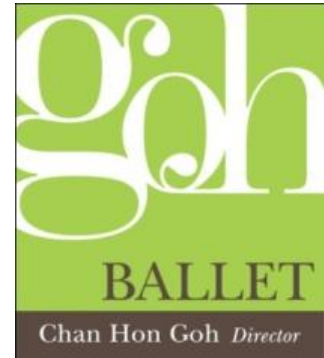


He can definitely dance

By Sheila Reynolds - Surrey North Delta Leader, BC Local News, July 1, 2010

Surrey native Alex Wong knows he can dance, and so far, he's showing the judges and millions of TV viewers he has all the right moves on So You Think You Can Dance (SYTYCD).



In the top nine on the popular television show, Wong has wowed the judges with his technical ability, creativity and passion. (An elimination show narrowing the finalists to eight dancers is tonight (Thursday).

He has been called "sheer perfection and sheer genius" by judges and a recent performance was labelled the best to ever grace the SYTYCD stage in the show's seven seasons.

"I believe that you have just set a new standard for So You Think You Can Dance," judge Nigel Lythgoe told the emotional dancer after a duet with "all-star" Allison Holker.

Wong is an accomplished ballet dancer who moved to Surrey at the age of 12. He initially trained at the Goh Ballet Academy in Vancouver while attending North Surrey Secondary for two years before transferring to a half-day program at McGee Secondary in Vancouver.

His big break came at 17, when he took top place at Switzerland's Prix de Lausanne, one of the most prestigious ballet competitions in the world. Along with a cash prize, he won an apprenticeship scholarship at the dance school of his choice and attended American Ballet Theatre (ABT) in New York City.

After a year there, he auditioned for Miami City Ballet, which snapped him up. Last year the company promoted him to principal soloist – one of just three such roles.

In an interview with The Leader last spring, Wong hinted he was interested in new experiences, saying Broadway and a couple TV shows had sparked his interest.

“I still want to do so much more,” he said last March. “I’m keeping my eyes open and seeing what there is.”

In fact, Wong auditioned for SYTYCD two seasons ago and was accepted, but had to bow out due to contractual obligations with Miami Ballet.

This time, when the TV show came calling, the 23-year-old made the risky decision to give up his position with the ballet company to be eligible for the competition.

“I followed my gut,” he said in an interview with CTV, “because I wanted to be able to express myself in all these different forms of dance, I wanted to make my own mark in my dance career.”

Wong is the first and only ballet dancer to make the top 10 on the show.

He predicts his biggest challenges will be hip hop and ballroom, and says he needs to work on showcasing his personality.

“Nigel has always said to me, ‘You have great technique,’ but I need to express myself, and emote through the television screen.”

SYTYCD performance episodes air Wednesdays and results shows air Thursdays on FOX.