



Goh Ballet's four best ballerinas will perform at international competition in Korea this July. Young dancers will hit the stage in Seoul to represent Canada.

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This July, Vancouver's premiere ballet school will be sending four of its best young dancers to represent Canada at the Korean International Ballet Competition.

Chihiro Abe, age 15, Sara Carver, age 17, Letizia Dotto, age 16, and Michelle Khoo, age 16, will head to Seoul as the only Canadians performing in the junior division of the prestigious competition, where dancers from Russia, Korea, Austria, the United States, and more will compete.

Abe and Khoo were awarded the silver and gold medals respectively at last year's Vienna International Ballet Competition, and hopes are high that the girls will do well again this year.

Chan Hon Goh, Goh Ballet's esteemed director, will serve as a judge for the second time in the competition's seven-year history, and will be the only Canadian on the judging panel.

"All ladies had to prepare five variations and accomplish a high level of artistic maturity paired with technical assurance," said Goh when asked what sort of qualifications the dancers had to meet before they were assured a spot in the competition.

"Their qualification is reviewed from the list of previous dance repertoires, their teacher's referral, and their previous wins at other competitions. The cultural and artistic exchange for our dancers to be able to show original Canadian choreography and show their skills to a panel of internationally acclaimed judges is an experience that will stay with them for their lifetime," she added.

Although nerves are beginning to set in, the girls are excited to show the world just how hard they've worked to hone their craft.

"I think it's both nerve-wracking and exciting because we train so much to get that one chance on stage to make the audience fall in love with our dancing—but at the same time, you want to do really well, so that creates a lot of nerves," said Dotto, who took part in the last year's competition in Vienna.

"I think doing these bigger competitions really teaches you more about yourself, how you deal with those situations and what you need to work on, as well as what your strengths are," said Khoo.

"When I see all those different dancers from around the world it opens up my mind to explore new things that I might have limited myself to, or not thought of before. I just really want to have a great learning experience."

To see a sneak peek of the repertoires the dancers have been preparing for their trip to Seoul, see the video above.

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