



Canada's National Ballet School student announced winner of international Young Creation Award

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Toronto, ON, February 8, 2021 – An international jury of the Prix de Lausanne has announced Maya Smallwood, a grade 12 student in the Professional Ballet-Academic Program at Canada's National Ballet School, as one of two winners of the inaugural Young Creation Award. At 17, Smallwood was the youngest finalist and both the sole female and North American finalist choreographer selected from over 54 submissions worldwide.

"I am beyond grateful to be one of the winners – especially considering the number of young and talented individuals that were involved in the competition," says Smallwood. "I hope that my win will inspire others who have considered choreographing to try it because the feeling is so rewarding."

As a winner of this year's competition, which aims to discover aspiring and talented young choreographers, Smallwood's choreography will become part of the Prix de Lausanne contemporary repertoire in 2022. She will also have the opportunity to coach dancers who perform her piece.

"I am incredibly honored and proud to have represented Canada's National Ballet School at the Prix. It meant so much to me to see the NBS community rally and support me in this competition that has been months in the making," says Smallwood. A dual Canadian-American citizen, from Missouri, United States, Smallwood began her training at NBS in Toronto in Gr.7 and is working toward her Ontario Secondary School Diploma. "I am so thankful that I was able to represent both my Canadian and American nationalities in such a special way."

Smallwood set her work on Gr.11 NBS student Ewan Hartman, sharing that, "the organic and creative environment we worked in was incredible." Smallwood's choreographic work, titled *Unravel*, is "about the psychological constraints and barriers that we put on ourselves."

Says Mavis Staines, NBS' Artistic Director and CEO, "On behalf of NBS, I am very proud to congratulate Maya on this recognition, especially as she realised her beautiful creation under the pandemic's constraints. Multi-talented and deeply thoughtful, Maya absolutely deserves the opportunity afforded by this exciting international initiative, and Canada could not be better represented."

Staines shares, "As a Prix de Lausanne international partner school, Canada's National Ballet School is proud to participate in this annual celebration of young talent and global collaboration. The innovative addition of the Young Creation Award, focused on choreographic talent, reflects the Prix's commitment to constantly evolve how the competition supports future dance artists."

About Canada's National Ballet School

At Canada's National Ballet School (NBS), excellence, access and inclusion fuel our belief in sharing the transformative power of dance. Since 1959, NBS' pursuit of excellence has constantly revealed the lifechanging impact of dance. This is what drives the School's commitment to making dance a part of all Canadians' lives. Learn more at www.nbs-enb.ca.

About the Prix de Lausanne

Created in 1973, the Prix de Lausanne is an international ballet competition for young dancers aged 15-18 years old. Its goal is to discover, promote and support the finest talents around the world.

As part of the annual Prix de Lausanne International Ballet Competition, the [Young Creation Award](#) aims to discover aspiring and talented young choreographers. Entrants must be enrolled in a Prix de Lausanne partner school or company, and are required to create an original choreography of a contemporary variation, set on a fellow partner school student. Choreographies were filmed and submitted via video, and then judged by an international jury.

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