

# Local Dancer Takes Top Prize At Provincial Festival

RYAN LUX  
STAFF WRITER

A three-year dream came true for a local dancer, Keily Stewart, following a big win at the Provincial Festival of Performing Arts last week.

Keily started competing at Provincials three years ago and this year, she not only qualified for finals, but took the festival's top prize with her jazz solo "Bang, She Shot Me."

The talented dancer is only 12-years-old, but possesses a work ethic and focus that belies her young age. She has been attending workshops, dance conventions and summer schools for years, all in pursuit of becoming B.C.'s top dancer for her age category.

"I felt like I had a good chance because I was the oldest in my age group and I've been competing at that level for three years now, but even so it's a great honour even to go to Provincials, let alone get into the top three and win," said Keily.

Always thinking ahead, Keily noted that her win is significant – if she decides to pursue dancing professionally, it will look good on her resume.

Her provincial win wasn't Keily's first major dance achievement. Last summer she attended the Royal Winnipeg Ballet Professional Division Summer School. Following what was essentially a month-long audition, the ballet invited Keily to return for the Fall/Winter Professional Program.

"It was such a great experience and I became such a better dancer, even my learning quality got better," she recalled.

However, Keily that said at 11-years-old, she just wasn't ready to leave home.

"I wanted to go very badly and I really wish my family, friends and my animals were all in Winnipeg – so that was the thing holding me back," Keily said, "I just felt like it was too early to be living on my own. I still need my parents around for advice."

While Keily says she loves all dance styles, including jazz and freestyle, she explained she's been focusing lately on ballet – a style for which she's gaining a better appreciation.

"Everyone says, and it's been proved lots, that you need ballet to be good at jazz. I didn't like ballet as much before but since then it's taught me so much," said Keily.

For the naysayers who may claim ballet is a "sissy sport," Keily said they should try it.

"For sure lots of them might say ballet isn't hard but obviously they haven't ever tried. I'll tell you it's really hard to get good at," said Keily.

Moving forward, Keily said she hasn't decided whether or not ballet and dance are her definite future.

"I still don't know what I want to do when I'm older because I still have a lot of choices and I have a while yet to choose anything," she pointed out.

In the near future, Keily said she wants to work on having a good time on the dance floor.

"Sometimes I get so caught up in practicing all the time that I forget to have a good time and be happy with the outcome no matter what. Dance isn't just about technique and work, it's about enjoying every moment of your performance," she explained.

Keily will be traveling to Winnipeg again this summer to study once again at the Royal Winnipeg Ballet where she hopes to continue honing her technique and improve her already impressive skill.



Submitted Photos

**Kelly Stewart won the top prize at Provincials last week, just the latest milestone in her already promising dancing career.**

# Dance camp broadens knowledge

**DAN CHALCRAFT**  
*Sports Writer*

Students of the Northern Dance Theatre are getting exposure to a variety of teaching methods from guest dance instructors, each knowledgeable in different styles.

The dance camp started on Aug. 15 and runs to Aug. 26, and marks the beginning of their competitive dance season.

Shauna Milne, owner/director of Studio 2 Stage, explained that they bring up dance teachers from places such as Texas, Vancouver, B.C. and Edmonton, Alberta because it introduces the dancers to different teachers' styles.

It will also have students performing a variety of different dance disciplines, where they could be dancing from three to eight hours a day.

"We are trying to broaden their knowledge in tap, jazz, ballet, contemporary and other styles," said Milne. "Some of these dancers are wanting to pursue dance after they graduate high school and the exposure to the different teachers helps that."

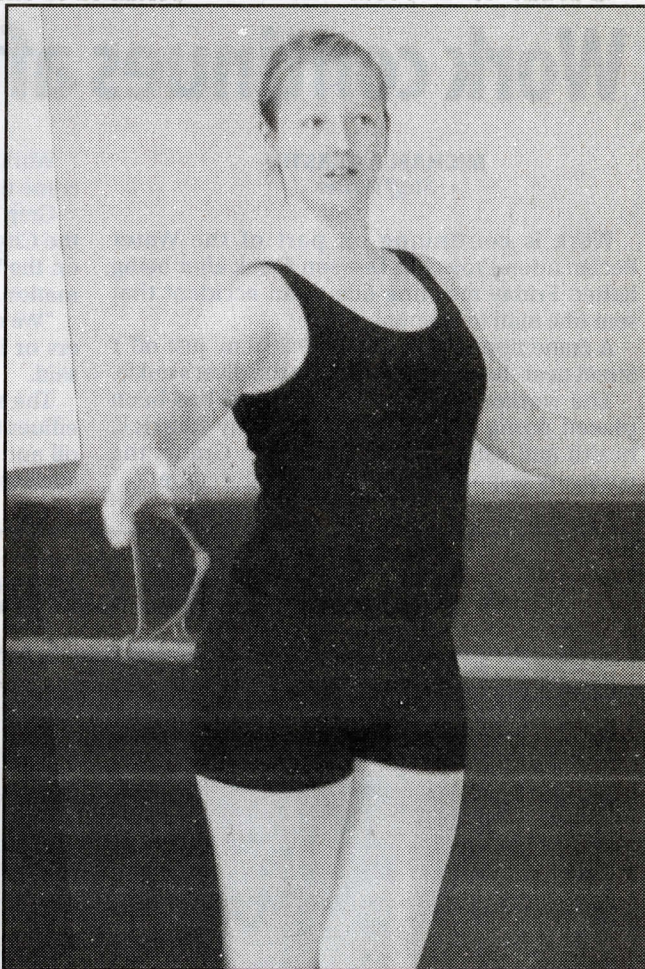
One of the several dance teachers that are working with the students over the two-week period is Sally Ogden, a guest dance instructor from Edmonton, Alberta.

"My focus as a teacher is to help them find their centre of balance and also to help them improve their technique," said Ogden. "I hope to be able to give them the same corrections their regular dance teacher does so they hear them in a new way that may make it stick with them."

As the dancers move into the second week they seem to feel they are constantly learning.

Hayley Popwell, 13, said, "I will take away different techniques that the others teachers have taught us, such as not moving our hips when we are dancing, like stretching our feet when we dance, and keeping our posture straight when we are dancing and arms straight". Other dancers, such as Mariah Boot, 13, feels that looking up and keeping her posture will help her further in dance and dance competitions, whereas, Tamara Loewen says,

"I am learning how to use my core better since when I'm balancing. It helps me in my dance placements and where you point your feet will help me in my dance and dance competitions."



AUG. 24, 2011

DAN CHALCRAFT PHOTO

Shianne Fairlie is trying to keep her balance and maintain good posture while performing a ballet move on Aug. 22. It was the second week of dance camp for the students where they are getting guest instruction from out of town dance teachers at Studio 2 Stage.

# Local dancer accepted to National Ballet School

**BRIANNE ZWAMBAG**  
*Staff Writer*

Fort St. John's impressive roster of athletes has one more name to be added as one of the city's dancers has been accepted to the prestigious Canada's National Ballet School in Toronto for their summer school program in July.

Keily Stewart, a 13-year old dancer from Fort St. John who has trained in multiple dance styles, was one of 150 dancers selected from national and international auditions to participate in the summer school offered by Canada's National Ballet School in Toronto this coming July.

"I am really looking forward to the experience and I'm excited to get to know the different styles out there,"

she said.

The acceptance came after Stewart and her mom found the audition opportunity in a dance magazine some months ago. Since they were going to be in Edmonton, where the auditions were being held that weekend anyways, Stewart decided it was a perfect opportunity for her.

"I went to a workshop, and there were two judges there and a dance teacher. She taught us all the bar exercises and centre exercises and exercises going across the floor, and we just performed them as good as we could and it was up to the judges from there," said Stewart.

Stewart must have made an impression because she was selected from over 1,000 applicants in 20

cities to join the program.

Talent is the sole criterion for acceptance, according to Canada's National Ballet School. Dancers who have trained here have gone on to perform in dance companies across the World including The National Ballet of Canada, American Ballet Theatre, Boston Ballet, the Stuttgart Ballet and London's Royal Ballet.

This honor is one that has been 13 years in the making, as Keily began her first dance classes only a month after she could walk.

"I take dance lessons at the Move Studio, and I take the company classes," said Stewart. "Other dancers have motivated me to want to be a dancer, and once I started I just really enjoyed it."

•SEE DANCE ON A5



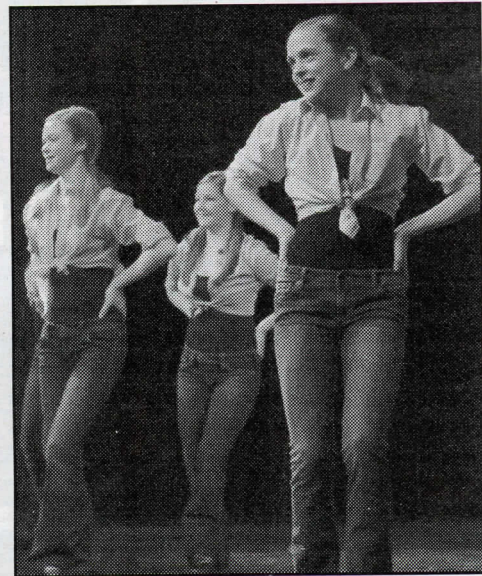
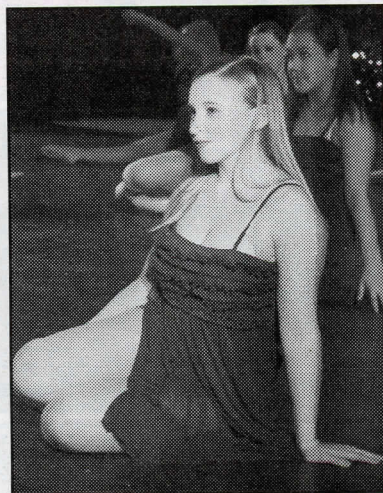
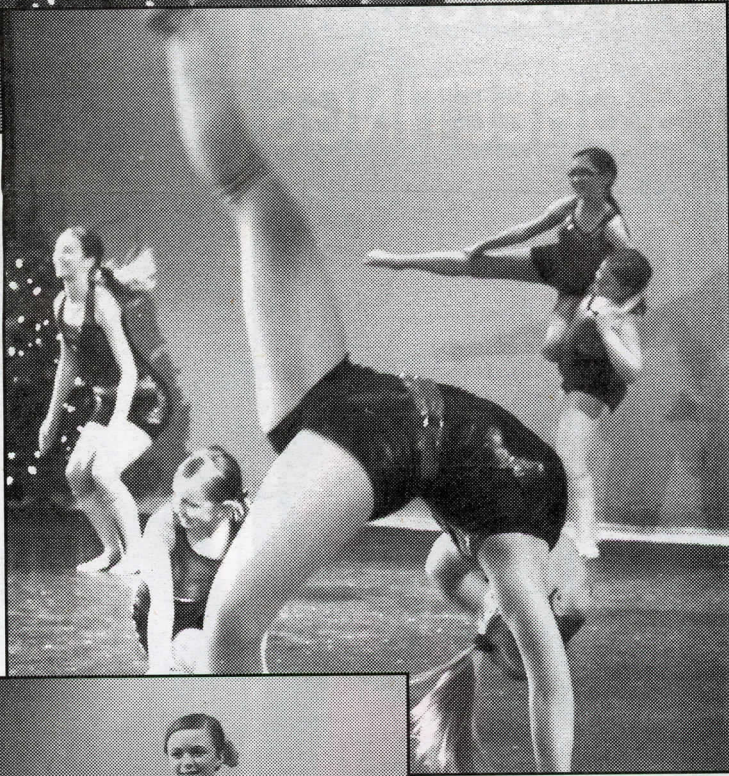
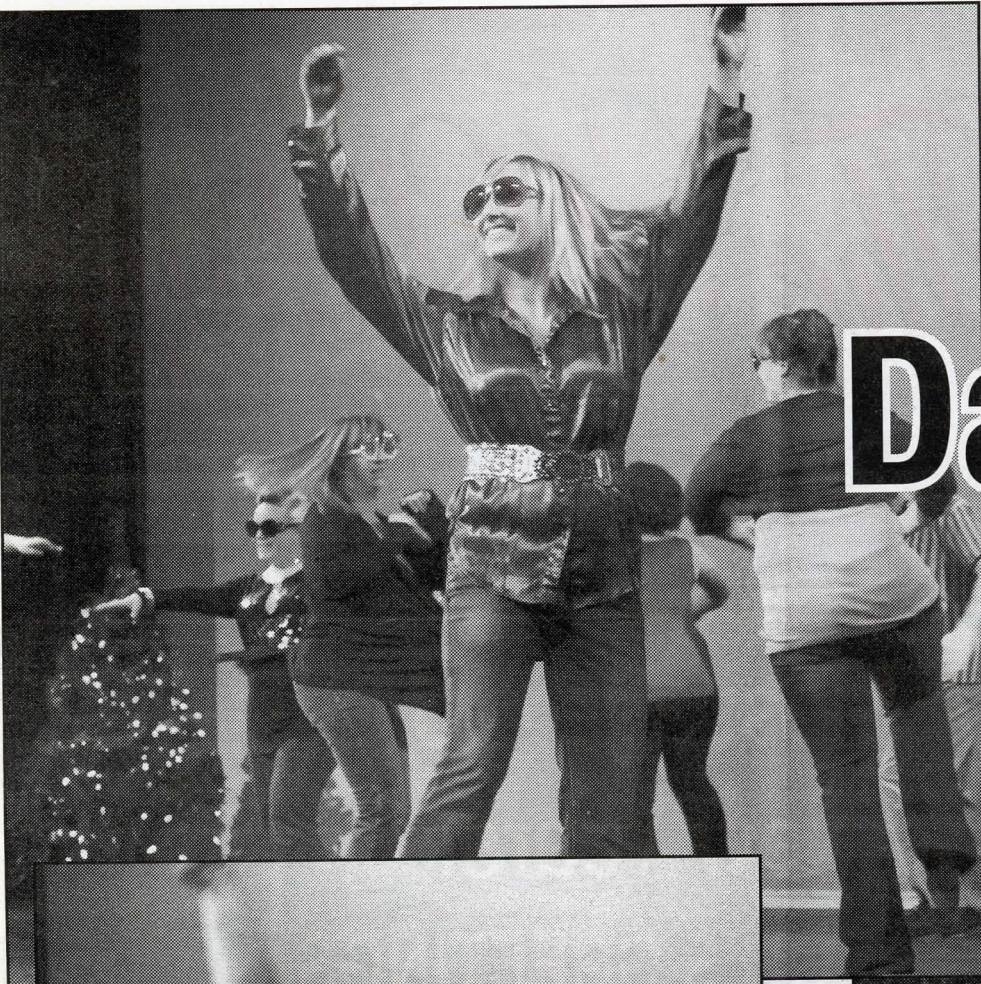
SUBMITTED PHOTO

Thirteen year old Keily Stewart has been accepted to Canada's National Ballet School. She will attend the summer school program in July 2012.

Dec 30, 2011

# Just Dance

Kirstyn Kerr Photos





Submitted photo

*The pre-junior, junior, intermediate and advanced dancers from Fort St. John's Move Dance Centre Society. The girls are dressed for their large group tap number "Can Can" at the Quesnel Festival of the Performing Arts from March 8 to 11, 2012. A number of the girls also received scholarships.*

# Local dancers win big at year-end competition

**KATIE MAXIMICK**  
*Sports Writer*

Hundreds of dancers came together in Grande Prairie last weekend to compete in the Standing Ovation Dance Festival, but for a much smaller group of six from Fort St. John, the weekend meant so much more than a year-end event.

Close to 40 dancers from Studio 2 Stage Dance Academy travelled to Alberta for the annual festival Apr. 25-29, and many of them returned home with medals and awards for their solo and group performances.

Dance studios from all over northern Alberta and B.C. competed in the festival, but it was the small city of Fort St. John that stood out in terms of excellence.

"[The event] has been very competitive in the last few years, but I think this year was probably one of our best," said Shawna Milner, owner of Studio 2 Stage Dance Academy. "The girl excelled."

For half a dozen of the local dance troupe, this was their last year dancing together, which made the final competition of the year that much more meaningful.

"I have six students graduating. In the end all of them were recognized with some sort of an award," Milne said. "I was super proud of my graduating students."

One of those girls is seventeen-year-old Rebecca Reed. Her drive and accomplishments in Grande Prairie over the weekend literally brought Milne to tears when she was asked which dancer progressed the most.

"Rebecca Reed has danced with me for several years now," Milne said. "Her only goal was to get a gold this year, and she ended up getting gold in all of

her solos... She ended up with most promising and most outstanding in two of her events."

Reed won gold in jazz, contemporary, tap and variety as well as a silver in lyrical, and platinum in her variety duo with Karleigh Smith. The duo also won most outstanding for that performance, which was the friends' last competitive performance together.

"We've danced together for 13 years so it was fun to wrap up with that," Reed said Tuesday afternoon. "It's very hard because a bunch of us have danced together for a very long time. We have some that joined later, but we're all such a close group that it's going to be difficult."

How Reed exceeded her own expectations in Grande Prairie was all about drive.

"I felt like I wanted it this year," she said.

"Because I'm a graduating student this year I felt like I really wanted it for my last competition to just go out with a bang and show people that I can do it."

Reed plans on returning to Studio 2 Stage next year, but not competitively. She will take some dance classes in the fall, but Grande Prairie was her, and some of her friends', last hurrah in terms of contending.

"The six were able to dance together really well and made me proud," Milne said. "It was a big year for them."

Studio 2 Stage has their season-end recital on May 12 at the Cultural Centre, where the girls will be able to dance together one last time.

"We had a blast," Reed said with a smile. "It was really nice to end the competition season with such a strong festival."

"It's been fun."



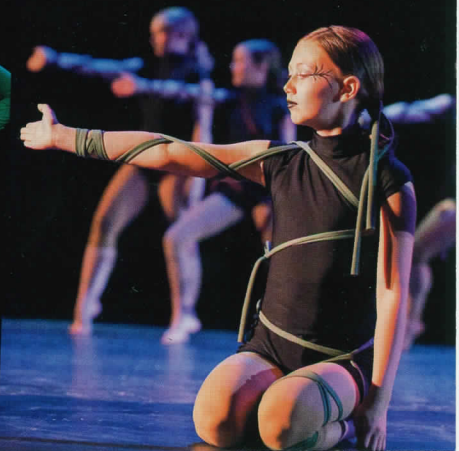
KATIE MAXIMICK PHOTO

Studio 2 Stage Dance Academy's graduating students pose for a photo at the studio on Monday afternoon. From left to right: Shannon May, Karleigh Smith, Amanda Frankhan, Melynda Bergen and Rebecca Reed. Missing is Carly Dick.





Check out all the pix online!  
<http://ow.9b.me/1POTQb>



# peace river north FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

MARGARET MAY

Hundreds of singers, dancers and musicians, along with teachers, families and volunteers converged on the North Peace Cultural Centre the week of April 15th to 22nd for the Peace River North Festival of the Arts, a celebration of performing arts in our community.

For festival volunteers and organizers, we remember again why the festival is so important to us when we see young performers take the stage after months of practice and training, and have their moment in the spotlight. We watch as nervous children transform into polished performers as soon as they take the stage. We see smiles of pride and relief when a performance goes well, a few tears of disappointment when it stumbles, as, inevitably, they sometime do.

We see performers of every size and age, from the little pianist with legs dangling off the piano bench playing in their very first festival, to teenagers who are already seasoned performers amazing us all with their skills; from the tiny tap dancer who was only four years old, to the dad who learned a tap dance so he could perform with his daughter in her last Peace River North Festival. We heard wonderful piano of all styles. We enjoyed our first ever classes in banjo, "good" violin solos that turned into "amazing" after a few minutes with the adjudicator, and classical and popular guitar in the fastest growing division in the festival. We were treated to beautiful singing, rousing band music and a stirring recitation of the Charge of the Light Brigade. Dancers did the physically impossible with grace, beauty and strength.

And then, at the end, "The Best of the Fest", just a sample of the wonderful, talented performers that we saw through the week, who will soon be hard at work, preparing for next year's festival.



# CAL NEWS

Community





**Local**

# **BEST OF THE FEST**

Photos of some of the  
top performers from the  
Festival of the Arts

*APR 25, 2012*  
**See page A3**

# JUST DANCE



DECEMBER 2012

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Company dancers of all ages from the Move Dance Centre attended a contemporary workshop with Josh Beamish. Josh is originally from Kelowna, but now resides in New York. Thanks to the FSJ Dance Society for helping to fund this workshop. As well thanks to FSJ Arts Council and the City of Fort St. John for their grant to support this workshop.

Rhonda Grimes

# The Move

Presents

## Move Dance Recital

Monday, June 4, 2012

6:30 PM

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**NORTH PEACE CULTURAL CENTRE**

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Box Office (250) 785-1992 Fax (250) 785-1510

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**\$14.00**

NPCC Event

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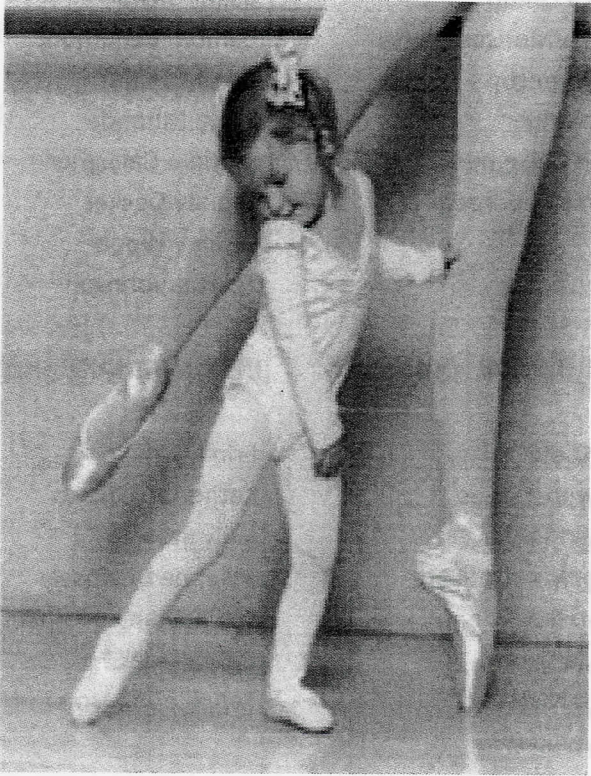
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# THE MOVE DANCE CENTRE



**5<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL DANCE SHOWCASE**

**MONDAY**

**JUNE 4<sup>th</sup> , 2012**

**6:30 PM**