

Classical Ballet Comes to Smyrna

By TIM DARNELL (Patch Staff) -  March 7, 2016 12:17 pm ET

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SMYRNA, GA -- The award winning International City School of Ballet has brought its nationally recognized classical ballet training program to Smyrna-Vinings. Artistic Director Georne Aucoin, Resident Choreographer and Executive Director Musashi Alvarez and the school itself are all recipients of national awards for their work.

Founded by Ms. Aucoin in 2004 in Warner Robins, the International City School of Ballet is one of the most respected pre-professional ballet academies in Georgia. Since January 2013, the Youth America Grand Prix has presented ICSB with the Outstanding Teacher and Outstanding Choreographer Awards in addition to two Outstanding School awards. YAGP is the world's largest global network of dance and annually hosts ballet competitions in major cities around the world. When ICSB decided to relocate to Smyrna in 2013 it was not only a windfall for the Smyrna-Vinings community but also for the entire Metro area.

In addition to intensive and personalized training, students of ICSB have participated successfully in some of the world's largest student ballet competitions such as the Youth America Grand Prix, World Ballet Competition, Prix de Lausanne, and USA International Ballet Competition. ICSB students come from all over Metro Atlanta and Georgia as well as other states and Canada. Ms. Aucoin believes in cultivating more than good dancers.

"Ultimately, it's about cultivating the whole person," she says. "Ballet training serves as a fantastic vehicle in which students can discover how hard one must work to become great and how passion plays an important role in being

successful in life. It's also about developing a true sense of confidence that comes from having pride in one's work, knowing that they have done everything possible -- from doing individual research on the story and characters of a ballet, to going over notes and corrections with other members of their class -- with attention to every single detail in understanding the purpose and concept of the work they are performing. The students here are whole-hearted in their work and it continues to inspire us and fuel the success of the school. For those passionate about ballet, we continue to strive to make this an ideal place to cultivate it."

Alumni of the school perform in companies around the country and in September 2015, the school gained some added attention when ICSB alumna Betty Cantrell won the Miss American Pageant! "Betty originally came to me to seek training because her goals were to perform someday on Broadway," Ms. Aucoin says. "She was very hardworking; always a dancer that I could rely on. I would use her as an example by telling the other students that she didn't have the hyper mobility and proper structure in her legs and feet suitable for classical ballet but she had incredible stage presence and charisma that allowed her to take the smallest role and make it interesting. That is invaluable. She did many character roles for our various productions at ICSB and definitely held the show. She served as an inspiration for the other students because of her enthusiasm and dedication to her work."

In May 2015, ICSB concluded its first school year in its new location by producing a Spring Gala featuring the premier of "For the Common Good" by Mr. Alvarez and "Le Jardin" from the ballet Le Corsaire as well as "Waltz of the Hours" from Coppelia. The Gala was held at the Marietta Civic Center and was a free event funded by ICSB and its Parents Supporting the Arts organization. The PSA is a 501c3 parent group with a commitment to helping ICSB realize its vision to provide free or inexpensive high-quality performances for the community.