

THE CITY



MY TORONTO: CHAN HON GOH

Chan Hon Goh came to Toronto 18 years ago via Vancouver and Beijing to join the National Ballet of Canada, where she is a principal dancer. She spoke to the Post's Mark Medley:

Serenity For the past year, I have been living by the water, in the Queen's Quay area. I was always fond of the area because of its serenity. Being by the water, there's something very calming and it's transforming in a way. I decided, after I had the baby, that I wanted to have a place very close to work. I used to live in the Yonge and Rosedale area. I like that little neighbourhood: how it can be so residential and in the midst of the city. But now I feel a little bit secluded in that I'm by the water. I've found some beautiful playgrounds to spend time with my son. Especially now, when the weather is getting warmer, you see people on their bicycles, you see other moms with their babies. It's a wonderful, newly developed neighbourhood.

Facing the music The Music Garden is so beautiful. They have different blossoms, different plants at different seasons of the year, so depending on which season it is it could look very very different. It's really the way they designed the walkways within the garden. It feels like a park. You go and the various lit-

tle signs tell you about the plants (and) tells you the various colours that come up. Then there's that beautiful gazebo right in the centre where in the summertime they actually have musicians that play, so you can bring your lunch and sit on the lawn and sort of be taken away from the phone and the computer and be able to enjoy the sun.

Comfort Food My husband and I really enjoy going to Annona, which is at the Park Hyatt. They have a stable menu but it changes also seasonally. They have a winter menu that's quite homey and comforting. I love the atmosphere. They take very good care of you. (There are) huge windows looking over Avenue Road, but it's not right next to the street. There's a little pedestrian walkway so you can look, but you also have the privacy.

Where the action is The cultural aspect of the city is one of the best in Canada. There is a certain rhythm now in the city that I don't find in any other Canadian city. Toronto is where you want to be. (It's) where the action is.

Shoegazing One of the places that I love to visit, and that has fascinating exhibits throughout the year, is the Bata Shoe Museum. I love, and I've always had a fascination with, various shoe designs. My husband and

I started our own ballet shoe design company 10 years ago. They have a great dance collection there as well. To feel so close to some of these legendary people because you see their shoes is quite an inspiration.

Dancing at the new Four Seasons Centre The major difference that I've noticed is the acoustics. I'm hearing notes that were lost before. It's overwhelming, it really envelops. When I'm on stage, (there's) this added dimension, this intimacy with the audience that was not felt as obviously when we were at the Hummingbird. Now they are able to see our (faces). For me as a performer, the music makes a huge difference. And to be able to know that my movements and my expressions are being read that much clearer, that they come across easier to see, is great. Those are the little nuances that we work so hard at. And being in a different part of the city, now when I have a break before my performance in the evening I go out and I'm with the corporate crowd. I'm walking amongst people with suits and ties. And then around the corner you've got Queen West.

■ Chan Hon Goh will be dancing at The Four Seasons until Saturday and in Balanchine's *Don Quixote* from June 15-24.

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J.P. MOCZULSKI FOR NATIONAL POST

Chan Hon Goh feels a greater intimacy with audiences when she dances at the new Four Seasons Centre.