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## Save the dance

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Dear all,

I'm Victor Caixeta and I'm currently a soloist at the Mariinsky Theater in Saint Petersburg, Russia.

I am fully aware of everything that is happening with our school for the past months, and with the best intentions, I'm here to tell my brief but "gold" story at the Staatliche Ballettschule Berlin.

In June 2016, I was studying in Toronto, Canada. I was diagnosed with depression and anxiety and was about to give up my career in ballet and come back to Brazil. But after a long conversation with my teachers back home, we decide to contact the Staatliche Ballettschule Berlin and see if the scholarship that they offered me in February 2015 was still valid, and luckily it was! I then, took all my stuff and bravely arrived in Berlin not knowing what I would find... Since day 1 in Berlin, the school and the staff welcomed me not just with open arms, but with opened hearts, and breaking the stereotype that Germans were cold people! After my arrival, I no longer was depressed and have made already friends for life!

When the school year began in September 2016, I started to have a dream routine, learning not just German, but with so many international students, I could learn 4 new languages. The academic school was great, I had the basic stuff that I could study being a beginner in German, and when we didn't have a busy schedule of performances, it was pretty easy to copy with homework and tests!

At the practice, it was everything I've always wanted, hard and intensive training! I had excellent teachers which made me grow so much as an artist, and also as a person. I cannot understand the testimonies saying that the training was excessive and that the teachers were so strict, because if you want to be a ballet dancer there's not an easy way, not that I'm aware of... I believe that someone that studies to be a doctor, doesn't have much free time either, and lose weekends and holidays studying to pass in a great university and have a good degree! With ballet this is not different, there's a quote by Oliver North that once I've heard from one of my teachers in Berlin that says: "An easy life is rarely meaningful and a meaningful life rarely easy." and this fits like a glove when one, talks about a ballet career.

Through the months, I've had so many experiences, and traveled and won competitions all around the globe! And also had amazing opportunities to dance pieces by extraordinary choreographers while I was in Berlin! During the preparation for a very important competition in Moscow, I had to deal with my first injury, and even now, I still don't know what I really had... Some doctors made different diagnosis for my foot, they said it could be tendinitis, stress fracture and even a tumor...

I remember the whole school was devastated with the news, one day I was the "Golden Boy" and another day, I couldn't dance... I still remember having a meeting with the directors, my teachers and my partner, deciding that we wouldn't participate in that competition. Few days passed by, and with physiotherapy, and following all doctors advices, my foot made a huge improvement and I felt I could dance again. The school didn't force me to dance at any time, and with or without the school I decided to go to Moscow to compete, because somehow I felt there was something waiting for me in Russia, it was one in a life time chance! At the competition, I wasn't only a prize winner between the best dancers around the world, but also got the contract at the renowned Mariinsky Theater, where I dance professionally since then...

With that being said, I want to leave my full gratitude to the SBB for everything they've done for me, including all the financial help (I had 100% scholarship) not only all this, but also to shape me into the adult I'm today! I believe that the school has just good intentions for all their students, and they've helped not only me, but thousands of young dancers, full of dreams!

In my opinion, in the dance world there is a lot of misunderstanding about everything! From high intense training, to food disorders...

This is a subject that should be discussed not only in school but at home, and we cannot blame only the school when there's problems...

If you want to be a professional dancer there are standards that you must fit in, and of course with responsibility and

heathy!

I want to finish this testimony saying that all these people waiting to put a bad label at the school are not harming the school, or the stuff, they are harming these hundreds of students that dream to be a professional ballet dancer, people that spend so much money to be in that school, and buy expensive ballet clothings, or people like me, that left they country, in the other side of the globe, to study in a great school like SBB...

I really wish that this situation is going to pass, and we can all go through this without scars, and continue working towards or dream future!

And I hope that in a few years the doors of the Staatliche Ballettschule Berlin will still be open for me to perhaps come back, and be a teacher for the future generation!!!

Sorry for not being able to write all this in German, this is a very sensitive subject, and I don't want to be misunderstood!

Viel Danke,

Victor Caixeta