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## Markham bursary winner has oriental dance in her blood

BY SIMONE JOSEPH  
Staff Writer

Janice Fung's first dance steps were in traditional western formats, but she felt an irresistible pull towards her own heritage.

"I was doing ballet and tap when I was four, but I became very interested in Chinese dance because it is part of my culture," said Ms Fung, one of 12 recipients of a Celebration of the Arts bursary from the York Region Newspaper Group.

She currently teaches folkloric dance to Chinese children and has performed in the annual Toronto Dragon Boat Festival, at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa and in the annual Dancers For Life festival with the National Ballet.

Ms Fung has won awards for her performance of folkloric and classical dance from the Toronto Kiwanis Dance Festival and the North American Chinese Dance competition in Vancouver.

The Markham dancer studies graphic design at York University and Sheridan College, but hasn't ruled out a career in dance. "I'm keeping my options open," she says.

Ms Fung says the variety offered in Chinese dance is a bonus.

"There are 56 nationalities in China. It is one culture, but it is also many different cultures, all of them drawn from emotion. You really have to learn the essence and pour feeling into the dance, whether you're depicting the prairies of Mongolia or a city like Beijing."

And speaking of Beijing, "I'm



STAFF PHOTO/BILL ROBERTS

Markham's Janice Fung performs her Chinese dance routine during Sunday's second annual Celebration Of The Arts gala.

hoping to attend classes at the Beijing Dance Academy next summer. It's a chance to meet professional dancers and I'm also hoping to learn Mandarin."

For now, Ms Fung attends a day-long dance class once a week, as well as practising on

her own.

This year's Celebration of the Arts, the second year for the program, saw 12 young performers from York Region receive \$1,500 bursaries to help advance their cultural education.



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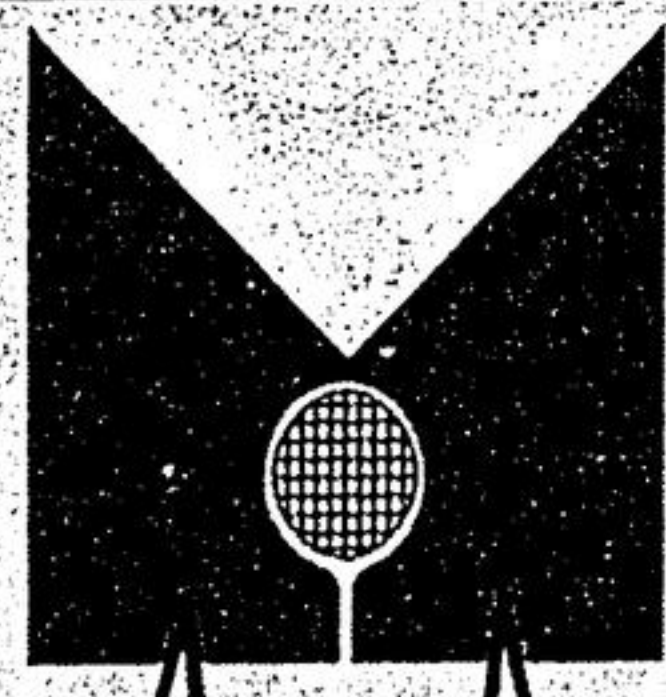
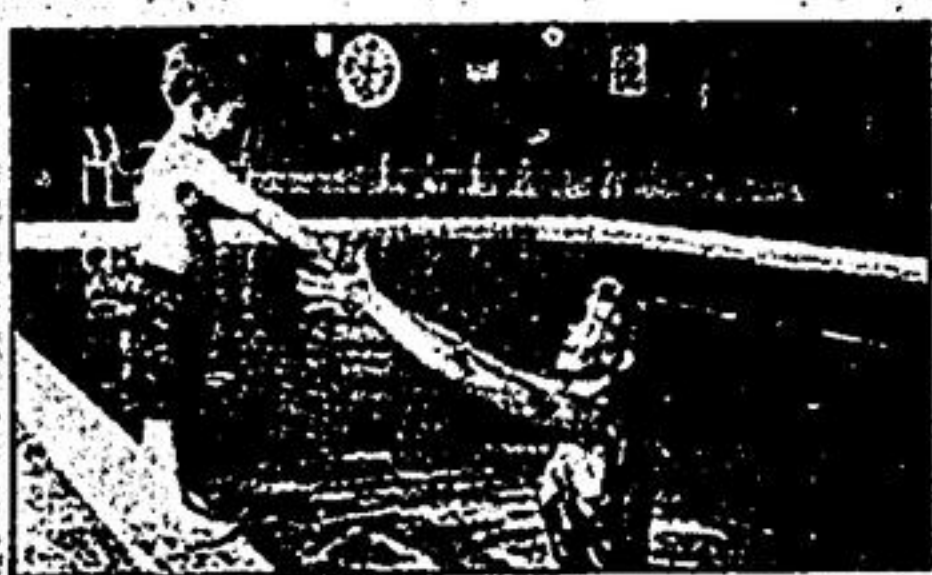
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