



Corazon Miller

Corazon Miller is a NZ Herald reporter

Dinosaur triggered dance love

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Teenager shines at ballet event.



The inspiration that got one Auckland teen aiming for the stage was Dorothy, the green and yellow spotted dancing dinosaur on the children's TV show, *The Wiggles*.

Twelve years on, Lilly Maskery, 15, has just returned home from New York, having made the top 12 in the junior age division at one of the most prestigious ballet competitions in the world, the Youth America Grand Prix.

"I wasn't expecting it at all," Lilly said. "Just getting to the finals was already a massive accomplishment for me."

But she said it was a proud moment when her name was called at the award ceremony.

The teen, who trains at the Philippa Campbell School of Ballet, was one of the few Kiwi dancers selected to compete at the competition, which wrapped up last week, and the only one to make the top ranks.

The week-long competition, involving a gruelling schedule of workshops and performances, is often the place where fulltime dance schools and companies from around the world go to scout out new talent.

Lilly, a student at Epsom Girls Grammar, was offered seven scholarships that could open doors to a professional career as a dancer. She's taken up three: one for a summer school at the Canada National Ballet in July, another for an international training programme with the Australian Ballet School and another week-long course at the Royal Ballet School in England in 2017.

Ballet teacher Joye Lowe said Lilly had not only talent, but the passion and dedication to succeed.

"She works hard."

Ms Lowe has taught the young dancer since she was about 7 or 8 but said it wasn't until Lilly was 11 that her potential shone through.

"By then she had developed more of an artistic quality, plus the technique and the musicality," Ms Lowe said.

"I looked at Lilly and could see she was going to be a dancer."

- NZ Herald