

Weatherdon headed to Prix de Lausanne in Switzerland

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Maggie Weatherdon, as Lead Flower in Neglia's The Nutcracker at Shea's (2019), photo courtesy of Gene Witkowski

BUFFALO, NY – Neglia Conservatory of Ballet proudly announces pre-professional ballet student **Maggie Weatherdon** will compete at the prestigious **48th Prix de Lausanne in Montreux, Switzerland** February 2 – 9, 2020.

The Prix de Lausanne is considered one of the most elite ballet competitions in the world. Maggie is **one of 84 candidates** chosen from a field of 377 dancers from around the globe. Maggie follows the footsteps of her mentor Sergio Neglia who won awards there in 1982 when he was starting his ballet career. Sergio is Neglia Ballet Artists co-founder/Artistic Director and Maggie's teacher.

Six years ago when Maggie started training at Neglia, Sergio told her if she "stayed with Neglia, she would go somewhere someday and be really proud of herself." Maggie couldn't imagine then that Prix de Lausanne would be one of those places.

"When we heard Maggie got in, it was not a surprise to me. She works hard. She is devoted. We're very proud of her," says Sergio.

Since 2014 the pair have been working together on Maggie's technique and artistry and they both recognize a connection. "I like Sergio's matter-of-fact teaching style. I understand him," says Maggie. "I'm never nervous for Maggie. I show her what to do in class. When it's time to perform, she's done the work and is ready to go," says Sergio.

Maggie will travel to Switzerland with her coach and ballet teacher Heidi Halt Neglia, co-founder and Executive Director of Neglia Ballet. At the competition, Maggie will perform a classical variation (*La Bayadere*) and a contemporary piece (*Chroma* by Wayne McGregor).

"Having accompanied Maggie to all of her competitions, I'm amazed by her artistic growth and maturity." says Heidi. "She continues to flourish as an artist. It's been great to be on this journey with her."

While winning an award would be an incredible achievement for Maggie, just being at the Prix de Lausanne will be an important milestone in her ballet journey.

"At Lausanne I'll learn by watching the other candidates dance. I'll meet with international ballet schools and companies and maybe get a scholarship or contract. This makes me think I can actually, probably, have a ballet career," says Maggie.

"With all the work she has done, Maggie has already won," says Sergio.

Maggie travels from Grimsby, Ontario, Canada to train with Neglia Ballet six days a week. She has performed many lead roles in Neglia Ballet's *The Nutcracker* at Shea's Performing Arts Center. Maggie received First Place in Senior Women's Contemporary Ballet at Youth America Grand Prix. In 2018 Maggie competed in the USA IBC in Jackson Mississippi. A French Immersion student, Maggie is eager to use her French language skills to converse in Switzerland. In addition to her ballet focus, she is an honor student and has been accepted into Biochemistry programs at two Canadian universities. After graduation, she hopes a career in ballet will allow her to travel the world.

27 nations will be represented at the competition and Maggie is the only dancer to represent Canada this year. As a dual citizen (USA and Canada) Maggie will surely make both sides of the border proud when she competes in Switzerland this February.

"I wouldn't have gotten this far without the support of Neglia Ballet and my family," says Maggie who, on top of all the benchmarks, will celebrate her 18th birthday while she is abroad.

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