

WITNESS THE HOPE OF CHINESE BALLET

Article / Zhao Junjie, Wang Dan, Zhou Zhi

Pictures / Ballet Teaching Department,
Middle school affiliated to Beijing Dance Academy



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Igniting a new light of hope

“Respect tradition, enrich from classics, and be inclusive.” For more than 60 years, the ballet department of the Affiliated Secondary School of Beijing Dance Academy has always observed the motto above, establishing a ballet training system with Chinese characteristics.

For many years, the ballet department of the Affiliated Secondary School has been exploring to maintain and consolidate ballet department’s leading position as the backbone of the academy, to construct a

landmark of Chinese vocational dance education for professional ballet training, and to train and prepare well-qualified professional ballet dancers for domestic and international professional companies and universities, illuminating the hope of the future of Chinese ballet.

Laying the cornerstone for the future

Ballet shapes a person’s body meticulously. The training of human bodies is based on the science of modern anatomy. In order to achieve refined and precise training of young ballet talents,

especially teenage ballet students at the Affiliated Secondary School of Beijing Dance Academy, ballet education, from its basics, must respect the principles of sciences and develop a comprehensive training system.

After more than sixty years of continuous exploration and practice, we gradually developed a systematic training curriculum to cultivate high-quality talents.

The core courses of the curriculum include classical ballet technique, pointe, variation, and partnering classes. The foundation courses include historical dance, character dance and contemporary dance

1 > Classical ballet teaching play *Garden*
2 > Original ballet teaching play *Sound of the Sea*
3 > Classical teaching play *Esmeralda Duet*



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1 > Students perform excerpts from the classical ballet teaching play *Swan Lake*

classes. Supplementary courses include dance fitness classes, technique classes, and Chinese folkdance classes.

These three major parts – core course, basic course, and the supplementary course – not only complement each other, but also train and shape ballet students systematically, progressively and comprehensively.

The establishment of a curriculum system is not the end of ballet education at the Affiliated Secondary School. Instead, it sets a higher and more comprehensive new starting point.

Ballet education must acknowledge the tradition and characteristics of vocational ballet education. Meanwhile, it also needs to adapt to the trends and requirements of current development of ballet worldwide. Through teaching and research, our teachers provided additional school-based courses

step by step, including dance fitness, acting, dance human science, and Pilates. These school-based courses help to expand new areas and emphasize on cultivating students' comprehensive qualities. Our excellent curriculum guarantees high-quality teaching, reinforces the leading and role-model status of the department of ballet, determines the direction of the training of ballet talents, and lays the cornerstone of hope for the education of talents for Chinese ballet.

Cultivating the seedlings of hope

Cultures thrive through exchanges and mutual learning. China, a cultural superpower, highly values inclusiveness. Ballet is a globally recognized top-tier art form. There is still a long way to go and a lot for us to learn. Only by exploring and learning can we better achieve excellence in Chinese ballet education. Experts from the former Soviet Union helped us establish the academy, the first

ballet school in our country. It is like a seed, slowly taking root in China, allowing ballet to grow and flourish in China.

Nowadays, with the progress and development of ballet and the influx of ballet performances of different schools and genres from all around the world, many foreign ballet experts have come to our school to teach. Among them include Ben Stevenson, the artistic director of the Houston Ballet, Gilbert Mayer, professor at Paris Opera Ballet School, Roland Vogel from Stuttgart Ballet, Yelena from the Vaganova Ballet Academy, Eldar Aliev, artistic director of the Mariinsky Ballet Far East Stage, and many others. These excellent ballet masters brought our teachers and students not only the teaching concepts of ballet, but also the understanding of different artistic styles of various ballet schools in the world. They provided great help in broadening our horizons and had far-reaching influence on establishing our own school of ballet.

With their various cultural backgrounds and distinctive creative ideas, experts from overseas played important and active parts in the training of our young talents, introducing different creative ideas and systems to our ballet students and helping these future stars of Chinese ballet to shine.

Forging new stars of hope

No art could can survive solely based on theoretical work. All creative processes must also be tested by practice. The ballet department of the Affiliated Secondary School of Beijing Dance Academy attaches great importance to practical performance opportunities, trying every means to create more opportunities for students to enter the theater and step onto the stage to show the results they've achieved through learning in class.

In recent years, increasing performance and practice





> Classical ballet teaching play *Suite in E Minor* Dancers are like a group of spring birds, moving forward in the continuous drizzle, sometimes rotating, sometimes flying and sometimes fluttering



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1-3 > Original ballet teaching play
Crest, a modern ballet work in the 17th
Beijing Dance Competition



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opportunities for ballet students has been one of our important tasks. Every Each semester, students enter the theater to present their repertoires, which are fragments of famous ballet productions and pas de deux. These performances not only test students' completion of the syllabus at their grade levels, but also allow them to understand and familiarize themselves with the stage, laying a solid foundation for them on their ways to becoming excellent ballet dancers.

The biennial "Star Road" ballet concert is our landmark performance that successfully shows the

teaching achievements of the ballet department. In recent years, we have rehearsed Balanchine's "Serenade" and "Allegro Brillante", Paris Opera Ballet's "Études," and many other repertoires that would usually could only be performed by professional companies, fully reflecting the professionalism and competency of our training. At the same time, we also have brought numerous contemporary pieces onto the stage, including contemporary symphony ballet "Jupiter Symphony" choreographed by Canadian choreographer Peter Quanz, contemporary dance "Breaking Dawn" choreographed by Fei Bo, Chinese original ballet Dancing in

the Spring River, choreographed by Zhang Zhenxin, choreographer of the National Ballet of China, as well as contemporary works The Wave and Whales Fall, choreographed by our own outstanding graduate Wang Le, artist with Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo.

With outstanding dancers, choreographers and a series of fine ballet works, the ballet department of the Secondary School affiliated to Beijing Dance Academy has always been leading the way at the forefront of the ballet field domestically and globally, becoming a unique name card representative of Chinese

ballet. Let the world wait and witness the stars of the hope of Chinese ballet.

Sailing for toward the future with hope

While stage performances focus on putting class materials into practice, competitions emphasize on challenging the dancers and gaining practical experiences. The ballet department of the Affiliated Secondary School of Beijing Dance Academy actively organizes teachers and students to participate in various major ballet competitions at home and abroad, from the

department-level "The Rising Star Show" competition, to the academy-organized "Academic Cup", to domestic major competitions, and eventually to international major competitions, participating in a chain of competitions. The dancers first participate in school-level selection and training. Eventually they go through the review panel that consists of an expert group. Every step is a practice for the contestants, and every step is a chance to improve.

Internationally, we participated in various A and B-level international ballet competitions recognized by

the Ministry of Culture, including International Ballet Competitions in Varna, Helsinki, USA, Moscow, Paris, as well as Prix de Lausanne, YAGP and Nagoya International Ballet Competition. Our students have participated in these competitions a total of 27 times, winning 9 gold medals, 8 silver medals, 9 bronze medals and 14 other outstanding awards.

Domestically, we participated and achieved impressive results in 27 various events including the National Ballet Competition, "Tao Li Cup" Dance Competition,

1 > Original ballet teaching play
Star Road
2 > Classical ballet teaching play
Fijeta



Beijing International Ballet and Choreography Competition, Shanghai International Ballet Competition, Beijing Dance Academy International Ballet Invitational Competition, and CCTV Dance Competition. We have won 45 first prizes, 39 second prizes, 49 third prizes and 32 other outstanding awards. A large number of young dancers have stood out in these domestic and foreign competitions. With their achievements in competitions, they have now grown to become the backbone of many domestic and foreign ballet companies.

Students in the ballet department experience the entire process from choreography to training, preparation and presentation at

competitions. Throughout the process, they meet new challenges, bear pressure, overcome difficulties, strengthen their bodies and minds, acquire new knowledge, enrich themselves and gain deeper understanding of life. The journey to success is not always smooth sailing. There are many things in life one could only understand through continuously amidst setbacks in order to improve and move upward. Our ballet teachers guide the students to grow and improve themselves together, feeling the eternal and inner power of hope.

With rapid development of information technology, the ballet department of our school never forgets where we came from and where we are headed for. We always

respect the tradition, while seeking innovation and development on the basis of integrity and legacy. Looking forward to the future, the ballet department of the Affiliated Secondary School of Beijing Dance Academy will continue to follow the educational protocols, delve deeper into teaching methods, strengthen class management, inherit tradition, persist in reform, and continue with innovation. Based on the analysis of talent market demand and the requirements of diversity upon graduation, ballet education and teaching system with Chinese characteristics will continue to be enriched and perfected. In this new era full of opportunities and challenges, we will put great effort in educating our students to the high standards we always aim

at and create a new chapter of Chinese ballet education.

Our country is developing, and the world is progressing. As a big country, China presents its diverse culture and inclusiveness with an open mind on the international stage. The professional exploration of Chinese ballet dancers also continues and expands, accompanied by the pace of the country's continuous openness. We will never stop improving and moving forward. We grow through learning and experiencing. The teachers and students at the Affiliated Secondary School of Beijing Dance Academy will work together to present the light of hope of Chinese ballet to the world.