



## Dance Mogul Magazine Exclusive Interview

**Dance Mogul:** What sparked your interest in Ballet?

**Olga Aru:** I grew up in quite an artistic family and my perception of the arts was established very early. My great-grandpa was a known sculptor and I was simply fascinated by the variety of shapes I could not even comprehend yet. My grandma was a ballerina for a short period of time right after IIWW. She introduced me to the world of dance, which I am very thankful for. Then as a child, I fell in love with the magical movements of pointe technique in combination with beautiful music from Swan Lake. The breaking moment into the ballet world was my acceptance into the Kiev's State Ballet Academy at age 13. It was extremely selective and hard to get in, and it surely distinguished my future career in the arts. As a mature 13-year-old, I thought, if only 2 kids got in out of 200, I have to become something... Otherwise, I was simply taking that opportunity from somebody else. I had to take that chance, and I think it might have worked!

**Dance Mogul:** Who have been some of your inspirations in the field?

**Olga Aru:** Artists like Baryshnikoff, Lopatkina, Vishneva are still inspiring me but also creative people and artists of all types do. I think the biggest influence of becoming an artist was to be backstage at Kiev National Opera and be drawn into the magic of live performance. The artistic aspect and the technique of the dancers I've seen growing up were so flawless, and I wanted to work harder than anyone to become one of them.

**Dance Mogul:** When was your big break?

**Olga Aru:** From first Bluebird pas de deux I've danced at age 15 to any other role that was accomplished on stage since. It's really hard to specify. As an artist, you put all that you have into preparing for each role, technique, and the dynamics that evolve through the character. As a result, every accomplished role feels like a big break! And you keep wondering what the future holds.

# Olga Aru

## Ballerina - Choreographer

**Dance Mogul:** Tells us about some of your favorite moment's dance has given you?

**Olga Aru:** Every day, just being able to dance and express my self through the motion. Performing in Night Valpurgis as a Dame alongside my best friend and dance partner A.Kozhukhov with full live orchestra at Silesian State Opera. Dancing in the musical production of Tut Ankh Amon on stage at Cairo National Opera house. And from the latest moments - working on evolving through the role as an Evil Queen in the Russian version of a Snow White by T.

Manukovskaya. Meeting amazing and inspiring people from all over the world and dance alongside.

**Dance Mogul:** How are you holding up during the pandemic?

**Olga Aru:** I am just trying to chase through it... Some days are harder than others. Trying to find new ways of expressing myself in the digital world and continue growing. At the beginning of this situation, it resembled a lot of what I had experienced in Egypt during the Arab Spring Revolution... With curfew, restrictions, gunfights, shortages in

supplies and so much more happening and changing by the hour. It was really scary, and if not for the locals, not sure how I would make it safely otherwise. The bottom line, we all should be more appreciative of our health and the peace around us... During the pandemic, dance company I worked for locally went off-season prematurely. It left us partially separated from the dance community and environment we were used to on a daily basis. Since then I started working on new choreography for new ballet creation.



Trying to stay positive and in shape - consistently streaming IG live workouts concentrating on separate groups of muscles you can work on from home. Honestly, you don't have to buy an expensive gym subscription to stay fit and there is so much you can accomplish from home especially in a fitness routine. It's been fun to share some good vibes with the crowd and shake the stress off our shoulders. We all need that now. I also have been happy to continue sharing my knowledge with the students at CityDance. Their team and direction have been very supportive dance community in this tough time, which I'm really thankful for. It's been absolutely new to everyone and amazes me how things switched to online learning so successfully.

**Dance Mogul:** What are some ways dancers can still be progressive with no real timetable to return back to stage work?

**Olga Aru:** It's important to establish a routine and find new safe spaces you can feel free in. From the counter-top in your kitchen - to the forest or the field nearby. Think creatively and out of the box, we sort of have to now... Even without an audience, nothing should stop you from dancing. We are in this together, so it's crucial to support one another within your dance community. And yes, it is hard! It might even get harder before it gets better. Performing arts are heavily affected by Covid-19. But for us dancers, we are tough too! If injuries can't stop us, nothing else can. We will return back on stage even stronger with more feelings to express and share with the audience... This is only temporary... We will be back, and

soon. Until then... Keeping your body in shape while keeping mind off the matter, even for a short amount of time... From learning a new variation that you always wanted to dance, to creating a new dance of your own! Think creatively and outside the box. You can be studying the human body to prevent future injuries, ways to improve your work, ways of documenting the dance, yoga. Taking live classes taught by dancers from all over the world. Improving the core work, working on breathing, extensions, the list goes on. Simply reading the new book or trying out a new smoothie recipe!

**Dance Mogul:** What advice do you have for up and coming Ballerinas?

**Olga Aru:** First - listen to your teachers! Keep consistency in improving your work. Just to want something is never going to be enough. You need to breathe it, live it, and dream it, to make it happen! Our job as professional dancers and athletes does not accept any miracles. It's a craft and a precise one. The more time you invest in the studio polishing that step, you get rewarded by doing it flawlessly at your first big show. No miracles. Science, craft, and artistry in its pure form. And the last piece of advice is not to forget that the art of ballet is more than just the technique. It's beautiful storytelling, so let's not be afraid to live through our characters and keep evolving and learning from them. In addition to the above - never underestimate your value when joining a professional company.

**Dance Mogul:** How will you proceed moving forward as an artist?

**Olga Aru:** True art reflects reality, so

I am not afraid to create during this time reflecting how many of us might feel at the moment. Someday this will be a time in history, so let's not stop creating. I feel that isolation, ironically, helped me realize that it's time to move on and produce more as an independent artist. In the past 12 years, I have traveled and worked in more than five countries. Dancing mainly in the classical repertoire as a demi-soloist and then as a first soloist/principal dancer. I have achieved a lot as a performer and now would like to challenge myself to see what the future holds. Yesterday we finished recording "Isolated in Motion" with JEP Film. The dance dedicated to emotions and feelings the one might experience and live through at this time. Working on a new project called "Digital Requiem" which will bring a few dancers from several countries and unite them in a modern dance "digitally" for now... It's a heavy and emotional dance and is just about to reflect the time we're living in. And, of course, Mozart's Requiem is an inspiring and infinite masterpiece. There are few other exciting collaborations with known European composers I have been working on so far. I think bringing them together when studios are open will be my next step aside from my performing career.

**Dance Mogul:** Is there anyone you would like to thank for helping you on your journey?

**Olga Aru:** My mom Svitlana for supporting and encouraging in every chapter of my life. My mentor V. Potapova for giving me the artistic knowledge and making me believe in my strength as a dancer and person. All my close friends for always being there for me!