



## **Vancouver's Acclaimed Dance Academy, Goh Ballet, Opens its First Toronto Location.**

**After nearly 20 years of running the Goh Ballet Academy in Vancouver, Chan Hon Goh is bringing the internally-renowned school to Toronto's Bayview Village Shopping Centre.**

*by* JORDANA COLOMBY



As the daughter of two Principal Dancers with the National Ballet of China, Chan Hon Goh has been surrounded by dance her entire life. When her family moved to Canada and opened their classical institute in Vancouver, Goh started her training, which eventually led to her becoming a Principal Dancer with the National Ballet of Canada. Goh retired from the stage in 2010 and accepted the invitation to become the director of her family's academy as she stepped into the mentorship stage of her career. However, Goh's dedication to dance extends far beyond the school. As a founding member of Vancouver's Arts and Culture Policy Council, Goh represents not only ballet, but all forms of dance within the city and ensures there are always opportunities for young dancers in Vancouver. Now, she wants to bring those opportunities to dancers in Toronto.



Goh has been carrying on the school's legacy which started back in 1978 when her parents opened Goh Ballet Academy Canada. Having lived in her Toronto throughout her illustrious 20-year career with the National Ballet of Canada, Toronto seemed like the natural next step in expanding the school. "I really had my career in Toronto and it would be wonderful to impart some of this experience and give back to the community in Toronto, give back to the younger generation," says Goh.

Even though Goh already runs two locations back west with a combined eight studios, opening a new school is no easy task. This is the first location Goh has built from the ground up, so everything from picking the right floors to wiring the internet is a new and exciting challenge.

Located in Bayview Village Shopping Centre, the new 7000-square-foot space features five studios. The mall has access to parking as well as the TTC for easy commute to and from the school. The aim was to make the studios as large as possible to give it a sense of airiness, almost as if you can feel the oxygen and motivational energy flowing through the space. "When they walk in there should be a departure from their everyday lives," Goh says about the students. "I want them to feel a sense that they are there for a purpose and there to learn this beautiful art craft."





A true nod to dance itself, the first work of art you see upon entering the studio is somewhat of a “moving art” piece, as Goh describes it. The two-storey, pink-toned image depicting Goh as Juliet merges with a grayscale photo from Swan Lake. As you walk through the hall and catch glimpses of work from different angles, it looks as though the scenes are coming to life. Archival photos documenting the incredible success of the Vancouver studios over the past 40 years line



the walls as students head toward the dressing rooms. The photos are a record of the past and motivation for the future.

In terms of staffing, Goh says that has been the fun part. “It’s wonderful to see the calibre of people who have been applying,” Goh says. The creative faculty will be sent to Vancouver this summer to train at the original academy to ensure they understand the syllabus and there is a synergy between the two schools.

Goh Ballet Bayview will have limited enrollment to ensure quality teaching environments. The week-long workshops will begin this Summer and the annual programs will start in September 2019. The full programs include: Creative Dance for ages three to four, Junior School for students four and up, Pre-Professional School for students around the age of 11, Prima Dance for students 12 and up, and Adult Drop-In Classes for those who want to rekindle their love of dance and reintroduce their bodies to something wonderful. The studio also offers Golden Ballet for 55+.



Goh says as the academy expands, the vision remains the same: To build opportunities for young dancers to learn from wonderful teachers and choreographers. However, with the wide range of classes for everyone from toddlers to seniors, the studios are really a place where anyone can explore their passion for ballet.

“It’s not just about the steps,” Goh explains. “You can always do better. Your legs can always get higher; you can always do higher jumps or more turns. But what really is important here is not forgetting that ballet is an art form that touches the human emotion. That’s what we hope to really inspire and motivate within our student community.”

Registration for Goh Ballet Bayview’s 2019 annual training programs are now open [online](#).