

codarts



hogeschool voor de kunsten

Magazine
Winter 2010-2011

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From the other side

Van de andere kant

'I am a new third year student in the Bachelor of Dance programme at Rotterdam Dance Academy. I am 19 years old and come from the land down-under, Melbourne, Australia. It was an interesting and challenging journey to get here, yet the adventure is only just beginning!' Madeline Harms blogs about her adventure on Dance Informa. She also writes in this edition of Codarts Magazine. Madeline Harms.

I grew up in Mount Gambier in rural South Australia, approximately 500 km from Melbourne. In 2005 I was accepted into The Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School (VCASS), Victoria's specialist (elite) school for dancers and musicians, and moved to Melbourne with my family in the beginning of 2006, where we joined my older sister, Anna, who had already been studying there for two years. When Anna graduated from VCASS at the end of 2006, she headed straight to the Rudra Béjart School, in Lausanne, Switzerland. Having her heart set on Europe she worked hard and made it happen. After spending two years there, she found her first job in the ballet company of Die Theater Chemnitz, Germany, and is now going into her third year there.

One evening whilst speaking to her on the phone, telling her of my worries about what would happen this year, she said: 'Come to Europe, I will pay for your plane ticket.' At first I thought this would be an impossible idea; it was so far away. However after many discussions with my parents, we decided that to explore the European scene would be the right thing to do. Here in Europe there is a huge arts scene, and to be part of a culture where you are supported by such a large community, is a really exciting experience. Over the next couple months I did my research, and stumbled upon Codarts whilst Googling one afternoon.

I was immediately impressed with what the university had to offer. I got in touch with Rotterdam Dance Academy and various other schools across Europe, and necessary arrangements were made for me to audition privately or join in with the early audition dates. So six weeks after I graduated (December 2009), I was off to the other side of the world! I travelled on my own, first to my sister's home in Germany, and then to the Netherlands, Switzerland,

France, and finally England. What an eye-opening and enriching experience it was...

Over the past year I had discovered that my passion lay in contemporary/modern dance, and felt that I needed more experience in this area. Therefore I narrowed down my search to full-time schools with intense modern training and repertoire, as well as training in ballet and other styles, where I could enhance my technical abilities and develop myself as an artist.

This is why I decided to accept my place at Rotterdam Dance Academy. After researching, seeking advice, and looking at personal positions, my family and I decided this was the best place for me to be. What particularly attracted me to Rotterdam was the large amount of new and existing repertoire taught, and the never-ending flow of guest choreographers and teachers coming into the school. This has already been justified, for I have already met so many wonderful dancers and renowned teachers and choreographers (such as Jiří Kylián), and I have only been here for three months.

It was a struggle to decide whether or not to leave Australia, for the Netherlands. However, with the support of my family, friends, and teachers I decided to grasp the opportunity whilst I could. I needed to be pushed out of my comfort zone, and studying over the other side of the world would definitely do this. To be honest, the beginning wasn't easy; everything was exciting and new, yet so foreign. Having to completely switch myself around; the time zone, seasons, school year calendar, even sides of the road. Yet I feel like I have come a long way and already learnt so much.

I am very fortunate and grateful to have been awarded an International Talent Grant from Codarts, as well as receive sponsorship from the Pierino Ambrosoli Foundation to help support my study here.

I feel so privileged to be a part of this wonderful arts and culture and am very excited by it all! I have an abundance of new things to learn and explore... It is a huge change in my life but I guess I am on to the next chapter; who knows what it may bring?

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