

# Chan Hon Goh

By Ellen Douglas

**The passion and commitment which Canadian Principal Chan Hon Goh puts into her beautiful, even flawless ballet performances, has a ripple effect throughout her life. This energetic young woman tackles every challenge, every project with unequalled zeal and enthusiasm.**



Photos: Cylla von Tiedemann, courtesy of the National Ballet of Canada

Chan Hon Goh has been with the National Ballet of Canada since 1988, becoming a Principal Dancer in 1994. She has captivated audiences in England, Australia, Germany, Quebec, California, New York and Washington to name but a few! Renowned and positively reviewed for a diversity of roles performed in a myriad of places, this woman's travel schedule is enough to give one a headache! Some of her previous roles include: Juliet in John Cranko's *Romeo and Juliet* (1998), the title role in Ben Stevenson's *Cinderella*

(2000), *Odette/Odile* in James Kudelka's *Swan Lake* (1999), *Princess Aurora* in Rudolf Nureyev's *Sleeping Beauty* (1994) *Spring* in James Kudelka's *The Four Seasons* (1997), She was featured in the company premieres of Kudelka's *Désir* (1998), *Cruel World* (1996) and *Terra Firma* (1997), George Balanchine's *Mozartiana* (1997), Frederick Ashton's *Symphonic Variations* (1996), Antony Tudor's *The Leaves are Fading* (1991), and John Cranko's *Concerto for Flute and Harp* (1990). Behind the scenes, Chan has organized the "Stars of North

American Ballet" tour to China in 2002, put together the classical programme for the "Festival des Arts de St. Sauveur" in Quebec in 2002 and an evening of Mix Repertoire for "Dance at the Main Stage" in London, Ontario in 2003.

Chan Hon Goh has also taught Master Classes in a variety of places, and finds satisfaction and pleasure at the opportunity to influence and affect the lives and directions of young people. "Principal Shoes" the company she started with her husband, well-known ballet instructor Chun Che, gives out shoe scholarships to

young dancers every year. Designed with the input of doctors, physiotherapists and sports medicine experts, Chan is proud of the "Principal Shoes" product; "These shoes allow for a better alignment of the foot, hopefully preventing or eliminating many common dance injuries!" she enthusiastically offers. "The Diamond Point Shoe is incomparable, try them on and they sell themselves!" Participating in the business of dance seems well suited to Chan; she speaks constantly of the big picture and her desire to positively impact the industry in a broad scope. "The idea of improving the industry for everyone with a valuable product like this means a lot to me." Already a proven success, "Principal Shoes" sells on average 10,000 pairs a year both through its website - [www.principalshoes.com](http://www.principalshoes.com) and major retailers across the country.

As if her performance schedule and a shoe company were not enough, Chan published her autobiography "Beyond the Dance: A Ballerina's Life", with Cary Fagan in 2002 (Tundra Books). Finalist of the "Norma Fleck Book Award" 2003 and Nominee of the "Rocky Mountain Book Award" 2005. A unique book, geared toward young people, Chan wanted to encourage youth of all nationalities to pursue their passions and reach for their goals.

Born in Beijing, Ms. Goh immigrated to Vancouver B.C. in the late seventies. The only Chinese student in an all-white class, she faced many obstacles and hardships. Discussing this with her, she commented,

"I only hope that children today are kinder; that the increased diversity in our culture has created more openness and acceptance of differences. It was very difficult for me".

Supportive of her culture, Chan has been an Honorary Advisor to the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto since 1995 and has actively fundraised for the Federation of Chinese Canadian Professional's Education Foundation since 1999.

Both of Chan's parents were Principal dancers with the National Ballet of China and founded the notorious Goh Ballet Academy in Vancouver when they immigrated. "I feel so lucky to have trained under my parents; I don't know where my life would have gone, if this opportunity were not there for me; the school just celebrated its 25th anniversary, I'm so proud of them".

And what of the future? Well, Chan's immediate future is booked! This multi-award winning dancer eagerly looks forward to a cross-continent schedule over the next year. "From Peter Boal



and Company in New York to The National Ballet of Canada, *Giselle* at the Hummingbird Center Toronto to the

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*Nutcracker* in California! I'm fairly busy till year end, and 2005 has even more exciting and challenging roles to offer!"

Chan discusses her work with both a reverence and enthusiasm.

"The dancers I've worked with, exploring these roles, becoming these characters, each time in a new and inspired way; I'm very fortunate".

Perhaps it's the ingrained work ethic of the dancer or her parent's impressive accomplishments, or possibly her desire to overcome the obstacles and prejudices put before her; whatever it is that drives and has driven Chan Hon Goh to succeed will obviously continue to take her to new and greater heights in both dance and the business world.

For more information on Chan Hon Goh please see: [www.chanhongoh.com](http://www.chanhongoh.com).

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