

Evgenia Kanaeva: Everything I did, I did it with love for people

Exclusive interview from Zhenya Kanaeva Gymnasium

Questions by Alyona, catts, Ekaterina, Fanny and Zoe. Special thanks to Fanny, she wrote most of the questions

English translated by Ekaterina, Many Many Thanks!!!

-Zhenya, it's truly a privilege to communicate with you. First could you update us with what you've been doing recently? For example, invitation for gala, speaking engagements and commercial contracts?

-At the present time, I am attending to my family and my health. There have been invitations to competitions, and I've had a chance to attend some of them. I was also invited to a gala, but I had not been training for a long time, plus my injury keeps reminding of itself, and it is my position that one should be in a good shape to perform at such shows. For this reason, I am not performing. There have not been any commercial contract offers recently.

About Olympics

-Olympics is now months behind. Do you still remember what were on your mind the moment when your Chopin ribbon ended?

-I knew it was my last routine... And was happy that I had successfully done everything; and I succeeded in also thanks to the support of the audience, it is a powerful energy.

-Did you muse on this victory in the morning after? How did it feel?

-I was both happy and sad. Happy because I had not let my mentors and everyone who believed in me down; and sad because everything was over ...

About music

-I would like to ask you about your club music "Poeta". I noticed that the version you used isn't from the original album, but a remixed version produced by M.Rodriguez specifically for Swiss figure skater Stephane Lambiel. It was used in one of Lambiel's signature-programs for men's figure skating. Have you seen this program before? What is your comment on his performance? As a female athlete, how is it for you to interpret a masculine, bold music like this piece?

-I consider Lambiel a very talented figure skater with astonishing programs. I can only evaluate him as a spectator; I am not an expert in figure skating. His

programs are always very spectacular. I do not consider that music too masculine for a girl, it is very expressive, and I like performing with it. In general, Rodriquez is one of my most favorite composers, as you may have noticed.

Behind the scene

-You amaze people not only with difficulties and innovations, but also with remarkable stability while delivering them. How did you come up with such accurate and stable execution? Just hard work?—I believe your fellow competitors, as well as many youngsters, would be eager to know your secret because likewise they all work extremely hard in training but can't seem to reach the same level.

-Hard work is of course most important, but one needs to be smart and knowledgeable about how they work. And, of course, discipline is extremely important.

-When you, your coach together with other training staff create a new element, how do you all find out whether it's suitable for competitions?

-At first together with the choreographer and coach, we try this or that element to see how it fits together with other elements and music. After that, the Head coach makes her evaluations and makes necessary changes. We also look at how consistently I can perform this element. Overall, it is quite a thorough process when we start working on new routines. It takes a lot of time to polish them.

-Throughout your career, which period would you consider the most progressive (ie. the time when the biggest progress made)?

-I hope I managed to make progress every year. In any case, it was my goal and I worked for it. And I am not the one to evaluate this.

-There's a Pantene commercial about a little girl starting her RG career after watching you on TV. One interesting plot is that the girl was framed by her competitor and she fought back with an epic win. However, we all know in reality it's not that simple and easy. Are you aware that there are ruling people in RG who can pose hindrance to a gymnast's path? Can you suggest a more practical way for young gymnasts to protect themselves from such things?

-One should stay above that, follow their path and do what they love, without obsessing over external intrigues. It is not worth thinking about it. What matters is to do your job with full strength and love, put one's soul into it.

About the new Code of Points (COP) and others

-They have been revising the COP again. What is your opinion on the use of music with lyrics? If you were selected to take part in writing the new COP for the next few years, what changes would you suggest?

-Music with lyrics is awesome and interesting, I like it. I think it will diversify musical pieces used. As for the code, I think it is necessary to introduce elements of various types into routines and not stick to a certain set of elements belonging to a certain type of gymnastics. Professional gymnast should be able to do everything: difficult leaps and balances, etc. There should be more diversity, and preferably points should be given for complex fine apparatus work and for risky elements.

-We know for ballet and figure skating, male dancers and skaters need to perform with both strength and elegance. I would like to ask you about men's RG, what is the potential of its development?

-At this time, I am going to refrain from answering this question.

- Which is your favourite leotard?

-Hoop 2008 and clubs 2012 leotards. In general, I love all leotards created for me by Marina Gogua and her team. They put their soul into each of these leotards. Thank you so much to her and her assistants!

Off the carpet

- After reading a lot of your interviews, we know you are very interested in language. You mentioned that in the future you would like to learn English, Spanish, French and so on. Are you interested in learning Chinese as well?

-For starters, I should master English at least. I think Chinese would be very difficult to learn. It is a very difficult language.

- What is your biggest fear in life, if any?

-Lose my loved ones.

- When actresses/actors need to cry, they nurture the emotion by remembering of something sad. What would you think of if you need to cry and to laugh?

-I don't even know... I am such a person: I express what I feel.

- If you had a free ticket to visit any country in the world, which one would you like to go?

-New Zealand, Brazil and Australia. I have not been in any of these countries.

- Russia is a big country. If you have friends from overseas coming to visit Russia as tourists, what places would you take them to and why?

-Probably, sightseeing in Moscow, Sankt-Petersburg and my hometown Omsk. I would take them to Bolshoi Theater, Red Square, Vorobyov Hills, Moscow parks. In Petersburg, that would be Spas on Blood, Hermitage, Palace Square. In Omsk: Irtysh riverfront, Uspenski Sobor, and of course, our new center for gymnastics.

- If you have to make a present for a RG fan, what would you give?

-Something symbolic, heart-shaped ☺

And after

- Down the years you have had experience of being trained by a few well-known RG coaches. What qualities would you consider the most important for a RG coach? Do you think you have possessed these qualities? Would you ever consider becoming a RG coach?

-Patience, understanding, humanity, love for their craft and students, and above all, faith. At this point, I cannot say anything about myself as a coach.

-What would you like people to remember the most for Evgenia Kanaeva?

-Everything I did, I did it with love for people...

Zhenya, thank you very much for taking the time to do this e-mail interview with ZKG. We wish you an abundant life for the future. Every blessing.

Thank you too, guys! I also wish you the best of everything, lots of joy and happy moments!

I would like to use this chance to say thank you to those who have supported me, put part of their souls into the victory, and not only this victory but all previous ones. I am forever grateful to my mentor Vera Efremovna Stelbaums, head coach of the national team – Irina Aleksnadrovna Viner, her husband – Alisher Burkhanovich for his strong support of rhythmic gymnastics, my stage director – Irina Borisovna Zenovka, choreographers, doctors, massage therapists of the national team and to everyone who contributed part of their soul into the victory. I also would like to thank my first coach – Elena Arais, Amina Zaripova and Natalya Kukushkina, who trained me in Moscow Center of Olympic Training. Thank you so much to everyone! Without these people, I could not have

accomplished what I have. Thank you to my friends and family, my husband to be – Igor for his love and support. It is great happiness to be loved. And big thanks to you, my fans! Special thanks to 3oe (note: Zoe in Russian ☺), as we call her, who came to London from Taiwan to support me and root for our national team. I could always feel the support from my loved ones and even from people I don't know... But this year, this support has been especially strong. It was our victory!

