



Ekaterina Trunina, classical dance teacher.

Ekaterina, tell us about your expectations for the program. Was there anything you were particularly concerned about before the beginning of the masterclasses?

Two weeks of training have passed by... Right you are – I did have some concerns. My main concern was the quality of ballet lessons conducted via online media, as well as their deliverables. You know, teaching of ballet is very unique – you have to use your body to show and teach it. Sometimes you focus on motions of arms and hands, sometimes – on motions of legs and feet. Every now and then you need to come to your student and physically correct their body positioning.

Let me tell you that this project was a very comfortable exercise! The organizers have kindly created an environment facilitating online masterclasses, and I am glad to admit my concerns and fears were for naught. You can use cameras to show close-ups of feet, hands or head. Whenever I needed to go into further detail, I just had to ask the technical staff to provide the camera angle I needed, and they complied perfectly. In that regard, I felt no constraints whatsoever! I could freely switch between far distance shots and close-ups. Our technicians provided perfect views of both students doing bar exercises and students practicing in the middle of the room.

When students are in a ballet class room, I have no problem with technique and variation demonstrations – I face the mirrored wall, and so do my students behind me. During the program, I could very well rely on modern technologies to use that demonstration methodology. All I had to do was turn my back on a camera and a screen, and the students could learn the motions as if they were standing behind me, while I could watch their work on another screen.

All in all, I think the program was a unique chance to learn classical ballet in a remote mode for kids across the world. I am very glad this project has taken place, and I commend the Bolshoi Ballet Academy and Russian Ballet International for the idea to conceive it.

Are you satisfied with the progress of your students?

Oh yes, the kids have come a long way! I taught three classes, and with each class I spent a week. Let me tell you – there was quite a difference in the level of my students in the beginning the end of each week.

Kids are very swift to catch the material we teach and to accommodate my comments and corrections. It was lovely to watch kids with thousands and thousands of kilometers between them to work as a single team, to dance and grow together. Yes, I am proud of them!

Liudmila Ermakova, classical dance teacher.

Liudmila, I have heard that this program was not your first experience in online teaching. Tell us about things you focus on during online lessons.

Indeed, I have already conducted online lessons. Because of the worldwide pandemic, our teachers had a lot less teaching options, and had to start teaching from their homes, without any special-purpose equipment and, naturally, without the comfort of the splendid training rooms available at the Academy. Experiences we made in the beginning of the pandemic helped take certain points and

problems into account, so quite a lot of things went smoothly in the joint summer online masterclasses project.

I think, the main problem we encountered this time was availability of space for training. Both foreign and Russian students trained at home – in their rooms, with constrained space. Sometimes it was literally one meter by one meter. Meanwhile, the task was to follow the curriculum of the Academy in its entirety – the curriculum of a professional ballet school. We managed to do that. My main focus is correctness of ballet movements and motions.

Which variations did you give your students to learn? Why did you choose them?

Oh, I don't think they were too hard or complex. My task was to demonstrate them in full force, because the kids need to understand what they are about to do. Meanwhile, the task of the students is precise and correct execution of the variations, rather than virtuoso performance.

Are you satisfied with the results?

Yes, very much so!

Marina Goryacheva, accompanist.

Marina, please tell us about your involvement in the online master classes as an accompanist.

The world around us keeps changing, and we change with it. Of course, work of online piano accompanist is very unique. You need to be very energetic, and your drive has to be palpable. You also need to have a perfect command of the instrument you play, in order to recreate the feeling of a real hands-on lesson and contribute to a creative and inspiring environment. It is none other than music that brings together all participants of a master class, with thousands of kilometers between them, and transforms them into a single cohesive team.

This time you played a very special instrument...

Right you are, I played a state-of-the-art electronic piano. Sounds it makes go directly to the computer, and all participants of a class hear the music simultaneously. You really get a feeling of togetherness – as if we all were in a ballet class room.

Alexander Kabanov, director of broadcast.

Hello, my name is Alexander Kabanov. I am the director of broadcast for the Russian Ballet International Online Summer Intensive at the Bolshoi Ballet Academy in Moscow.

I was managing the online broadcast and sound, controlling cameras, microphones and translating for the teachers that needed a bit of help in communicating with the audience.

This was the first online summer school in the history of the Academy and I am proud to be a part of this wonderful team. Over the course of two weeks we have made 25 large online broadcasts for the students all over the world.

I am extremely happy to be the part of this team and want to say thank you to the wonderful technicians of the Academy who provided the best effort into putting all this together. The equipment was outstanding and helped us deliver the best and most convenient format and high-quality of broadcast available this date. I am looking forward to developing this brilliant initiative even further and making this experience unforgettable for all future students of the Bolshoi Ballet Academy.