



Local teen Ballerina dances on international stage

Reported by Katie Brace, News Channel 5 WPTV
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LAKE PARK, FL – Kristina Bentz recently returned from a two-week trip to Russia. She was chosen for the rare opportunity to briefly study and perform at the renowned Bolshoi Ballet Academy.

She performed an award winning pas-de-deux to earn the spot to the Bolshoi. Four U.S. dancers were chosen. Kristina and two male dancers made the trip.

Even though training in the U.S. is almost a full-time a job, it was nothing compared to the Bolshoi. Kristina says, "Everyone was redoing combinations two or three times, whereas here you're like, 'One is enough. I'm tired whatever.'" "It was a big wake up call."

Kristina started dancing at age three. By age ten, her teacher says the talent was undeniable. Joan Miller of the Palm Beach Ballet Center has trained dancers for more than fifty years. She counts Kristina's grace and connection to the music among the best. Joan points a picture of one of her former students and says, "One is partnered with Baryshnikov. (in reference to Kristina) She has that ability to go that far."

You could say a teacher is biased. But, while in Russia, Kristina was among the select few chosen to perform solo at the Bolshoi Ballet Academy's Gala. She was the only one from the U.S. She can still picture what it was like as she moved onto the stage. "One of the guys backstage was, 'Don't be nervous.' And, I almost went out early," says Kristina.

Kristina is back on her home stage; back to practicing for hours a day. Her experience has put a new spin on her dancing. Kristina says, "It makes me want to dance even more and push myself even more, see where it can take me."

Since returning from Russia, she has fielded offers to dance in Germany and to attend numerous ballet academies. She also has the opportunity to study full-time at the Bolshoi. The Bolshoi Ballet Academy is once again holding auditions in the U.S. Auditions in Florida are on February 21st. <http://www.bolshoiballetacademy.com>

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Kristina Bentz (center) pictured at Bolshoi Ballet Academy's Gala in Moscow with fellow students Spencer Keith and Adam Hartley.