**Theatre on Ice**

**International Coordination Group meeting**

**(via Zoom, May 16th)**

*Decisions made*

**Participants:** Jan Gardner (Australia), Bob Horen, Lauren Whittaker and Eric Hampton (USA), Mélanie Lambert (representing Cédric Melay for France), JC. Berlot (secretary).

The meeting was organized to decide the sets of CE axes for the two upcoming seasons.

1. **Decision of CE axes for 2022-23 and 2023-24.**

The four proposals made in the meeting were excellent, with three obviously congruent axes in each proposal. This quality is encouraging, as it validates the participative process that was put in place to involve the choreographers.

The discussion led to the following decision:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Theme** | **Choreographic process** | **Gesture** |
| 2022-23 | Nature | Call and response | Rotational movement |
| 2023-24 | Street art | Contrast | Release |

Two more sets of axes were proposed:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Freedom | Cascade | Round movement |
| Jazz | Counterpoint | Asymmetrical movement |

The decision was made considering:

* The CP and gesture types that have not been explored in the history of CE
* The context in which these 3 axes will be interpreted. TOI teams need to re-engage after these last two years of pandemic (some teams in the US, for instance, have not been able to resume training other than virtually)
* The universality of understanding of “Nature”, the theme selected for next year. It should be understandable to every team of every country, hence remaining in every team’s comfort zone. At the same time, “nature” appears as more neutral in the international current context
* The possibility to be interpreted by all levels, not limiting the elite teams and pushing the younger ones upward at the same time
* The decision for 2023-24 was made already so that teams have ample time to prepare a theme that should promote a more vibrant energy (after the more organic choice of 2022-23).
1. **Nature, call & response, rotational movement: first rationale**

The committee, in consideration of possible variability in training/competing over the past few seasons, selected these axes because of the potential for teams of all levels to have a greater understanding of the concept, as well as for ease of accessibility in terms of the process and gesture.

The broad theme of 'Nature' is universal through our understanding that we are all connected.  And from this shared experience, the relational aspect of 'Call & Response' was chosen as the process.  While the gesture, 'Rotational movement' was selected to help demonstrate the organic movement patterns found within the natural world.

1. **Street art, contrast, release: first rationale**

The theme selected for the 2023-24 season is a style. “Street art” widens the style chosen as the Rhythm Dance for the 2022 season in ice dance (Street dance), in order to increase the diversity of potential propositions.

The choreographic process of Contrast (“Different opposing choreographic sequences happening at the same time”) offers the possibility to investigate the variety of levels and activities offered by street art.

The Release gesture ("Loose movement of the body that has a relaxed liquid energy (A release from held muscular tension in the flow of movement)”) can be envisioned through the movement of an arm in tennis, for instance: the movement is precise before hitting the ball, and the arm keeps its natural movement in a less precise way and loses itself through space. Release gesture is present in street art, just like precise movements are.

The meeting planned during next Nations’Cup might be considered as a launching pad for this set. It could allow for a more thorough presentation of it, providing (or coming up with) different examples.

1. **Next stages**
* Each member of the coordination group **informs the choreographers and coaches** of her/his country in the best suited way.
* The discussions in Boston will then focus on selecting the 2024-25 set of axes.

Several other points were discussed as well:

* Each country **promotes the upcoming Nations’ Cup** in Boston, April 19th to 22nd (April 19th: practice and meetings, April 20-22 competitions).

The goal is to have **teams from different countries represented,** as Nations’Cup remains **an inter-club competition**. Asian countries being still closed by the pandemics, we need to promote Nations’Cup toward the teams of Mexico and European countries. Some teams from Spain, Germany and Italy have participated in competitions in France these last years, and the Netherlands might be accessible as well.

* The involvement of choreographers into the TOI choreographic process remains at stake: how is it possible to make them feel that they are a (most important and even key-) part of it? Many, in the U.S. particularly, seem to be in a “tell us what to do / what you expect” type of reaction.
	+ Should they be asked to propose additions to the Choreographic Dictionary?
	+ How, at the same time, should the Committee push the direction where it wants to focus their attention (with the right flexibility)?
* The Choreographic Committee, which bears the responsibility of making the Dictionary evolve, might also be valued in the selection process:
	+ It might review the proposals made by the countries and analyze them (consistency with the Dictionary, potential congruence of the 3 axes, potential of creation and development for the teams, etc.), and then present their choices to the Coordination Group, just like Eric did (in a much expert and appreciated way) in today’s meeting.
	+ Such a process would of course be possible only if it’s practical enough (meeting logistics) and if it takes place in an ongoing conversation between the Choreographic Committee members.

Such an evolution of the selection process for the CE set may be discussed at next Nations’Cup.