

Putting her own twist on curriculum

BY KEVIN GRIFFIN, VANCOUVER SUN AUGUST 27, 2010

The Goh Academy is adding more dance styles to its classical ballet classes to expose young students to a wider range of performance genres.

New director Chan Hon Goh, who officially takes over Sept. 1 from her parents who founded the school in 1978, said that during the formative period of ages 12 to 18, students need to be exposed to different kinds of dance.

Goh said her school will never change its emphasis on classical ballet.

But during its summer school, the academy opened up its curriculum to include areas such as musical theatre and voice.

Goh said future changes will likely include seminars on the practical side of preparing for the life of a professional dancer such as nutrition, writing a CV and dealing with performance anxiety.

"Sometimes you need to come out of your comfort zone," she said.

"You need that exposure when you're young so that you can take on anything as a professional."

The school's enrolment is between 450 and 500. It has six full-time staff including Goh, along with six part-time and three administrative staff.

Goh, a former prima ballerina with the National Ballet in Toronto, started her ballet training at age nine at the academy founded by her parents Choo Chiat Goh and Lin Yee Goh, both of whom were principal dancers with the National Ballet of China.

In her 20-year career on stage, Chan Hon Goh danced the lead roles in Romeo and Juliet, Swan Lake and The Sleeping Beauty, and the title roles in Giselle, Madame Butterfly and La Sylphide.

She was a guest artist with companies throughout Europe, Asia, Australia and North America.

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