

Local dancer nationally ranked

Thirteen-year-old Chelsea Adomaitis of Framingham captivated an international panel of judges last week in New York City, where she finished in the top 24 against dancers from around the globe at the 2004 Youth America Grand Prix.

The Grand Prix draws thousands of competitors, dancers, teachers, and leading professionals from Japan, China, Mexico, Switzerland, Russia, Brazil and the US to a five-day competition that includes workshops and seminars and culminates in a climactic Gala performance held at Lincoln Center in Manhattan.

The event is seen as a stepping-stone for young dancers to launch professional careers, and has an impressive track record—winners frequently land apprentices in companies such as Paris Opera, Royal Ballet, Kirov Ballet, National Ballet of Canada, American Ballet Theatre, San Francisco Ballet, Joffrey Ballet of Chicago, and New York City Ballet, to name a few.

Adomaitis' journey to NYC began in March at one of the five regional semi-finals held around the globe, where she competed against 45 dancers, age 12-14, to earn a spot in the final competition in NYC last week.

A longtime student at the Dancing Arts Center (DAC) in Hollis-

ton, Adomaitis was accompanied in New York by her DAC coaches Wayne Stewarte and Perla Joy Furr.

DAC artistic director Karyn Edison describes the trip as an exercise in self-reliance as well as dance. "In their home studio, students work on technique and artistry, as well as emotional and intellectual development," she said.

"[Chelsea] had to deal with being in such an intense environment without any close friends or family with her... She had to deal with exhaustion, intimidation, nerves, and excitement, all on her own."

"I didn't have any of my friends with me, so I had to be independent," Adomaitis said.

An evaluation is intimidating at any age, but particularly so when your conference review is with the likes of Diana White of NYC Ballet and Rebecca Rice of American Ballet Theatre.

Adomaitis' clear-eyed navigation of classes, workshops, and competition in New York City indicates a bright future for the young dancer, who is very likely to dance professionally.

"Many dancers can dance beautifully, but few can handle the culture of the dance world. Chelsea can," said Edison.

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Chelsea Adomaitis dancing her solo of Kitri in Act I of Don Quixote,