

Classical dancers' education in Polish ballet schools. Situation, dilemmas, challenges and innovations

Although ballet has been present in Polish culture since the 16th century, there remains a distinct lack of publications on the Polish market concerning artistic education in the field of dance. Consequently, dance, and especially classical dance, does not occupy its rightful place in the pedagogical theory of aesthetic education. In Poland, for many years there have been calls for reforms in arts education, including ballet education, but the postulates put forward by those demanding such reforms have not been realised. It is also worth mentioning dilemmas connected with the dancer's profession in contemporary Poland, such as the low social status of the profession itself, short stage careers, the high frequency of injuries, the mismatch between education and labour market requirements, competition from foreign dancers, and the liquidation of early retirement options.

The pedagogical monograph method was adopted to describe the education of classical dancers in Poland in terms of challenges, dilemmas and innovations. In the first part, the authors discuss ballet education in Poland, referring to the importance of art in the process of education and the history of ballet education in Poland. They present selected contexts of professional artistic education, legal and organisational foundations of ballet education in Poland, as well as definitions of ballet. The second part of the study focuses on the characteristics of selected foreign methods of education in the profession of dancer, as well as descriptions of classical dancers' careers in a world of 'fluid' changes, and the profile of a potential future dancer, i.e. a child entering both adolescence and ballet school. In addition, this section presents the stress factors associated with ballet training and the psycho-physical and cognitive benefits of participating in classical dance education. The third and final part of the study presents Dominika Babiarez's proposed innovations implemented by the author in the 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 school years at the Olga Sławska-Lipczyńska Ballet High School in Poznań. Although not exhaustive, this study marks an important attempt to draw attention to particularly important aspects of ballet education.

Translated by Rob Pagett