

Cracking into a classic

By Sheila Reynolds , Surrey North Delta Leader , December 13, 2009

A pair of young local dancers have chassed their way into a classic Christmas ballet.

Helen Pahou and Hugo Bedard de Vilca auditioned in September to be part of Goh Ballet Academy's production of The Nutcracker.

Helen, 11, wasn't sure she'd make the cut when she saw the throngs of other dancers vying for a role. But she landed a spot, as did 12-year-old Hugo.

This will be the first time either has been in the Nutcracker.



Surrey's Helen Pahou, 11, and Hugo Bedard de Vilca, 12 (not shown), are part of the Goh Ballet Academy's production of The Nutcracker.

The production is the largest full-length ballet in the history of the dance academy and will feature more than 100 dancers and two guest stars from the National Ballet of Canada.

Helen will play the role of small angel in the scene where protagonist Clara and the nutcracker enter the Land of Sweets. The David Brankin Elementary student, who trains at Surrey's Flora Pigeau Dance Academy, is more than a little excited.

"It's a dream of mine", she says. "This is the first time I've been in a big show where everyone can see me dancing and it's an honour to be in it. This is really big for me. I'm so excited – this is a very important show for me."

But she has another wish after this performance – still related to the Nutcracker.

"My dream is to be Clara," she says without hesitating. "Clara, Clara, Clara!"

Hugo, who began dancing five years ago, has also never been in The Nutcracker – that he can remember. (His mother says he was in a production when he was small.)

For this show, he'll be filling the role of the delivery boy during the prologue and party scene where Clara receives her beloved nutcracker as a gift.

Hugo has been training with Goh Ballet Academy since the summer and goes to Francophone school at Jules Verne Secondary in Vancouver.

The Goh Ballet's performance of The Nutcracker runs Dec. 17-20 at the Centre in Vancouver for Performing Arts (777 Homer St.). Tickets are available by calling 604-280-3311.