

GNBC readying spring ballet show

Having successfully helmed their first production of "The Nutcracker" last winter, Greater Niagara Ballet Company artistic directors Mary Schnepf and Molly Vine are back with a new show sure to please families and children of all ages.

The Greater Niagara Ballet Company presents "Scenes of Spring" on Friday, May 20, at Niagara Falls High School. The production, under the guidance of Schnepf and Vine, will feature several family-friendly short ballets that "radiate the warm ambiance of spring."

"Peter and the Wolf," a narrated symphonic fairy tale for children with music composed by Sergei Prokofiev, tells the story of a young, carefree boy named Peter, who cannot help but go out into the meadow on a lovely day. He is joined by his friend, the graceful Bird, along with a silly Duck, and a prowling Cat. After a while, a hungry and dangerous Wolf arrives in their midst. Although a rather large and inept hunting par-

ty has been pursuing the Wolf the entire time, it is ultimately Peter (with a little help from his animal friends) who outwits and captures the Wolf.

Vine said the GNBC has cultivated a relationship with the Niagara Falls School District, and that elementary students are learning about musical instruments.

"Peter and the Wolf is a great ballet to kind of tie that in with dance," she said.

"We thought that would be a very good ballet to do. It's very kid-friendly.

"We had a lot of young children audition for 'The Nutcracker,' so we were kind of anticipating that for our spring show, as well, and we wanted to be able to put the younger kids somewhere. There's hunters and meadow dancers, like flowers, in 'Peter and the Wolf,' so that's kind of what they ended up doing. That was a good ballet for the little ones."

"Degas," with music composed by Gabriel Urbain Faure (Dolly Opus 56), is inspired by the fa-

mous Edgar Degas painting "The Dancing Class."

A beautiful scene unfolds when ballet dancers from the Paris Opera gather for dance class with a famed choreographer. Artistry, music, impressionism and Parisian dance merge to create this lighthearted and masterful ballet.

"Pas de Trois," with music composed by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, is a lovely dance from Act I of "Swan Lake," which centers on the festivities on the eve of Prince Siegfried's birthday. "Pas de Trois" features guest dancer Dominic Giambra, as well as Schnepf and Vine.

Schnepf said, "All three shows are kind of classic GNBC shows."

She added, "I wanted to put on some classics for our first endeavor on a non-'Nutcracker' show, on a spring show. So, we did want to start bringing some of the performances that we haven't put on in a while back on."

Vine said, "I think it's important to give local dancers – whether they're students or local profes-



sionals – an opportunity to do something besides 'The Nutcracker.' And I think, as choreographers, we want to be able to showcase different works, because 'The Nutcracker' is a set ballet. So, like one story. But we've got so many ideas, and so many things in our repertoire that we want to get out, and have an audience see us perform."

"We want to provide our audiences and the students and our dancers a variety of things to do, too," Schnepf said. "It keeps it more interesting. It helps the students and the dancers grow, as well, because 'The Nutcracker' – we change things every year, but it's basically the same. So, giving them new steps to do, new choreography, really does help them ... learn and grow as dancers. And hopefully they learn a few things along the way."

Two performances are sched-

uled for "Scenes of Spring": an on-school-time show at 10 a.m. for local students, and an evening performance at 7:30 p.m., both inside the NFHS Performing Arts Center, 4455 Porter Road, Niagara Falls.

Discounted tickets are available for school groups for the morning performance.

To reserve tickets, call or text 716-713-9735, or purchase online at greaterniagaraballetcompany.org or at the door.

For parents and students looking to get involved, or be notified of upcoming classes or auditions, visit the GNBC Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/GreaterNiagaraBalletCompany>; its website, <http://www.greaterniagaraballetcompany.org/>; or email greaterniagaraballet@gmail.com.

"All are welcome, regardless of age and dance experience," Vine said.

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Students prepare for International Student Science Fair



ISSF will take place May 29-June 3 at Niagara University. Lewiston-Porter is hosting the International Student Science Fair, an annual gathering of high schools from around the world that provides a platform for students to engage in scientific research and education. This is only the second time the event will be held in the U.S.

Local Lew-Port STEM students are preparing for the event, which will take place May 29 through June 3 at Niagara University.

Pictured, back row, from left: Ethan Alker, Josh Long, Kaden Johnson and Raj Singh. Front row, from left: Lauren Lunshof, Julia Thomas, Amanda Huang and Nicole Peunic. Missing is Sarina Singh. (Submitted photo)

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