

Brothers win awards at international dance competition

BY WILLIAM MAETZOLD | SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20TH 2016



Jake Roxander and his brother Ashton won competitions at the Youth America Grand Prix in Seattle.

MEDFORD, Ore. -- Two local brothers are excelling as ballet dancers on the international stage. Both Ashton and Jake Roxander were winners of categories that included both girls and boys at the Youth America Grand Prix last month in Seattle. "I was pretty happy when she gave it to me, but I was also kind of calm," Jake Roxander said. "I wasn't jumping off the walls. I was just like, 'yay!'"

Jake, 13, won in the classical and contemporary categories for his age group. Both Jake and Ashton are the son of the owners of Studio Roxander. The studio opened in 2009, but then moved to a new location on E. Tenth St. in Medford two years ago. "It's kind of cool because both of my parents did the same thing," Jake Roxander said. "So it's also kind of amazing to share the same love for ballet."

The brothers' mother, Elyse, said it was important to be at the competition in Seattle. "For our boys and even for Alex the other student that went up, we want them to perform well under pressure," Elyse Roxander said. "When it's not, I'm at home with my teachers who have known them since I was a little kid or my parents in our children's case."

The Roxanders were even awarded outstanding teacher at the Youth America Grand Prix. Ashton Roxander is currently in Boston training to be a professional dancer. Jake said he would also like to be a professional dancer. The places at the Seattle event qualify them for a competition in New York City in April.