

Canadian Ballet Youth Ensemble presents *The Nutcracker*

A dream comes true for a young Burlington dancer

By JENNIFER ENRIGHT

Last year, 9-year-old Madison Patryluk of Burlington could only watch as a spectator during a performance of *The Nutcracker* at Hamilton Place in Hamilton.

She says she was enchanted by the magical quality of the story and she wanted to take part. So when she was selected earlier this year to join the production as a member of the Canadian Ballet Youth Ensemble she was thrilled. Each year the Youth Ensemble, which is a non-profit charitable organization, trains young dancers to perform in *The Nutcracker* in Hamilton as well as in many other ballets.

"IT'S A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUNG DANCERS"

Madison, who has been dancing since the age of five, says she auditioned in the spring for *The Nutcracker* and then she was chosen as one of 85 young people, aged 9 to 18, to join the Youth Ensemble.

Madison's mom, Cindy, credits her daughter's dance teacher from Dancers Burlington as inspiring her to try out for a role in *The Nutcracker*. Madison says her teacher, Olga Krymchanska, was formerly a member of the Kiev Ballet Theatre, the world-famous Russian dance group that performs in the production each year.

During the summer Madison and others from the Youth Ensemble, attended a camp for two weeks where they got to know one another, an opportunity that gave them a chance to work together as a group and to find out which roles suited them best. After the camp, Madison began practising several times a week in preparation for the role that was selected for her, as one of the soldiers in the production.

Madison says her role doesn't involve a lot of dance moves, but she admits that at this point she's happy just to be involved in the production and to learn as much as she can from watching the more experienced dancers.

Vitek Wincza, who is the founder and artistic director of the Canadian Ballet Youth Ensemble as well as the choreographer and producer for *The Nutcracker*, says the experience Madison and other young people gain from dancing in the ballet is invaluable. He says members of the Youth Ensemble are given the chance to work with internationally renowned artists. "It's a great opportunity for young dancers."

Another important part of the experience is the knowledge they acquire about Canadian history, says Vitek. The production is one that remains true to the classical ballet, but still adds a distinctly Canadian element to the story. Instead of the lead female role of Clara there is the character of Sophia MacNabb, a young girl living in pre-Confederation Hamilton. Sophia's father, Sir Allan Napier MacNab, who became a member of the Upper Canadian assembly, built Dundurn Castle in Hamilton, a well-known landmark in the city that is now a museum.

Vitek says there are also many other Canadian references in the ballet, all of which serve to make this a

unique version of the ballet. "This is the only *Nutcracker* in the entire world that focuses on Canadian heritage."

Opening night for *The Nutcracker* is on Friday, December 10 at 7:30 pm. On the following day, on December 11, the matinee performance begins at 2 pm and the final performance begins at 7:30 pm. Special matinee performances are also available for schools on Thursday, December 9. All performances are at Hamilton Place located at 10 MacNab Street South.

To order regular tickets, call 905-527-7666. For schools requesting tickets, the number to call is 905-525-9832. To order tickets online, the website is www.cbye.ca.



PHOTO BY JENNIFER ENRIGHT

As a dancer with the Canadian Ballet Youth Ensemble, Madison Patryluk of Burlington will be performing the role of a soldier in *The Nutcracker* in December. The 9-year-old says she is enjoying the experience of working with accomplished dancers that are part of the production. She says she would like to continue dancing in the future. "I want to go to the National Ballet School."



A *Nutcracker* Art Exhibition featuring the work of

Robert Desrosiers

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Hamilton Place, Piano Nobile
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Fri., Dec. 10 - Sat., Dec. 11, 2004

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The Nutcracker

A Hamilton Holiday Tradition...
Starring the Kiev Ballet Theatre

Hamilton Place, Friday December 10, 7:30 pm
& Saturday December 11, 2:00 pm & 7:30 pm
Music: PETER TCHAIKOVSKY Story: ET HOFFMAN
Featuring THE HAMILTON BALLET ORCHESTRA,
Children's Parts by CANADIAN BALLET YOUTH ENSEMBLE
Choreographed and Produced by VITEK WINCZA

Tickets: \$22.50, \$29.50, \$39.50
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12 noon

14 THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR 102.9 AM900 CHAL