

OPERA

Navigating towards the Company Audition

"We receive countless inquiries a year for requests to audition for our 110 member company" explains Gabriella Komor, International Cultural Manager for the 125 year old Hungarian National Ballet Company, "And, unfortunately we cannot accommodate a fraction of them. Dancers who vie for an individual audition throughout Europe have great difficulty to navigate the territory. It is expensive, there are logistical issues for everyone involved and it can be a very expensive process. As much as we are always looking for new talent, time is a precious commodity for our Director. The good news is that we have now discovered a way to help teach and facilitate qualified dancers--- not only for our company but for others as well".

According to Ms. Komor, the Hungarian National Ballet Company began its summer international program last year in order to allow pre-professional and professional dancers worldwide a chance to audition not only for the HNBC but other European companies. These are companies that are always on the lookout for talent that otherwise may be off their radar.

"Companies usually know their regional talent and come to know competition winners, but they are also aware that there are those dancers who never come to their attention"



dance adjudicator Eldar Aliev who will be a special guest instructor for the three week course. *"The HNBC has the ability to bring talent to the European doorstep for a full experience as well as exposure. There are great and numerous competitions worldwide that do this as well. But, there are countless dancers who may not show up at Varna or the YAGP, for example, who are well poised as talented pre-professionals. The HNBC-Summer International can help this particular group immeasurably".*

While no guarantee for a company contract, the three weeks of rigorous preparation precede the showcase performance in the Hungarian State Opera House helps to ensure that the best possible opportunities are nevertheless afforded the dancers.

"It's a win win relationship" observes Artistic Director, Gabor Keveházi. "The Hungarian National Ballet reviews the applications and vets the qualified dancers. We help prepare the selected dancers for their performance that also acts as an audition and competition. At the end of the program, the dancers have had expert preparation in classical ballet repertoire, character, pas de deux and modern dance and had the opportunity to exhibit it all on the Opera stage. In this way, the decision makers know that they will be viewing new talent and talent that can be evaluated carefully. Some of these dancers will win competition titles; some come away with coveted company contracts while others are offered internships and scholarships. Everyone comes away with professional experience with important additions to their CVs".

Last year's recipient of a company contract with the HNBC, Tatiana Vdovicheva of Russia, jumped at the chance to send in her application as soon as she noticed the introduction of the new Hungarian program. She particularly liked that there would be a select number of participants who all had a professional career in mind.

"They keep the number of dancers to a minimum so that we received a lot of individual attention at elite levels. I have danced extensively and professionally, yet this program had a lot of appeal for me. Most of all, the Hungarian National Ballet Company was a coveted position and I wanted the opportunity to show not only that I had the requisite talent but that I was a good fit for them. I didn't have to worry whether or not I was noticed in a huge sea of dancers in a crowded room or given a the usual cursory glance on my CV. They got to know me in the studio, saw me interact with the faculty and other dancers and finally saw what I could do on stage. Everyone danced a varied and long program and it was fantastic. Then, I was offered the contract I was seeking." The process evidently worked like a charm. "She is a fantastic fit and everyone enjoys working with her" says Ballet mistress Katalin Hágai.

Sixteen year old HNBC member Elizabeth Thiry from the USA shares her perspective with regards to the special value for dancers her age. *"The HNBC Summer International is an incredible opportunity for younger dancers who are eager to test their mettle in a professional setting. Although I was already an HNBC member, I knew that the HNBC-SI program was going to be a rigorous program needed to push me to new levels. The program represented the HNBC quality company atmosphere in every way and we were privy to coaching from our own famous Director, ballet masters and international instructors. There was first rate character instruction that Hungary is famous for as well as a contemporary world premier that we learned and performed. Directors need time to fairly evaluate a dancer's scope and as dancers know, we often wish for more time or the right setting to show what we can do. That is precisely what the HNBC-SI offers: it gives a dancer every chance to show his or her scope, work ethic and theatricality. This is not just another summer intensive...it is much, much more".*

For complete information on the 2010 HNBC-Summer International, please go to www.opera.hu/hnbcsi.

Dates: July 10th-July 30, 2010

Venue: The Hungarian State Opera House