

ARTS

Local girls dance way onto national team

By Stephanie Thiessen
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

A pair of young Miltonians are hoping that two months from now they'll be standing on a podium listening to their national anthem play — a fitting conclusion to a competition that's called the Olympics of dance.

In November, Jade Ryan and Allana McLeod, both 16, will be competing with Oakville's Addison Brasil, 17, at the International Dance Organization's World Dance Championships in Germany as part of the Canadian National Dance Team.

The three Dance Elite students had to audition for their spots on the 22-member Canadian National Dance Show Team, and have been taking classes all summer long in preparation for the November 22 to 26 competition.

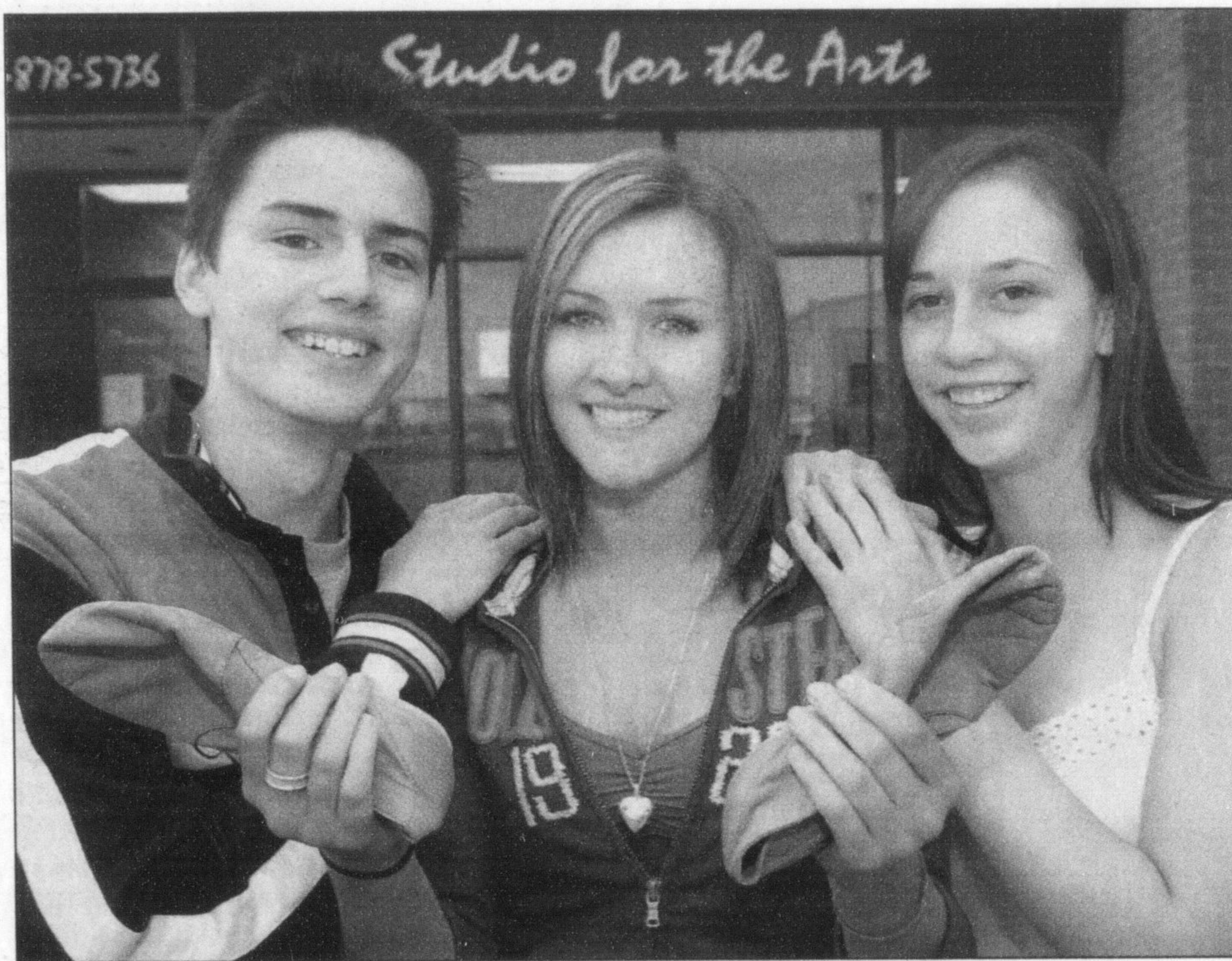
They're putting in the long hours because they're passionate about dance, they all agreed.

"The classes we've been through are so intense, if we didn't have a love for it, we wouldn't put up with it," Allana said, adding, "If you want to be a dancer like this, there's not much of a social life. It's one or the other."

The show dance routine is similar to jazz but with more of a theme, Addison said, explaining there'll be many languages represented at the competition, so it's important for the themes to be clear.

"You have to be able to tell the story regardless of the language," he said.

Allana added: "Dance is like a common



GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

MAKIN' THE CUT: Dance Elite members (from left) Addison Brasil, Allana McLeod and Jade Ryan are all smiles after earning a spot on the Canadian National Dance Team.

language."

Canada has 11 world titles to its credit, meaning the local dancers have more than a small chance of ending up on the podium as they're hoping.

The fact the students made the team is reason enough to get excited, said Marnie Palmer of Dance Elite.

"The auditions brought some of the best

dancers from across Canada," she said.

As luck would have it, Palmer won't be traveling to Germany with the students, because she's due to give birth that very week. But, she said, they won't be far from her thoughts.

"I'm so excited for them. I'll be thrilled for them that day (when they compete)," Palmer said.

Although the vast majority of their time in Germany will be spent in a theatre either dancing or cheering on the rest of their teammates, there will be one day for sight-seeing, Addison said, adding, "It's the only day we won't be in uniform."

Needless to say, there's a lot of work involved in working toward their dream.

Just because they have a lofty goal and tight training schedule doesn't mean the three teens will be excused from real life for the next two months. Like every other teen, they also have to deal with school and, for two of the three dancers, a part-time job.

"We bring a lot of our homework here (to Dance Elite)," Allana said, explaining they have to fit their schoolwork around their dance schedules.

"Our lunches are spent doing homework," Jade said, adding most of her friends don't really understand what it takes to be a dancer. "They wonder, 'How can dance be so tiring?'"

Fortunately, the students' dance training, which started at a young age, has given them skills — like perseverance and time management — they've been able to apply to all areas of their lives.

The teens all get good grades and are on the honour roll at school, as well as being part of their student councils.

They each said the hard work is definitely worth it. The level they've achieved is proof of that.

"If you really want it, you can have it. We all wanted it," Addison said simply.

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Fabulous Fall Colour
An outstanding show of colour and texture in the fall garden is the subject of this week's TERRA Trend.

Cool nights and warm days are traditionally the first signs of fall but for the gardener the first hardy mum to flower reminds us that autumn is here! Fall is a great opportunity to fill the garden with splashes of colour. Fall mums come in a rainbow of colours and shades and are great when planted towards the front of the garden bed, in hanging baskets and containers. Mums can easily replace any spring planted annuals that are starting to look tired or can be placed throughout the garden.

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