

Y. Burlaka

MORE THAN A SHOW

According to the apt metaphorical expression, ballet competitions called *the workshop of the stars*. Indeed, the way of the many outstanding artists on the ballet Olympus began with the participation in the competitions. Ekaterina Maximova and Vladimir Vasiliev, Natalia Bessmertnova and Mikhail Lavrovskii, Nadezhda Pavlova and Vyacheslav Gordeev, Alexander Godunov, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Eva Evdokimova, Francesca Zymbo and Patrice Bart, Loypa Araujo, Julio Bocca, Irek Mukhamedov, Denis Matvienko...

Now this form of the choreography art gained the widespread dissemination and development. The contests are interesting for the professionals — choreographers, critics and, of course, for the dancers and the audience, which captures the element of excitement, more typical for sports.

The true experts do not miss the chance to see on the stage a broad panorama of the ballet art in a variety of schools, styles and performing talents, to discover new artists' names, starting the stage career or keeping it.

The contests are attractive as any creative experiments, promoting an increase in the artistic culture.

Currently there are more than 150 major ballet competitions. They take place in Moscow and New York, Helsinki and Istanbul, Budapest and Rome, Vienna and Beijing, Riga and Tokyo...

One country may have several traditional ballet competitions. For example, in Russia, along with the Moscow International Competition, there are *The Arabesque* in Perm, *The Young Ballet of the World* in Sochi, and well known The All-Russian contest, which held in the different cities of the country and separates the various ballet specialty — classical, folk-stage dance and the creativity of the choreographers.

In the United States, along with the competition in New York, there are some popular

competitions — in Jackson and *The Youth Grand Prix of America*. In Ukraine there was the contest, named after Serge Lifar (in Kiev and Donetsk) and *The Crystal Shoe*, placed in Kharkov. In Italy young dancers from different countries come to the *Premio Roma* and *Citta di Spoleto*. In Seoul there are two ballet contests, held in parallel. In 2009 there were 6 (!) International ballet competitions at once. The competitions of the dancers began to overlap in time and, in a certain sense, to compete for the applicants. And the weight of the medals, determined by the complexity and the severity of the conditions of the competition, is different. In order to regulate competitive process, in 2005 was even set up the International Federation of the ballet competitions, which included representatives from the nineteen most respected competitions.

So, the contests provide a wonderful opportunity for the young dancers to prove themselves. The preparing for the competition has a positive effect to the complex formation of a dancer. During the preparation for the competition, they do a great job of selecting the repertoire that best suits for the individual artist. This step allows to the dancer carefully evaluate his capabilities, that seem to be the fundamental basis of his future ascent to the heights of the art.

The work on the development of the selected program, including the techniques of the dance and the choreographic style of the composition, is the next important stage in preparation for the competition, as well as the most important step in the professional development of the dancer.

The repertoire of all existing competition consists of the two ballet *whales*: classical dance, presented by the ballets of the 19–20th centuries, and contemporary choreography. In various competitions the contemporary choreography may be supplemented by a jazz dance, modern dance or free plastic. For example, in the competition *Young Ballet of the World* the

participants of the younger group must perform the character dance and the fragment from the ballet-tale.

In the preparation of the contemporary choreography appears productive result of co-working with the author of the choreography, which often gives us amazing benefits of co-creation of the writer and the interpreter.

There is no doubt that the classical section of the competition is basic, so any competition begins with it. Representing the fragments of the choreographic classics — *Pas de deux* and *Variations* — the contestants can reveal the level of possession of the classical school, their training and technical capabilities, and not only this. Without the school the talent is powerless on the ballet stage. It is very important to find the compliance with the original source, the sense of the style, the understanding of the composition's structure and the image content of the creation.

The classic pieces not only represent the most favorite episodes from the performances,

but also help to preserve some lost creations for various reasons.

Music is the esthetic dominant, that reigns on the ballet stage, when we talk about the Art of the dance. The Musicality of the performance is an important quality that the jury assessed as an integral part of the plastic speech. It equally concerns to the classical and modern choreography. Nowadays in the composition of the dance music uses the most sophisticated base: rhythm of the percussion instruments, various noises, pop, electronic music, jazz and hard rock.

Ballet competitions have become the part of the world ballet art. They entered in the history of the world culture, define the current state of the choreography and outline its motion vectors in the future.

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