

From Westchester To Stuttgart

Local Dancer Explores First Hand the Universal Language of Dance



A year ago today, Georgia Lathrop would never have guessed she would be welcoming the first flowers of spring half a world away from home in Stuttgart, Germany. Back then, Georgia was training at Ossining's Logrea Dance Academy and considering how she would pursue her dreams after her graduation from Briarcliff High. Imagine being seventeen, and finding that you have been offered a full scholarship to one of world's oldest and most venerated Ballet Company Academies. This sounds like a fairytale – but it isn't. Georgia is living a dream come true in Germany where she is attending the Ballet Academy at Stuttgart the leading Ballet Company and Academy in Germany, which dates back to 1609.

The journey to Stuttgart started a year ago when Georgia placed first in the Classical Ballet Category and was one of the top 12 finalists Over All at the Youth America Grand Prix competition in New York City. It was there that Georgia caught the eye of the Stuttgart Ballet Academy's director, who subsequently offered her the scholarship.

Back home this past week on a short break from her training, Georgia returned to the Logrea Dance Academy, where she shared with me her experiences in Germany.

When asked about her reaction to receiving the scholarship Georgia replied, “It was more than I ever thought might happen. My plan was to attend ABT (American Ballet Theater) and I just hadn’t thought of anything beyond that!”

“The first thing I thought about Stuttgart was how far it was from home,” she said, “It was a little scary because I had to make the decision to go or not to go very quickly. It has been amazing, though.”

“So,” I asked, “After Stuttgart, where do you imagine yourself? Where would you like to be in the future?”

“I’ve never really thought about it. For right now, I just want to pass my tests. As far as the future goes, I guess I don’t plan very far ahead because you never know; you just have to let things happen and have faith you make the right choices. There are so many opportunities out there, too many to say I would choose one over another. There is a lot of heartbreak too. I just want to be the best Ballet Dancer I am able to be and hopefully someday a soloist,” Georgia answered, “but, whatever happens and wherever life takes me, I’ll know I did the best I could.”

If you ever had the pleasure to watch Georgia dance in the Westchester Ballet Company’s *Nutcracker* at the Westchester County Center or in the Logrea Dance Academy’s spring performances at Briarcliff Manor High School’s lovely auditorium, you would not be surprised that she has come so far. What is surprising is that she seems little affected by everything that has happened, even though she will tell you, she is not the same person who left the USA for Germany last September.

Georgia’s life at the Stuttgart Academy is demanding -- she is up by 7 AM and at the Academy by 8:15 AM. There, she warms up and begins her day with technique classes, which can last for up to three hours at a stretch. Other classes such as Dance History, Dance Theory, Music Theory, and even Anatomy are part of her curriculum. Of course, the focus is on dancing and, the rigorous schedule has her dancing six days a week and sometimes seven.

The most satisfying for Georgia are the performances. She has not only danced in performances with the Academy but she has also been chosen to perform with the Stuttgart Ballet Company. Georgia has performed this past year in Stravinsky’s “Jeux De Carte”; and “Le Corsaire, pas de trois” by Hector Berlioz among others. Her stay here at home is short lived, and soon she will return to Stuttgart. Contemplating this, Georgia stated matter-of-factly, “Yes, and when I get back we begin to learn a whole new repertoire.”

“How exhausting”, I thought, but also “how wonderful and exciting life must be for Georgia!”

“On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;
No sleep till morn, when Youth and Pleasure meet
To chase the glowing hours with flying feet.” Lord Byron

Bravo Georgia and dance on!