



Prix de Lausanne 2nd Place and Best Swiss Candidate Award Tsukino Tanaka. © Emma Kauldhar

Prix de Lausanne

EMMA KAULDHAR reports on the renowned ballet competition

After last year's online presentation, the Prix de Lausanne was live again this year but not in its traditional home, since the Théâtre de Beaulieu is currently undergoing renovation. As in 2020, the world-famous competition was relocated 14 miles or so eastwards along the shores of Lac Lemane to the vast 2m2c Music and Convention Centre in Montreux. For those who couldn't get there, up to seven hours of the event was livestreamed on ARTE Concert and the Prix

de Lausanne website each day. While the essence of the event focuses on the candidates who will be fortunate to win scholarships with one of the Prix's partner schools or an apprenticeship with a partner ballet company, the week-long event offers valuable classes and coaching sessions for all of the aspirants.

Of the 81 young dancers selected to participate last October, 11 were unable to attend - either because of injury or travel restrictions imposed by Covid, but 70 young dancers (43

Prix de Lausanne 1st Place Gold Medal winner Darrien Sellman. © Emma Kauldhar





Prix de Lausanne finalist -Lexi McCloud. © Emma Kauldhar

finalists presented two solos: the candidate's choice from a list of classical ballet variations and a contemporary solo choreographed by Mauro Bigonzetti, Kinsun Chan, Wayne McGregor or Goyo Montero, or a creation by one of the winners - Maya Smallwood and Samuel Winkler - from last year's Young Creation Awards. Sponsored by Heinz Spoerli, the awards were initiated to encourage upcoming choreographers and this year attracted submissions by 32 hopefuls from 14 different partner schools, five of which were presented during the interlude at the finals. The pieces were choreographed by Luca Branca, Jessica Templeton, Joshua Hunt, William Thomas and Milla Loock and performed by Yo Nakajima (Princess Grace Academy), Martín Dياز (Royal Ballet School), Victor Duval (Palucca, Dresden), Stella Byers (Palucca, Dresden) and Anita Ferreira (Hamburg Ballet School). And the winners were Milla Loock's *Cognition* danced by Anita Ferreira to *Dismantle* by Peter Sandberg, and Luca Branca's *Les Ombres du temps*, danced by Yo Nakajima to *Ad Infinitum* by Vincent Isler. The two winning choreographies will be added to the list of contemporary variations for next year's candidates.

The interlude, during which the jury debate the scholarship and apprenticeship winners, also saw a performance of Jean-Christophe Maillot's *Back on Track* by ten talented students from the Princess Grace Academy and the presentation, compèred by Deborah Bull, of the Lifetime Achievement Award to veteran dancer, choreographer and director Pierre Lacôte (who is featured on page 72 in this issue) by the Prix's artistic and executive director, Kathryn Bradney.

Finally the curtain opened on the judges and 20 finalists gathered on the stage and the main seven esteemed prizes, presented in reverse order, were duly awarded to Amy Ronnfeldt (Australian Ballet School), Maya Schonbrun (Master Ballet Academy, USA), Dorian Plasse (Princess Grace Academy), Mingyang Xie (Dance School affiliated to Shenyang Conservatory of Music), Luciana Sagiori (Petite Danse School, Brazil) and Tsukino Tanaka (Zurich Dance Academy/Yoko Creative Ballet), with the gold medal going to Darrion Sellman (Princess Grace Academy).

European preselections for the Prix de Lausanne 2023 will take place during the Summer Intensive from 4 - 9 July - registration online until 15 April.



Young Creation Choreography - Anita Ferreira in Milla Loock's *Cognition*. © Emma Kauldhar