

## In The Wings

### Q & A with NYIBC Alumni Olga Malinovskaya and Artjom Maksakov



Olga Malinovskaya and Artjom Maksakov - NYIBC 2009  
Photo: Whitney Browne

**Olga Malinovskaya (NYIBC Alumna 2009) and Artjom Maksakov (NYIBC Alumnus 2007/2009) have been invited to join Boston Ballet!**

**In this interview, they share how their careers have evolved.  
Enjoy!**

**What first motivated you to dance and when did you realize you wanted to be a dancer?**



**Olga:** In my childhood I always danced: folk dance, a little bit of ballet and modern dance. I saw a movie about the Ballet Academy in which I became enamored with the art form. Rigorous training at a ballet school seemed mysterious and romantic to me. I entered the Moscow Ballet Academy and discovered ballet is much more challenging and rewarding than portrayed in the movies.



**Artjom:** My parents were my motivation. It was their idea to have me dance. During my first *pas* in regular school, my teacher noticed my talent and told my parents I should pursue ballet. When I was 10 years old, I went to Tallinn Ballet School and after a year of training I fell in love with ballet. The school was like a family with everyone knowing one another, working and studying together to achieve our goals. I always did well on my ballet exams and during my time there I discovered that ballet was my life. I watched all of the performances in the theatre and by that time everyone in the company knew me.

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What specific experiences or people have helped you in your quest to discover your artistic voice and become the dancer you are today? What is your favorite lesson thus far? The "one" you keep reminding yourself of.



**Olga:** Every person has memories of people they've known, places they've visited and books they've read. All that happens to a person in life leaves a stamp on them, which is why it is impossible for me to identify one person who has influenced me. But maybe... my mother! She is a very special person in my life. I also cannot say that I have one specific lesson that stands out in my memory. I am happy to say that I have learned from all of my experiences.



**Artjom:** As I said, at first I received the most help from my parents. Later on of course, my teachers in school and theatre helped me a great deal. They were all wonderful people, dancers and teachers. Something that my teachers have taught me, which I think about every day, is that I need to love what I am doing. I need to work very hard to succeed and understand what I want to achieve in my life and where I want to be. There is always room for improvement. No limit to perfection!



Photos: Courtesy of Olga Malinovskaya and Artjom Maksakov

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Chemistry between dancers is vital for a memorable *pas de deux* performance. What have you done to "make magic" with a partner if there is not an inherent spark? How do you make your performance a success in this scenario?



**Olga:** We are artists so we must imagine we love our partner even if this is not the case in real life. That is professionalism. However, it is a magical and wonderful thing if you are able to love your partner.



**Artjom:** When I am onstage most of the time I am not Artjom Maksakov. I am someone else: Romeo, Albrecht, Desire, Siegfried, etc. These characters have feelings which I must develop to perform the role well. Of course it is much better to dance with someone you love. I have been fortunate to dance with the girl I love in Estonia, but not in every role.

How did participating in NYIBC impact you as a professional artist? What do you cherish most about your experience at NYIBC?



**Olga:** NYIBC was a great challenge: a new language, a new continent, new people and a new way of working. Everything was new for me! After the 2009 competition I met with Mikko Nissinen, Artistic Director of the Boston Ballet. At that point in time I was too inexperienced and too young to leave my home. Since then Mr. Nissinen has followed our careers, which was very kind of him.



**Artjom:** NYIBC was a great experience and outlet to make new friends. I am very thankful that I have had the chance to be part of this competition twice, in 2007 and 2009. If I wasn't too old for NYIBC I would love to compete again! NYIBC was three weeks of fun and joy each year I competed.

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**What professional developments have you had in your career since training and performing in NYIBC 2007/2009?**



**Olga:** Sergei Danilian noticed me at the competition and asked me to be a member of his project *Reflections*. This was a wonderful opportunity for me to dance with stars from the Bolshoi Ballet, San Francisco Ballet and Berlin Ballet.



**Artjom:** After the first competition in 2007 I was invited to join Dutch National Ballet (Het Nationale Ballet). After my second time competing in 2009, I received an offer from Boston Ballet.

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**Congratulations on joining Boston Ballet this summer! How did you receive this invitation?**



**Artjom:** Thank you so much. I met the director of Boston Ballet after the competition in 2009. In the end of our conversation he offered me a contract for the *corps de ballet*. He only had one contract available and since I wanted to come with my partner and girlfriend I declined. After two years I wrote to him and he invited both of us to join Boston Ballet as members of the *corps*. This will be an interesting experience since I have been a *Principal Dancer* and now I have to start from the beginning.

**You will be traveling far from home to become a member of Boston Ballet. How do you feel about making the US your home?**



**Olga:** I am excited to join Boston Ballet! I love to travel and explore new places. Boston Ballet is a strong, reputable company, which I am honored to join. I will do my best to become a great dancer for the company. I've been to the US four times and have always enjoyed visiting. I think that everything will be new and exciting and I won't have time to be homesick.



**Artjom:** Boston Ballet is a great company with great dancers and I am willing to do anything to be part of it. I have always loved visiting the US and I will also love living there. This season I encountered a lot of positive changes. I'm looking forward to joining Boston Ballet and sincerely hope that Mikko Nissinen will be happy with us. We will do our best!

**Thank you Olga and Artjom!**

**Merde! for this wonderful new adventure.**

**We look forward to seeing you dance in Boston.**