

Grimsby ballet dancer invited to compete at elite international event

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Maggie Weatherdon will compete among the “elite of the elite” at the Prix de Lausanne in Switzerland this coming February.

By Tristan Marks
NewsNow

Dreams really do come true.

Grimsby ballerina Maggie Weatherdon has been invited to participate in the 2020 Prix de Lausanne, the world’s premier ballet competition for young dancers.

Maggie and her family will travel to Lausanne, Switzerland to compete in the event from Feb. 7-9.

Maggie said she was shocked to find out that the judging panel had selected her. This was only the second time she had applied.

"I was shaking and on the verge of tears when I found out about it," said Maggie.

"They have a very rigorous selection process."

Indeed, this year the event's selection panel only invited 76 of the 377 who applied worldwide. Maggie was the only Canadian invited out of 13 who applied.

Entrants audition by sending in a video of their dancing.

Maggie, who has studied dance for almost her entire life, poured 14 years of learning and practice into her audition.

She said she is not worried about winning. For Maggie, what matters is that she now has the opportunity to pursue her passion in Europe.

"I love the artistry of ballet and being able to perform it," she said.

"Just being accepted into the Prix de Lausanne opens up many opportunities for me in Europe, which is where I want to be."

Ever dedicated, Maggie trains 15 hours over six days a week at a studio in Buffalo, NY all the while maintaining high marks as a full-time student.

Maggie's mother, Michelle, said she's proud of all her daughter's been able to do.

"She's worked very hard to get here," Michelle said.

"This competition is for the elite of the elite."

To apply for the Prix de Lausanne, Maggie had record two videos of herself during practice: one of her presenting a classical piece, the other a contemporary piece. This is reflective of the competition itself, where Maggie will choose a classical and a contemporary piece to perform from a list chosen by the competition's organizers.

This event also comes at an auspicious time for Maggie.

The event is set to occur during her birthday in 2020.

"I'm actually going to be celebrating my birthday when I'm over there," she said.

Michelle has set up a donation page on GoFundMe to help fund her daughter's travel and ballet needs for the Prix.