

## This Teen Is The First American Dancer to Graduate from Russia's Bolshoi Ballet Academy

He's from Montana.

by

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Photographs by **Mark Kean**; Makeup by **Nobuko Maekawa using M.A.C.**; Fashion by **Andrew Bevan**; Hair by **Yumi Nakada-Dingle at Jed Root**

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If you search **Julian MacKay's** name on YouTube, you may find a video of a tiny blond boy standing in front of a school entrance. It's Julian, then a student at the **renowned Bolshoi Ballet Academy** in **Moscow**. The surprising part? He's from **Montana**, he reveals, "which is known for bison and not much else!" Anyone else his age might erupt into a fit of giggles delivering this joke; Julian, utterly poised, smiles neatly instead.



Photographed by Mark Kean

As the first American to graduate, in 2015, from both the upper and lower academies of the Bolshoi Ballet Academy, Julian, ever-charming and now 18, has grown into the kind of dancer who wins roles coveted by elites twice his age: This summer, he'll be starting as the **youngest soloist** at St. Petersburg's

renowned **Mikhailovsky Ballet**. "It's been a crazy ride, from the moment the Bolshoi Ballet Academy scouts found me in New York after I won a Youth America Grand Prix medal when I was 11," he says, recalling the performance that changed everything. "They invited me to train in Moscow on a trial run. In the beginning, it was so hard because only three people at the school

spoke English. But by the end of the first year, I was **fluent in Russian**. My classmates had accepted me completely.”



Photographed by Mark Kean

Born and raised in rural Montana, Julian’s three siblings are also ballet dancers and stars on the rise. “The rule in our house was, ‘Don’t destroy the living room while you’re dancing!’” he jokes. “But in all seriousness, it’s great to have my two sisters as my main inspirations.” With wins from five prestigious international competitions, a recent yearlong apprenticeship at **London’s Royal Ballet**, and a new contract from **IMG London** for both **modeling and talent**, Julian is already an inspiration in his own right. “My dream is to be a **principal dancer**,” he shares. “I want to learn as much as I possibly can about the world of ballet.”



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\*Production: Rosa Curtain for Lock Studios