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TWGHs S.C. Gaw Memorial College dancers won praise and prizes - but they want more

Local secondary school team scoops one prestigious award at the prestigious Blackpool Dance Festival

By Jocelyn Wong | June 27, 2015

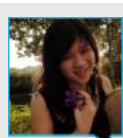
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Students from TWGHs S.C. Gaw Memorial College take to the floor in Blackpool, England.



Jocelyn Wong
CONTRIBUTOR

For 12 students from TWGHs S.C. Gaw Memorial College (SCGMC), the prestigious 90th Blackpool Dance Festival was a great success. Leaving the stages of England behind, they returned to Hong Kong with second place in the Blackpool British Open Ballroom Formation Dancing Championships.


Held each year in Blackpool, England, the Blackpool Dance


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Festival is one of the most important dance competitions in the world and features top international dancers.

Form Five student Lo Shuk-ting was especially excited about the competition because "taking part in Blackpool is every Latin dancer's dream". "The moment I found out, the first person I called was my mother, who told me to give it my best shot. Before this, my only exposure to Blackpool was through watching the competition highlights on YouTube - but now we're treading on the same ground as world class dancers!" she says.



Each step and twirl took a lot of hard work and practice.

SCGMC was by far the youngest team taking part this year - in fact, they were the only secondary school team in the competition.

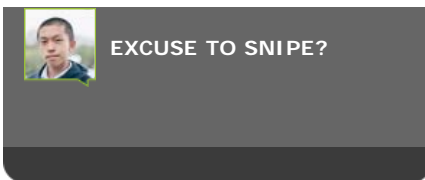
In addition to being so young, the team faced other challenges: with only one male and 11 female students on the team, they didn't meet the minimum requirement for the group dance category. That meant that they lost points even before the music started.

The only male student on the team, fourth-former Cheung Ching-kwok, was under a lot of pressure. "I was so scared," he says. "The other competitors were so strong. So I tried to just take it as a learning exercise." Watching his fellow competitors - some of the best dancers in the world - in action was a great experience for Ching-kwok, who learned to be more expressive during performances.

Having only one male competitor in their team put extra pressure on the other dancers, too. Some of the female students had to take on the physically demanding routines. SCGMC only had three months to prepare for the competition, so everyone had to work very hard.

Ching-kwok believes that tough training was the key to their success. Form One student Megan Rai Ka-hei agrees. "It was so tough, but stretching helps me become more mobile and agile which allows me to attempt harder moves" she says.

Shuk-ting also felt the tension of wanting to perform at the highest level so she "didn't let the team down". She decided to take things a step further, and started training



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on her own nine months before the competition to make sure she was in top form for Blackpool.

But all the stress of training and preparation disappeared as soon as the music came on. "I just got lost in the music," Shuk-ting says.



Lo Shuk-ting (left) and Cheung Ching-kwok getting lost in the music.

The local team's most memorable moment was the crowd's reaction. "When the audience members came up to us and praised our skills, it made the experience worthwhile," says Megan.

Shuk-ting claims British audiences are much more enthusiastic than those in Hong Kong.

"It was a surreal moment each time one of our teammates won in a category," she says. "It just didn't feel real that we could achieve such amazing results. I am so grateful for the experience and glad that my hard work paid off."

Her teammates agree but they are not satisfied with their achievements. They hope to return to Blackpool next year and win even greater honours.

This article appeared in the Young Post print edition as "Dancing dozen delights!"

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5

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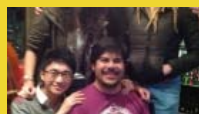
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