



PLATEFORME _NOUVELLE GÉNÉRATION D'INTERPRÈTES 2015

13 juin 2015, Arsenic – Lausanne

La quatrième édition de la PLATEFORME_Nouvelle génération d'interprètes a eu lieu en juin 2015. Organisée chaque deux ans depuis 2009 par le Marchepied, elle a pour objectif de favoriser les échanges, l'émulation artistique et l'insertion professionnelle, de tisser des liens, de créer de nouveaux espaces de discussion, de réflexion, d'apprentissage entre danseurs-euses, pédagogues, chorégraphes et public.

Dans ce cadre, l'Association pour la Reconversion des Danseurs Professionnels (RDP) et l'Association vaudoise de danse contemporaine (AVDC) ont organisé, en collaboration avec le Marchepied, un moment d'échange et de discussion modérée par la sociologue Valérie Rolle, co-auteure du livre "De l'école à la scène". Au terme de la représentation du samedi 13 juin 2015, les jeunes danseurs des compagnies **VERVE** – Northern School of Contemporary Dance NSCD – Leeds (UK), **BODHI PROJECT** – Salzburg Experimental Academy of Dance SEAD – (AUT), **EDge** – London Contemporary Dance School The Place LCDS – Londres (UK), **Le MARCHEPIED** – Compagnie junior de danse contemporaine – espace d'insertion et de création – Lausanne (CH) ont échangé avec le public sur leurs réalités et leurs rêves professionnels.

Cette discussion a eu lieu en anglais, la synthèse y relative l'est également.

Post-performance open discussion

Moderator: Valérie Rolle, sociologist

Participants: Michaela Ellingson, Edge (London); Erica Elizabeth Badgeley, Bodhi Project (Salzburg); Harriet Irving, Verve (Leeds); Victor Poltier, Le Marchepied (Lausanne)

Report : Sarah-Jane Moloney

Why did you decide to join one of these companies, and did you join it directly after your training?

For the most part, the dancers are joining these companies between their vocational training and their entrance into the professional world. Many of them cite these types of programs (youth companies) as "safety nets", a middle ground that helps boost confidence and knowledge of the profession - a time in which to think about their careers and gain experience – while still remaining sheltered from some realities of the professional world. Moreover, for one professional dancer from America who wanted to work in Europe, this type of program provided an opportunity to meet choreographers and be introduced to the European style of work.

What is your artistic and educational background, and how did this affect how you worked together?

The dancers all come from a variety of dance backgrounds and professional trainings (classical, hip hop, jazz, contemporary...). The dancers thus appreciated being introduced to many different backgrounds and styles through contact with their colleagues, which in turn influenced their growth.



Bearing in mind the question of professional integration, what was your greatest concern during the theater season?

As these dancers transition from students to professionals, new challenges emerge, such as negotiating the relationship with the choreographer: when you are no longer a student, at what point do you begin to stand up for yourself? There is a balance to be found between what the choreographer needs and what the dancer needs, as an artist. These programs help to build the dancers' confidence, to enable them to trust that they have something to give, knowing what they can bring to the table and understanding when to use it.

What are the professional realities you will have to face? Are they the same in England, Austria, Switzerland?

According to these young dancers, the professional reality they will have to face is quite difficult, especially in England where funding is scarce. This is partly because the landscape of the profession has changed quite dramatically in the past few years, and, in general, there are no longer many long-term contracts to be found. For this reason, many of the dancers speak of their desire to get involved in projects instead of companies. Also, one of the dancers points out that although a contract can be a safety net, long-term work with a company tends to shape a dancer's physicality and psychology. As a result, these young dancers prefer to keep an open-minded approach, collaborating with a variety of people and making connections that will bring varied influences to their work. However, all the dancers agree that it is a precarious time to begin a career and that most of them are facing an uncertain few years.

How do you deal with this uncertainty? Are you thinking about how you will live from your dancing, or whether you will take a side job?

One of the dancers points out that it is important to remain open-minded about such things: for example, their training as dancers has gifted them with many transferable skills, which would be suitable for a variety of other jobs. It is about finding the balance between what they want to do and what they are good at. It seems that, across the board, these dancers realise that they will have to capitalise on other skills in order to support themselves financially while attempting to succeed in the dance industry.

How did this year change your professional expectations, and in what way?

These programs (youth companies) are helpful because they provide the dancers with the information necessary to plan the next move in their career: they learn about what is "out there", and what is possible. For many, this has not changed the perspective they had when entering the program, but it has clarified it.





Feedback on the discussion

By Valérie Rolle, sociologist

Sociological studies on the entrance into the profession have shown that the possession of a diploma does not in itself guarantee a job. The school title often has a reassuring effect on the parents and eases the transition when professional reorientation occurs. While it vouches for a basic know-how, they still have to be consolidated with an accumulation of experiences. However, in markets where jobs are neither stable nor guaranteed and competition is fierce, other factors enter into account. The knowledge of one's professional sector, integration into its networks and the recognition of peers implies sharing certain ways of seeing, doing and thinking. One must be a good dancer, a work partner who gives one's heart and soul, as well as a colleague who shares the values and lifestyle of the group. This was clearly expressed in the aspirations of the dancers assembled for the 2015 Platform. The work undertaken within their respective companies prolonged their training. The end of this experience marks the beginning of a new probationary period, outside of a protective school-like structure. Among the issues raised was the capacity to build a relationship of equality with the choreographers, the affirmation of an artistic singularity but also the opportunity to acquire experience.

The proliferation of measures aiming to facilitate professional integration should nevertheless concern us. Indeed, it becomes a social problem after the post-war boom, when the markets cease to absorb the quotas of new graduates. It is therefore no longer enough to be qualified; one must also rope in personal qualities and relate to the values of the company. In the artistic fields, this helps to build the vocation of young artists. However, it also opens the door to questioning oneself and one's legitimacy in practicing under the gaze and judgment of those who are in a position to provide work. To enter into the profession also means figuring out these power relationships and negotiating an uneven playing field, since it is the social, and not only the professional attributes of each and every one that are being brought into play.

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