

# Hannah Bettes

Even before taking her first professional bow with Boston Ballet this fall, Hannah Bettes was one of the best-known teens in ballet. Her bright, lyrical presence, together with a stunning facility (those feet), has won her numerous competition medals and a devoted following. Now in her first season as a corps member, she's discovering how competition fame translates into a career.

**Company:** Boston Ballet

**Age:** 18

**Hometown:** DeLand, FL

**Training:** Central Florida Ballet School, Next Generation Ballet at the Patel Conservatory, The Royal Ballet School

**Accolades:** Youth America Grand Prix gold medal, junior division; World Ballet Competition silver medal, pre-professional division; Prix de Lausanne second prize, Audience Choice

**Breakout moments:** After winning at Prix de Lausanne in 2012, she spent her last two years of training at RBS, where Liam Scarlett chose Bettes as a soloist for a ballet he set on the school.

**On transitioning into company life:** "Ballet can be selfish at times—you're always working on yourself—but now, being part of a corps de ballet where everyone has to be the same, it's not really a selfish thing anymore."

**What she's working on:** "I'm still constantly working toward holding my turnout. And a lot of my base technique, I find, is still kind of weak. From the competitions, I learned how to do a lot of tricks, but it's the little in-between steps that I'm still faulty with."

**What Nissinen is saying:** "She was a top-level student, but it's a very different thing to be a student than a professional—I was willing to take that big step and start her in the company," says Boston Ballet artistic director Mikko Nissinen. "And she has been able to handle it. Now, it's just: How do we hone those qualities? How do we make her a top-rate artist? This is just the beginning."

**Her first year at Boston:** Bettes has already rehearsed soloist roles, including Neapolitan and four little swans in *Swan Lake*, and she performed the ballerina doll in *Nutcracker*. This spring, she is thrilled to revisit her contemporary roots. "We're doing *Episodes* and *Chroma* in the same triple bill. Just being around it will be incredible." ■

Bettes dancing *Coppelia* at the Cape Town International Ballet Competition



"She needs experience, mileage, to sweat a lot and to become a balanced dancer. If she can do that, there are no limits."

—MIKKO NISSINEN

BY ASHLEY RIVERS