

# Five dancing profs teach locals at camp

**Matt Molloy**  
Staff Reporter

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Submitted photo

A group of students stand with dance professional LJ Jellison, a former resident of Fort St. John, following a hip hop class at Studio 2 Stage during the summer dance school.

# ARTS

## Jellison comes home to lead summer dance school

**NORTHERN DANCE THEATRE SOCIETY**  
SPECIAL TO THE ALASKA HIGHWAY NEWS

Since the dawn of man, one of the purest forms of expression has been dancing, whether it is done for ceremony, rituals, celebration or entertainment.

The Greek philosopher, Aristotle, likened dancing with poetry and that dancers could, with rhythm applied to gestures, express manners, passions and actions. Stories are told through dance; suggestions are made and life is celebrated. Considering all this, it really is amazing how vibrant of a dance community we have here in Fort St. John.

Studio 2 Stage and Northern Dance Theatre Society is excited to welcome LJ (Elward) Jellison back to Fort St. John as an instructor at its annual Summer Dance School in August.

LJ got his start in dance at the studio founded by his mother, Noelle Jellison, and has gone on to dance professionally in many stage shows, including the Broadway production of *Wicked*, as well as in film and on TV.

Studio 2 Stage dancers recently enjoyed the benefit of his experience as an adjudicator at the Sherwood Park Standing Ovation Festival which they attended in May of this year.

His endless enthusiasm and love for dance made the festival fun, and his very high standards kept the dancers striving for their best performances.

LJ now makes his home in Las Vegas and will be teaching classes in jazz and hip hop during the first week of the summer school, which runs from Aug. 13 to Aug. 25 and offers classes in Ballet, Jazz, Tap, Hip Hop and Musical Theatre. Joining him as instructors will be Matt Shields, who dances with Tapestry Dance Company in Austin, Texas, teaching tap, as well



Submitted photos

**The Northern Dance Theatre Society perform its tap number entitled "Conga" at the Grande Prairie Standing Ovation Festival. (L-R), Rebecca Reed, Karleigh Smith, Raena Shuster, Nicole Arntson, Shannon May and Amanda Frankham.**

as ballet teachers Stephanie Sy and Jennifer White from Vancouver.

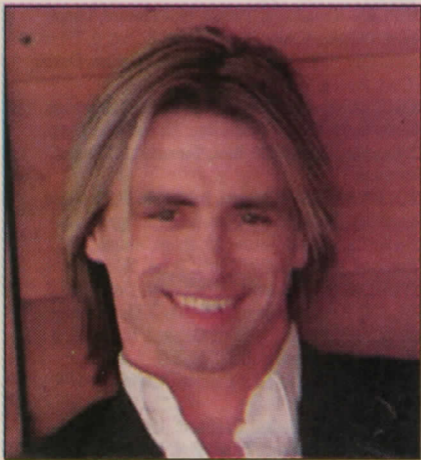
This year's summer school is funded in part through a grant from LegaciesNow which was set up as a result of the 2010 Olympic bid to ensure a lasting legacy for communities across the province.

The Northern Dance grant came from the ArtsNow Catalyst program which provides funding for B.C. arts, culture and heritage organizations to undertake projects that will build their artistic and/or organizational capacity. It is a fact of life in a northern community that our opportunities for our young performers and athletes to train with a variety of top level instructors are limited by distance from major centers.

Every summer local dancers participate in summer programs outside the region, often at great expense to their families.

Through this grant, local dancers will have a chance to work with teachers from as far away as Texas and who have, themselves, performed at the very highest level of their profession.

The dancers of Northern Dance Theatre Society and Studio 2 Stage are looking forward to working with the visiting teachers, honing their technique in ballet and learning all of the latest trends and innovations in tap, jazz and hip hop. They invite all dancers in Fort St. John and the Peace River region to join them in this exciting opportunity.



**LJ Jellison, a former resident of Fort St. John, will be returning to help teach the Northern Dance Theatre Society's summer dance school. His expertise in the dance world began here, with his mother's dance studio, Jellison Studio, and he has gone on to perform on Broadway.**



Submitted photo

**A group of students stand with dance professional LJ Jellison, a former resident of Fort St. John, following a hip-hop class at Studio 2 Stage during the summer dance school.**

# Five dancing professionals teaching locals at summer camp

Of the five professionals teaching classes, one returns with his wife to where he grew up

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ALASKA HIGHWAY NEWS

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## MAGICAL FEET

The Northern Dance Theatre Society hosted a ballet workshop at Studio 2 Stage over the weekend with instructor Carmelle McKinlay from Edmonton.

McKinlay travelled to the Energetic City to help prepare the students for their upcoming Royal Academy of Dance ballet exams. Twenty-two dancers participated in the workshop, which was held Friday to Sunday at the local studio.

The vocational exams will be held Oct. 28-29 in Prince George for several of the experienced dancers. Grade exams will be held in Fort St. John on Nov. 25 for the younger dancers.

(Pictured) Students Kelani (left) and Raena Shuster were two of the students learning from McKinlay.

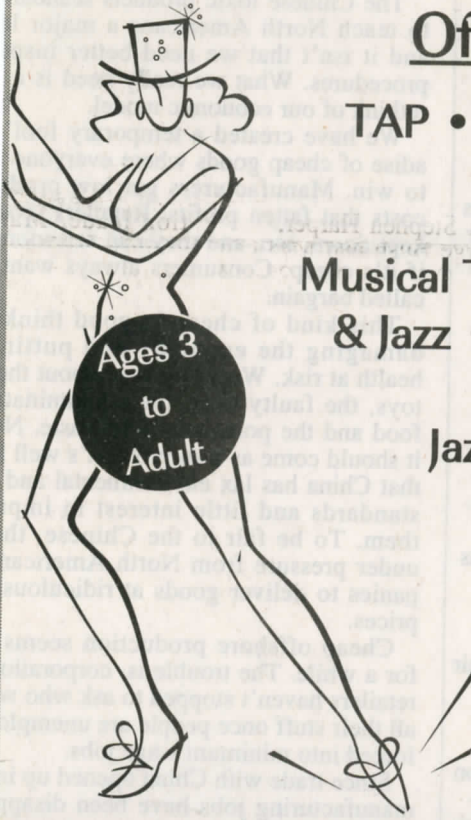
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