

NUVO



Have Ballet School, Will Travel

Vancouver's Goh Ballet opens a new location in Toronto.

- Writer [Deirdre Kelly](#)

Celebrated ballerina and entrepreneur **Chan Hon Goh** is embarking on a Canadian first with the expansion of her Vancouver-based classical ballet school to Toronto, paving the way for future satellite branches of the family-owned business.

Goh Ballet Academy's Ontario location is a new custom-built facility situated on the upper level of the Bayview Village premium-brands shopping centre in Toronto's north end. It represents a new direction for ballet training in Canada.

"I've never built anything from the ground up before, but I had to do it," says Goh, a former **National Ballet of Canada** principal dancer who took over her parents' school in 2010 following an illustrious 20-year dancing career. "No other [ballet] school has gone across the country before. This is a unique venture by far."

Housing five studios spread over 7,500 square feet, Goh Ballet Bayview features soaring 15-foot ceilings, a sprung Rosco floor, and large windows allowing for a surfeit of natural light. Goh worked with Toronto-based architecture and interior design studio **Batay-Csorba Architects** to develop the project. Classes for all ages will begin in September and focus on classical dance, with some classes on jazz and Chinese dance offered as well.

Young students will receive instruction in the Royal Academy of Dance syllabus originating in the U.K., while older, professional-stream dancers will follow the Vaganova method, a Russian ballet training and pedagogy model emphasizing expressiveness in movement.

For Goh, a Prix de Lausanne and Genée International Dance Competition award recipient, combining English and Russian training under one roof is what will distinguish Goh Ballet Bayview from Toronto's other dance school options.



“I really want to offer training that is individual, as opposed to a mass approach,” says the ex-dancer, whose own training came from her father and mother, Choo Chiat Goh and Lin Yee Goh, both former members of the Central Ballet of China. “I want to be able to pick out and nurture individual talent and create the dancers of the future.”

It’s already happening.

Under her guidance and without the benefit of government funding, the Vancouver-based Goh Academy, founded in 1978, has emerged as a national leader in producing young dancers who consistently reap accolades at international competitions, not to mention job contracts.

Graduates include Céline Gittens, the award-winning Black ballerina now a principal dancer with the Birmingham Ballet in England; Ye Feifei, today a principal dancer with

the Hong Kong Ballet; Danielle Gould, a corps dancer with the Hungarian National Ballet; James Stout, a principal dancer with the Dutch National Ballet; and Yuka Ebihara, a principal dancer with the Polish National Ballet.

“We are a private school, but look at our track record,” explains the 50-year-old mother of one who is also a published author, pointe shoe designer, and producer of the Goh Ballet’s annual holiday presentation of *The Nutcracker* in Vancouver. “We groom dancers from pre-school to the graduate level and then to watch them become a lead dancer in an international company is a rare phenomenon, I think.”

Published June 17th 2019