

Appendix 4: Complete answers to the questionnaires about the impact of Covid-19.

1. Alexandre's answers to the questions (these answers were translated from French to English because Victor answered the questionnaire in French in an audio format):

- On which platform did you follow your classes?

On Zoom

- According to you, what were/are the advantages of having online classes on Zoom or online on another platform?
 - Zoom is good because you have the possibility to have a live lesson.
 - In zoom you still have the possibility to see the teacher and other students.
- According to you, what were/are the disadvantages of having online classes? What about the feedback, the space, the contact with your friends, the feeling of being part of a team?
 - It will never be as good as a “real” studio class.
 - You are not with the other students and so you can't feel their energy and you can't spread your own energy to the others
 - When the class is over, it is completely over. You are then alone waiting for the next class; you don't share time with your friends
 - On Zoom you can leave the class whenever you want. So, according to me, it is harder to find the motivation and the energy to participate to the lesson until the end.
 - Regarding the feedback, no problem. The teacher was giving the feedback in live: you were doing the exercise and while you were doing it, the teacher was giving feedback orally.
 - I was very lucky because in my home we have an attic. And we transformed it into a dance class. Thanks to that, I had enough space to train. I also put a floor made for dance.
 - Regarding the contact with my friends, it was a period which was very complicated because you feel very lonely.
At this moment you try to find all the possible ways to contact your friends through internet. We were calling each other a lot.
 - Regarding the fact of being part of a team, I just didn't have that feeling anymore. I was alone. During that time, I caught the opportunity to discover myself. I tried to focus only on me. So of course, I didn't have this feeling of being part of a team.

This feeling only came back at the very end when we had (when we could) go back to school to receive our degree. But apart from this, the relation I was having with my class was very different than the one I had before.

- Can you please describe (every step of) the development of an online class (did you have to warm up before the class? With which exercises began/ended the class? How was the teacher showing the movements? What about the pianist/the music?
 - Yes, we had to warm up before the class.
 - We began and ended the class with the same exercises that we would do in the studio: little warm-up, then pliés. However, we couldn't practice our jumps because of the lack of space.

For the contemporary class, it was indeed very different as the class in the studio because we need much more space for this class, and we simply did not have enough of it. So, we did workouts instead of our contemporary class, which I didn't find great. And then, we also did a lot of improvisation and that I liked a lot, because we didn't need a lot of space to improvise.
 - Most of the time the teacher wasn't showing the movements because we already knew the exercises. When the teacher had to show us the movement, it was quite funny because he was in his living room and he was doing his best so we could see his entire work on the screen.
 - Regarding the music, it was really well managed. We had a pianist who was with us in our Zoom meeting. The only bad thing was the Wi-Fi. Sometimes the pianist's Wi-Fi wasn't working well and so we were hearing the music off-beat: sometimes the sound was very slow and in one go everything happened very fast. It was quite hard to follow.

For contemporary classes, it was the teacher who played the music on his iPad and so the quality wasn't that good.
- Do you think that one of the new technologies I showed you before could have helped you to keep contact with your teacher? Or could have helped you to practice besides the Zoom classes? If yes, which one and why?
 - No, I don't think so. According to me, none of the technology would have worked for me because they were focusing only on the technique and you do not have the feeling of having a true person in front of you.

2. Alysson's answers to the question:

- On which platform did you follow your classes?

On Zoom

- According to you, what were/are the advantages of having online classes on Zoom or online on another platform?

- You can really work on your own tempo, if you feel like working more on your arms for one class, no one will tell you to do differently.
 - You are alone, so you won't get distracted by others or you won't compare yourself to the others, since you aren't really able to see them.
 - You can focus on things you find quite difficult. When we're at school, it's much harder to really work on things you find hard, but when you're at home, the classes go (most of the time) slower, so you can really work on your personal corrections and things you find harder.
 - Every Wednesday when we have online ballet class, we finish with a 40-minutes workouts. It's much more fun to do the workouts with your classmates instead of alone.
- According to you, what were/are the disadvantages of having online classes? What about the feedback, the space, the contact with your friends, the feeling of being part of a team?
 - Lately, we've really been working on smiling with the other classmates, which isn't possible when you're on Zoom. That's quite sad because it's really nice to communicate with the others.
 - I also notice less feedback and corrections from the teacher. It's normal since we're just a small square on a screen but it's a pity that you, sometimes, get barely any feedback.
 - I always dance in my living room, I have to move the table and put a floor made for dance. I did have quite some space but it's still very small compared to the studios at school.
 - Can you please describe (every step of) the development of an online class (did you have to warm up before the class? With which exercises began/ended the class? How was the teacher showing the movements? What about the pianist/the music?
 - This year: we always have to do our warm-up before the class starts so we don't lose time with that. We always start the class with the same, small ab-exercises (we do the same at school). Since we only Zoom on Wednesdays, we already know the exercises from the days before. The teacher doesn't really need to show the movements, except when someone does something very wrong. While we're at school, the teacher records the pianist, so we use the recordings on Zoom. We finish every class with the 40-minute workouts.
 - Last year: the teacher sent us the exercises through WhatsApp, and we had to learn them. We had to practice them throughout the week and on Friday we had to send her some exercises. That way, she was able to give us feedback. It was a lot of responsibility, but I think we all managed it very good.

- Do you think that one of the new technologies I showed you before could have helped you to keep contact with your teacher? Or could have helped you to practice besides the Zoom classes? If yes, which one and why?
 - None of them because I will always prefer to follow a class with a real teacher, have real feedback and share the class with real classmates. Moreover, most of these technologies only focus on the technique.

3. Cynthia's answers to the questions

- On which platform did you follow your classes?
 - On Zoom
- According to you, what were/are the advantages of having online classes on Zoom or online on another platform?
 - It is kind of nice to be at home all day because you're not as bound to the schedule as usual so you can create your own routine. For example, I could choose how much time I would take for my warm-up and how much time I would take for my cooldown. We also learned to watch better because everything was shown on a little screen and because most auditions are like this right now it was very helpful to have this.
- According to you, what were/are the disadvantages of having online classes? What about the feedback, the space, the contact with your friends, the feeling of being part of a team?
 - You can get very distracted easily because there are lots of things happening around you at home. It was also hard because we had a lack of space and materials. I, for example, don't have a barre at home so I made one with pipes, but it wasn't so stable
 - The teachers gave way less feedback than normally because it is harder to see on a screen. So, I started filming myself dancing a lot to give myself feedback. I really learned to correct myself and this is for me even more effective than a teacher correcting me.
 - I danced outside on my terrace or in my garage. In the beginning it was hard, but it became normal.
 - I kept seeing one friend who lives in the city of Antwerp.
 - The feeling of being part of a team is totally lost. But at the same time, I feel so independent and free. After classes, I still follow other dance classes from other companies. I really enjoy this.

- Can you please describe (every step of) the development of an online class (did you have to warm up before the class? With which exercises began/ended the class? How was the teacher showing the movements? What about the pianist/the music?
 - We had to do workouts and stretch every day and film it. Before class, we do our abdominal exercises and our planks. We then just start doing barre exercises. Our teacher shows them through the video, and it goes really well because in classical dance, every movement has a name so after having showed it once, our teacher just says the name of the exercise and we do it. (In contemporary, this was much harder because you have to catch all of the details). After barre we went to centre, but we didn't do a lot of exercises there because of the lack of space. We did some small jumps and then our day was finished. The cool down, we had to do it on our own. In the very beginning of the pandemic, we didn't do zoom classes, but our teacher sent us our exam through video, and we had to learn it and each day send a video to her of us doing it. She then sent each of us feedback. This for me was better than Zoom classes because it was very individual.
- Do you think that one of the new technologies I showed you before could have helped you to keep contact with your teacher? Or could have helped you to practice besides the Zoom classes? If yes, which one and why?
 - No, none of them.

• **Paola Rodriguez Sterling's answers to the questions (Paola answered the questions in French, I translated them into English)**

- On which platform did you teach the class?
 - On Zoom
- According to you, what are the advantages of giving a class online and why?
 - I can teach learners in different countries.
 - Staying at home, which is where I am when I teach online, saves me time. I live on an island south of Montreal and travelling to the ballet school can take over an hour by public transport. During the winter at -20°, -30°, -40°, it's not really pleasant and you arrive at school already tired.
 - The previous point is similar for the students, *i.e.* I can feel the "winter energy" in the learners and this causes heaviness / weightlessness when teaching, as the energy of the group has to be constantly increased throughout the class. In online courses, I don't feel the heaviness/weightiness of "winter energy" at all, on the contrary, the students are always in a high energy mode which makes teaching easier and learning automatic.
- According to you, what are the main issues of giving the class online. What were the feelings you were experiencing?

- Taking into account the results of my master's thesis, I can conclude that there are 3 actions by which the teacher mobilises his teaching strategies: 1. Saying it, 2. Seeing it, 3. Doing it. "Touch", one of the teaching strategies used as part of this third act, is clearly and directly affected by online teaching. It disappears completely and causes a significant gap that the teacher has to fill with other strategies.
- There is also the musical part which cannot be fully exploited because of the delay between sound and image.
- The spaces used for the learners are not very suitable and this can limit the performance depending on the level of the group.
- Do you have the sensation of "really" teaching? Or is the fact that you have no contact with your students very hard for you?
 - I feel like I'm really teaching. In all the contexts in which I do it (leisure and professional for children, teenagers and adults, with students in Canada, Mexico, Colombia and Europe) I manage to connect with the students and have technical results, among others. And at the same time, not having contact with the students is difficult, I miss it very much, especially with the children.
- Were you at your ease while giving the class online? What were the feelings you were experiencing?

Feelings have varied throughout this year. I started teaching online in March 2020.

I would like to clarify that at the beginning of the pandemic, I was not obliged to teach online, so I did not have that feeling of being forced to do things I did not want to do. On the contrary, I decided to do so, and I started offering free courses during the first two weeks of the pandemic (it was apparently only going to last these two weeks). During those first two weeks of the free courses I was in an experimental mode, learning how Zoom worked, I was very happy to be able to offer fulfilment to the children and their families while we all had to stay at home; I was also tired because I taught from Monday to Sunday without stopping.

I was really happy and proud of myself, but when the pandemic was expanded, everything changed. I was in shock (as we all were), because at that time various things came into play: I was not going to have money to pay my rent or my bills, one of the schools where I was teaching was going to close down for good, the other school was not giving news and I could not teach the classes on my own because the community centre where I was renting a place to teach was also closed. As chaos set in, some solutions also began to emerge: the government offered financial aid, one of the schools decided to continue the session online (we are still there). After all the efforts of this year, the different achievements at the end of each session, as well as the comments of the parents and families of the learners, I have feelings of gratitude and a sense of well-being for having done my best, in the midst of this chaos, thanks to the constancy, tenacity and endurance of a team: parents/family, learners and the school/me.

- Do you have enough space to perform?
 - In answering this question, I laughed and asked myself: what does it mean to have enough space to perform? I have a sort of table and a stool that serve as a bar (I alternate between the two so that I can show different angles of the same exercise). And for the exercises in the centre, they are structured in such a way that the students can perform them wherever they are. Some are in the kitchen, some in the middle of the living room, some in their bedroom, the basement; I think I have a lot more space than many of them. So "Saying it" becomes the most common strategy used at that time.
- Do you think it is a good way to teach students? Or the fact to have to show the movement through a computer is not ideal at all?
 - I think that e-learning has pushed us to find new teaching and learning strategies, it is really a challenge for all (both teachers and learners). In the same sense, I think it is a way of teaching that could be implemented from time to time to reinforce certain elements of teaching and learning in dance.
- How do you do with the music/ the musicians. Do the students hear it well?
 - I use a loudspeaker that I put next to the computer. I have activated all the possible settings to get a better sound quality, but I think this is not enough. Before I put on the music, I do sound tests to confirm that the learners are correctly hearing it. The connection and the devices used for the learners come into play and can affect performance during the class, as it distracts the learners and they become preoccupied with technological problems and they cannot deal with the technical or artistic elements of the class.
- Did you experience some issues with bad connection? On your side or on the student's side? What happened if one student has a bad connection and is then "too slow" compared to the music you are hearing?
 - There are times when the connection is not very good, especially on the learner side. In any case, even if the connection is good, there is always a delay between sound and image. If a learner has problems with his or her connection, he or she disconnects and tries again, sometimes it works, but there have been times when learners have been unable to connect to continue the class. This is very frustrating for everyone.
 - Concerning the delay between sound and image, which will be quite present during the lessons, I focus more on the quality of the movements and not on a precise musicality. The exercises are therefore structured in a specific way to allow these qualities to be observed. As for the musicality, it is also worked on taking into account the qualities of the movements.

- Can you please describe (every step of) the development of an online class? Do the students have to warm up before the class? With what exercise do you start/ end the class? How do you give feedback?
 - The first thing I have to do is move some of the furniture around to give me the space I need to teach. Then, I move on to the installation of the various devices (computer, iPod, and speaker).
 - I take the time to greet the learners and interact a little with them, I confirm if there are no injuries. Then, I start the class with a warm-up. We do the class. And feedback is given in different ways. Here are a few examples: I give corrections during or after the exercises, I ask one learner to perform the movement and the others to observe and correct/comment, I take photos and we analyse them, etc. We end with the bow. I talk a little bit more with the learners, mostly to thank and congratulate them for continuing with the online courses and for their efforts. I remind them to stretch.
- Would you like to add something?
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5. Jean-Paul Dimmers' answers to the questions (Jean-Paul answered the questions in French, I translated them into English)

- When did you switch to distance learning? On what platform were the courses delivered?
 - I don't give the lessons because I'm the director of the conservatory. But it's a teacher with his girlfriend who gave lessons online when the second lockdown began in October. In fact, we did not give lessons at all during the first lockdown and the students stayed three months without dancing. They started again in June, they danced almost all the time in July, August and September and there were also masked internships. It was not until the second lockdown that they started to do distance learning. So mid-October.
- Have you been able to resume giving 100% face-to-face lessons since then?
 - No, not at all. However, we have always continued to offer face-to-face lessons for children up to 12 years old because for them we had the authorisation to do lessons with a maximum of 10 pupils per class. [These classes], we kept them and that's what saved the school. We still have 25 children under the age of 12 and it is thanks to them that we managed to keep paying our rent.
- What changes did you have to make in the studios so that classes could resume on site (adhesive flooring to divide up the space, keeping all the doors open, taking the temperature of the students and teachers, closed changing rooms and showers, disinfecting the bars, need to wear masks, etc.)?
 - Floor adhesive is not possible for us. We have a studio which is 10 square meters, how do you want to tell the children that they will have to dance their diagonal of big jumps in the square which is two meters by two? It's not possible. On the other hand, I had large squares, large rectangles made in a specialised shop, in a printing

shop, featuring "keep your distance", "wash your hands", "no shoes in the changing rooms". Large billboards of sorts. We also bought two large gel dispensers. We put bottles of gel in the three different studios. We clean all the bars after class with gel. And all the classes are masked (except the very small ones).

- What do you think were the hardest measures to take?
 - The new measures that have a huge impact on the budget. There have been big cuts in the budget. In fact, before, parents used to pay 300 euros per month. But there are parents who said that since their daughter only came 5 times, 5 times 10 euros, that makes 50, so I pay you 50 euros and not 300 euros anymore. And so, the parents took the initiative themselves to modify the annual fee by the number of lessons given. This means that automatically in this case, instead of having 1000 euros per month for the whole class, I only have 650 euros left. But the rent is always the same. The salary I pay my teachers is always the same. If it's 50 euros per class per teacher, the teacher won't say he takes less because he has had fewer students. The teacher still has to get up, pay for parking and teach. So, the fact that I have to favour some students has consequences that are not easy to deal with.
- Do you find it difficult to return to the classroom under these conditions? Or is it more of a relief?
 - That is to say, it is very complicated and for us it is a real Chinese puzzle. For example, there are some students that we have to favour over others of course. According to their criteria of dance quality. And of course, I have parents who have paid the school fees for the whole year who ask me why their daughter only dances twice a week whereas Celine dances five times a week. So, I have to answer that she only dances twice because she is not as good, what do you want me to tell her? So, it's very complicated. So, the parents complain that there isn't a perfect balance between the classes, but today we have to give priority in the classes to the children who are going to be knocking on the doors of famous ballet companies in 2021 or 2022.
- As a director, how did you feel about the closure of dance schools and conservatories in March 2020? What was your first action when you heard the news?
 - I totally accepted it because it was a war. It was about saving the population. It is about saving my teachers, one of whom is 80 years old. She is there every day even if she is over 80 years old. She was Rudolph Nureyev's partner when he was teaching, and she was 19 years old. She gave lessons at the Paris Opera when Rudolph Nureyev was the director. So, we really have high level teachers here. But she tells me that if she catches the Covid-19, she dies. So, me, with my car, I go to get her before each class, and I have to bring her back after each class. So, I'm a taxi driver. We also had to get rid of the cleaning staff because we can't pay her anymore. So, for the last 6 months I've been cleaning the studios, the toilets and the windows. And I have no choice. This is one of the disadvantages of the big cuts in the budget. I'll take an example, 50 euros per class for a salaried teacher in hand, that makes 600 euros gross per month with the social security contributions, employers' contributions, ... so a dance class costs me 100 euros. Four children at

10 euros makes 40 so I have a hole of 60 euros. I can take the course once, 5 times, but not 100 times. That's the situation I find myself in today. My dancers have to dance, my teachers have to be paid and teach as they are not unemployed. So, I have a huge shortfall to pay all the expenses that are fixed. So, it's my salary in the insurances on the side that compensates and allows me to bail out the school a little. Otherwise, it's not sustainable.

- Another problem: the pianist. We have a great pianist, Olga, who doesn't speak French, she comes from St Petersburg. We took her because she is a pianist who knows all the ballets of Tchaikovsky, of Don Quixote by heart. She has been in her flat for 4 months unemployed. We don't have a pianist anymore; I can't pay the pianist when all our lessons were with her. So, we work with soundtracks and CDs then. But it's very different because Olga, she follows the rhythm, she stops and starts again with a CD, you have to turn it off and on each time
- As a director, did you feel a psychological impact of Covid-19 on students and/or teachers?
 - Not too much apart from the anguish of my elderly teacher, no. They are all so motivated that whatever happens, we just go ahead and keep going. The anxiety no, we are living in very difficult times because the students have to be masked, they cannot go into the changing rooms, they cannot chat after a lesson, we have to disinfect all the dance bars after each lesson. They can no longer have a cup of coffee together after class. There are restrictions and a joy of sharing which is no longer there but on the other hand, the motivation is still there because we have high level teachers who manage to motivate the students.
With the older students, we have given them private lessons. We told them that the studio is available, that they can come on any day at any time and we pushed them towards online international competitions. So, that is to say that we went on the internet to look for competitions that were taking place today. We individually coached each teenager, who was ready to take part in the competition, during the week, and once the dancer had learned his or her variation, we brought in a cameraman, who, masked, filmed the dancer doing his or her variation. Then we sent the recordings we made by video abroad, so there are competitions that continue to take place. Our children are selected, rewarded, and so we have succeeded, thanks to these competitions, in keeping the dancer motivated. The difference is no longer on stage but on video.
- Have any students dropped out of the Conservatory because of Covid-19?
 - Because of the Covid-19, we have some parents who told me: "Listen, Claudia hasn't been dancing for four months because she's a little demoralised, she realised that she'll never be a prima ballerina" etc, and so we've lost between five and ten percent of our clientele of children who won't come back at the studio. The lockdown eventually made them realise that they were not made for this. And then, it was very difficult to do Zoom meetings, the pupils were not always available at the time of the lesson either. It's important to know that in high-level dance, there is, and we've always known this, a pruning that is done naturally, and this year, Covid-19 was perhaps a pretext for which some students dropped out. There are others, for example, it's because they gained some weight, their body changed, and they realised that it wasn't worth insisting anymore.

It's sad, but it's a reality. We have children who are beautiful when they are eight years old and then when they are fifteen or sixteen, depending on the morphological genes of the parents and heredity, you have girls who start to get big thighs, buttocks, etc. and it is useless to want to push them in international competitions, they will not pass the first minute.

- Have some students been affected by the technological precariousness (no computer to follow the courses online, no internet...?) Have you been able to help them?
 - No, there was no problem for that. Today, we either have children who have a computer for their schooling, or they use their parents' computers.
- In your opinion, were the students and teachers able to reach the objectives previously set for the year 2020 when the courses were given remotely?
 - Not too much. We intended to hold auditions because we have to do them every year to replenish the youngest ones.
- Are the auditions for September via videos then?
 - If the Covid-19 is no longer there or less intense or if the barriers are a little more relaxed, we will not continue only with what we have. We have to constantly produce a turnover, because we are a company, if I don't pay for my studio, I don't have a school anymore. There is a new generation coming with children who are 8 to 12 years old again and who are very motivated and want to dance.
- Did you have to cancel all the performances that were planned?
 - Yes, we haven't had a show this year 2020 and we're not about to have one anytime soon. So, it's a financial loss, yes, but at the same time, organising the show also costs us money. In this situation, we couldn't finance it. The end-of-school-year show, even if there are 300-400 parents in the hall at 25 euros a place, is never profitable with the rental of the theatre, projectors, costumes, technicians, advertising, videos, ... But it stimulates the children in their work. But on the other hand, with one or two lessons a week, how do you want to put on a show? That's not possible. So, for the moment we focus on the daily work and on competitions that we try to find to make the dancers rehearse exercises and to have videos that we send abroad. So, for the moment, it's the only way out we have; it's to give them international visibility and motivation through online competitions.
- But in the end, it's a great opportunity, fortunately there is that don't you think?
 - Totally. On the other hand, I told them: "Look, you don't have to run to Amsterdam for a competition anymore, you don't have to fly to Graz or Monaco, you can do it directly online and send it over the internet. It's another way of living for the moment but I hope that we'll get back to normal.
Last year, we sent a boy and a girl to the competition in Graz, and they had to take a plane, it was 300 euros per person, hotel room, registration, it costed more than 1000 euros for the couple. Now all that has to be done is the video and the editing.

However, if everything is still like that in six months' time, we won't be able to keep up the cost financially and the demotivation by the children will be too great.