

Busting a move at The Move Dance Centre

ALEISHA HENDRY
Staff Writer

The Move Dance Centre had a busy summer with dancers traveling all over Canada and the U.S. to showcase their skills.

Five Move dancers, Tristen Jackman, Nicole Schoepp, Hillary Gessner, Selena Wiebe, and Alyssa Gessner, got the chance to attend the Triple Threat workshop/competition in Los Angeles. Jackman won third place for her solo jazz performance, while Schoepp earned a gold level for a contemporary solo with Gessner taking a silver level for in lyrical solo. Wiebe attended the workshop as a non-competitor.

"It was incredible," said Schoepp, "We got to meet a lot of famous choreographers that you see on TV."

Those choreographers included Tyce Diorio, Lil' C, and Stacey Tookey from So You Think You Can Dance, as well as others from Dancing With The Stars.

The girls said they worked a lot harder in L.A. than they would at home, dancing

between five and seven hours per day.

"It was challenging," said Jackman.

Other girls involved in the dance studio had the opportunity to attend an array of prestigious dance workshops. Elissa Miranda and Keily Stewart attended the Royal Winnipeg Ballet summer program. Maegan Woodall and Jeannie Norman spent a week at the Harbour Dance Centre in Vancouver, while Shiau Shan Kao-Phan and Milanne Desfosses were at the Goh Ballet Academy, also in Vancouver.

Sonja Beale went to the School of Alberta Ballet in Calgary, and Ashtyn Lockyer attended a summer dance 'intensive' in Grande Prairie winning a scholarship.

The Move dancers are winding down their summer workshop on technique and choreography, trying out different dance styles they wouldn't normally have the chance to do. The dancers focus on jazz and ballet, but with these workshops, where guest choreographers Amy Gardner of Montreal, Rock Mejia

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of Calgary and Stephen Agisilaou of Melbourne, Australia were brought in, they get to try their hand at hip-hop and other styles.

Gardner herself was a competitor on So You Think You Can Dance Canada, while Agisilaou is the director of Vertical Shadows dance company in Australia.

Jackman, Schoepp and Gessner all agree that this workshop was just as grueling as L.A.

Mother of a dancer and long-time supporter of dance in the community, Arla Jackman,

said it says a lot about the dance community in Fort St. John that these girls were selected to go to this level of workshops and competitions.

"These kids are really dedicated to dance, the dance community is a very small community, but it's a very large community at the same time," she said. "You can't get this quality of dance in one small area, a lot of these kids travel so far even out of the country to go enhance their learning for the fine arts."

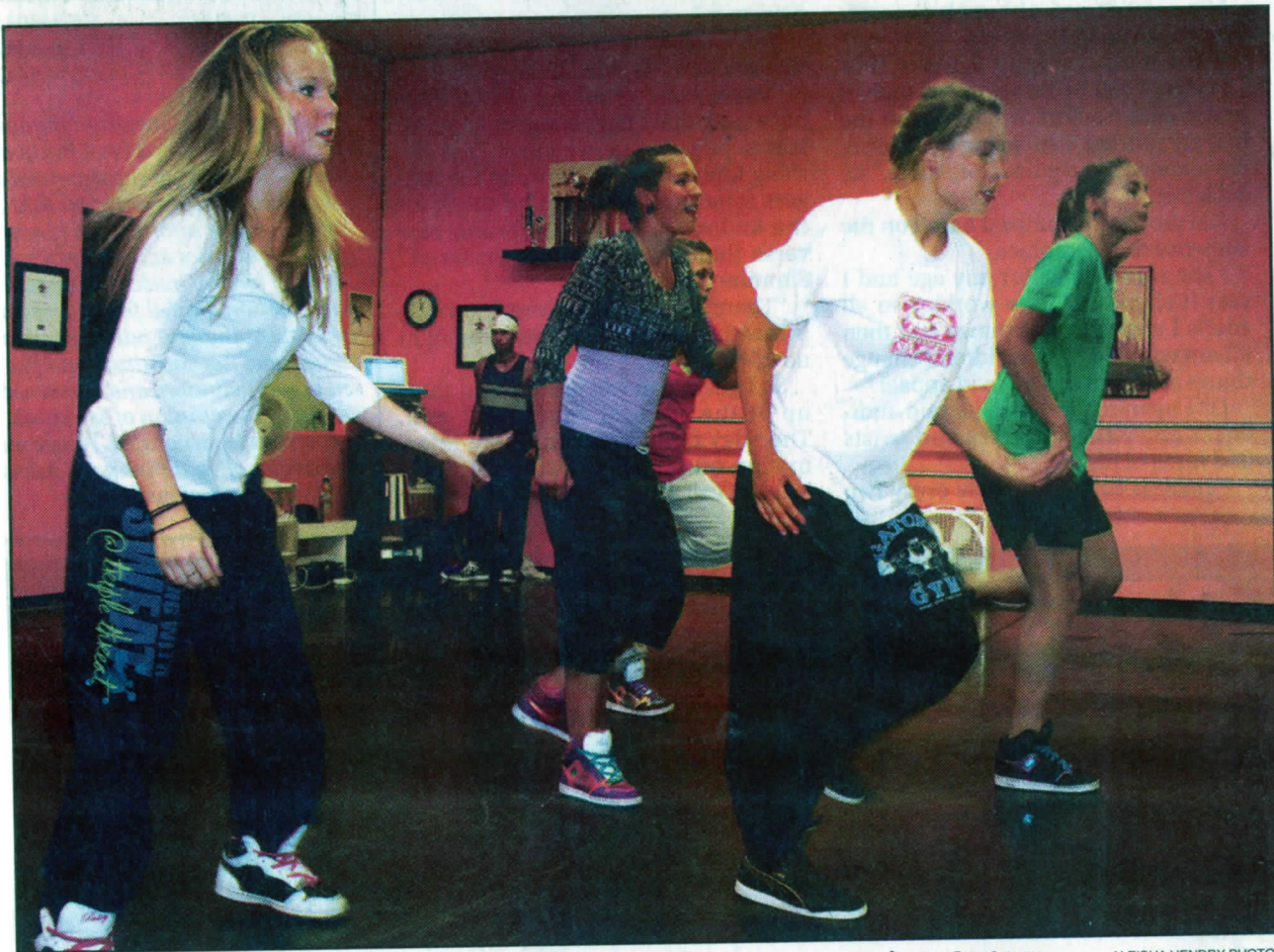
NEWS



ALEISHA HENDRY PHOTO

Participants in The Move Dance Centre's summer workshop of technique and choreography pose with guest instructors Rock Mejia, Amy Gardner and Stephen Agisilaou.

BUST A MOVE



AUG 31, 2010

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(L-R) Tristen Jackman, Nicole Schoepp, Ashtyn Lockyer, Jeannie Norman and Hillary Gessner run through a hip-hop routine during The Move Dance Centre's summer workshop of technique and choreography last week. See full story on A3.

Local dancers heading to Ro

KELLY LAPOINTE

STAFF WRITER

Two local 11 year olds will get the chance of a lifetime this summer and attend the Royal Winnipeg Ballet Professional Division Summer Session.

Keily Stewart and Eliissa Miranda will spend four weeks surrounded by some of the best instructors and dancers in the world in what serves as an intensive audition period for the full-time Ballet Academic Program.

Both girls said they are both very excited and nervous to attend a school that's so far across the country.

"One, it'd be cool and second, it can improve my skills," said Miranda.

Stewart said she would like to attend the school if she does get accepted for the full year program, but wouldn't do it until she was a little older.

She said she has fun dancing.

"I feel like I own the stage. I want to dance even more when I do it," she said. "I'm nervous at first because I'm in front of people, but then, after you're done, you want to go back and do it again."

Stewart has danced every year she's

been alive and Miranda took it up when she was four and began doing it competitively when she was five.

"I don't really know what makes me keep going, I just do," said Stewart. "My body just loves dancing. I think it moves to music better than if I did soccer or something, I wouldn't do too well because I'm graceful."

There have been a few dancers from Fort St. John who have attended the program, including Tiffany Blitodeau, who currently dances with the Kelowna Ballet and did full time studies at the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, which is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year.

Sara Aimot-Cushman, ballet instructor at the Move Dance Centre where both girls attend classes, said this is a really big opportunity and a step into becoming a professional dancer.

"Especially coming from a small community, not a lot get that opportunity. It's a really, really big deal," she said, adding that they accept the best kids in the world for the program.

"They come from overseas, they come from Canada, the U.S., they're dancing with really like-minded people and just going for it, pursuing their dreams."

Local dancers heading to Royal Winnipeg Ballet course

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Miranda's mother, Stacy, said it's neat to see both of them grow into great dancers.

"They're losing the cuteness and becoming very skilled and I really enjoyed that part of it, seeing them," she said.

"Every time I see her and Keily and that age group, it's amazing, every year they're so much more stronger and technically stronger and really

putting it all together."

Throughout the program, Royal Winnipeg Ballet staff assess students on their talent and aptitude for classical dance and look at elements such as talent, musicality, coordination and artistry of motion.

Students may be invited to participate in the Royal Winnipeg Ballet School performances of Ballet in the Park.

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(Above) Keily Stewart performs at the Quesnel Festival of Performing Arts. (Photo courtesy of Steven Beard of See & Believe Photography). (Inset) Elissa Miranda. (Submitted photo)

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Local dancers Move their way to a season full of scholarships and trophies

The Move Dancers wrapped up their very short season, getting loads of accolades along the way.

In a span of about a month and a half, the local dancers competed in festivals in Quesnel, Fort St. John, Edmonton and Grande Prairie.

"All that work all year long for a month and a half," said Move owner Ashley Campbell. "Everyone did very well and lots of kids won individual scholarships."

Campbell said it was a good season of dance.

"It just keeps getting better every year, I think."

This summer many local dancers will be heading to various summer dance programs around the country.

The Move Dance Centre will present a company and recreational student show on May 30 at 1:30 and 6:30 p.m. and on May 31 with just the company dancers at 6:30 p.m. All shows are at the North Peace Cultural Centre.

AHN STAFF



Kelly Lapointe Photo

The Move Dance Centre competitors show off some of the trophies they won from this season.



COMPETITIVE CHOREOGRAPHY

Kelly Lapointe/AHN

The Move dancers practice their large group number, which will keep them hopping during the upcoming competition season. They start with their first appearance at a festival in Quesnel this weekend.

Move dancers clean up in Quesnel

KELLY LAPOINTE
ALASKA HIGHWAY NEWS

The last weekend in February was fruitful for the Move dancers who won seven trophies at their first competition of the season in Quesnel.

"You always hope that they do well. With it being so early, it was nice that they did so well because it's three weeks earlier than they're normally competing so it was really good," said Move Dance Centre instructor Sara Amiot-Cushman ARAD, RAD RTS.

It wasn't a mandatory competition, so the local dancers mainly performed solos and duos.

"It was fun. Good experience, good practice for the other festival. I'm hoping I'll do better on my tap because I'm trying to get my sounds clearer," said Tennille Johnson, who got first place in her ballet and was awarded Stages Level I observer, where students get to watch the provincials competitors' classes.

"It's a good opportunity if they've never been before, so they

get to go and see kind of what it's about. Hopefully by going to other competitions where they can qualify. Now coming home to our festival that they maybe qualify out of their own. Rather than maybe taking that observer spot, they'll go as a competitor," said Amiot-Cushman.

Keily Stewart was named the provincial representative for Ballet Level I and won a scholarship, Shiau Shan Koaphan won the overall tap award and a scholarship and Nicole Shoepf was named a Stage III observer. Other scholarships were awarded to Milanne Desfosses, Ahstyn Lockyer, Hillary Giessner, Meagan Woodall and Katherine Grimes. Other Move dancers who competed were: Takisha Johnson, Salena Wiebe, Rebecca Hedges, Elissa Miranda, Jenna Miranda, Jeannie Norman and Carol-Lyn Kitt.

Now the girls are getting ready for the Peace River North Performing Arts Festival, which starts this weekend with dance running March 18 to 21.



Submitted photo

Some of the Move dancers with their impressive trophy haul from their first competition of the season in Quesnel.