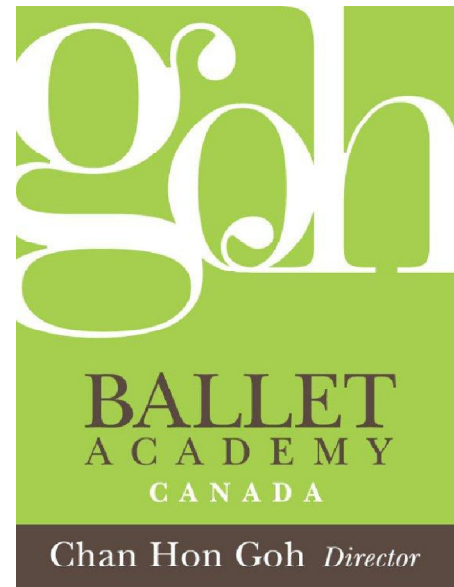


Chan Hon Goh: Making Ballet Affordable

By [Kevin Griffin](#) 27 Aug 2010 [Culture Seen](#)

[Chan Hon Goh](#) led Culture Seen into a dance studio painted light pink with one wall of mirrors. In the centre were two chairs angled to face each. Inbetween, Culture Seen partially faced a plant stuck into a clear glass vase filled with oval, polished stones. Written on one of the stones was SUCCESS; another LOVE. Culture Seen sort of faced the mirror so couldn't but help see his image reflected back to him. He felt like the interview was a performance and he was playing reporter.



Culture Seen was talking to Goh at the Goh Ballet Academy about her official appointment as director of both the [Goh Ballet Academy](#) and the Goh Ballet Company. It takes effect Wednesday, Sept. 1.

What Culture Seen didn't realize was how instrumental her parents – Choo Chiat Goh and Lin Yee Goh – were to her success as a ballet dancer. Over and above the usual support a parent provides for a child, they also did something else: they used their ballet skills to give her free ballet lessons. And that wasn't easy for a family that left Communist China in the late 1970s and had to establish themselves as immigrants in a new country when they arrived in Vancouver.

Thanks to her skill and hard work and her parents free lessons, Goh was able to join the National Ballet in Toronto in 1988. She became a principal dancer for 10 years and danced major roles in Giselle, Swan Lake and Sleeping Beauty. She became an international guest artist, co-wrote her autobiography (*Beyond the Dance: A Ballerina's Life* with Cary Fagan) and created a line of pointe shoes called [Principal by Chan Hon Goh](#) with her husband Chun Che.

But without free lessons from her parents, Goh doubts she would have had a ballet career at all. With that in mind, Goh wants to expand the school's scholarship program which already provides free tuition to 31 students totalling more than \$100,000.

Go [here](#) to listen to Goh talking about the importance of her free ballet lessons and how she wants to do the same for other talented students facing a financial crunch.

**Above and below: Chan Hon Goh / National Ballet of Canada*



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