



# CHANCE *to* DANCE

Boys get the hang of ballet with Pas de Vie

Amanda Karioth Thompson Council on Culture & Arts

Collin Vaccaro has dedicated eight years of his young life to the study of dance. AMANDA THOMPSON

**R**eferred to worldwide as “Lord of the Dance,” Rudolf Nureyev was one of the greatest male ballet dancers in history. Though he came from humble beginnings, at his death in 1993, his estate was worth \$21 million. As a child, he sneaked into a ballet performance and his life was changed forever.

What he saw at age 7, confirmed his deepest desire. “There was simply from this quite early age the awareness that the only thing I wanted was to dance,” he acknowledged. **See DANCE, Page 2D**

# Dance

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There are many boys and young men who feel the pull of ballet and Pas de Vie Ballet, a local nonprofit organization, offers specific training for them at no cost. Third-grader Will Cintron is happy to take advantage of the instruction and has made a study of ballet over several years.

A third-grader at Cornerstone, Will says the dance classes make him “feel happy and energetic.” Looking towards the future, he wants to continue his training and anticipates participating in national competition opportunities.

Benjamin Miller, 18, can show Will the way. Miller graduated from high school last year and is currently a member of the senior company at Pas de Vie. He also co-teaches the community classes for boys and men alongside Charles Hagan, the ballet company director.

While Miller began dancing when he was four years old, he didn't take to ballet right away. It was only recently, under Hagan's guidance that he became enamored by the art form.

“It makes me feel like nothing else which is probably why I do it so much,” said Miller. He is eager to pass that enthusiasm on to young dancers like Collin Vaccaro.

Though it rarely comes up in conversations outside the dance community, Collin has dedicated eight years of his young life to the study of dance. An eighth-grader at Cobb Middle School, he has worked hard to attain a high level of skill and his efforts have paid off. “I'm

proud that I've finally gotten to senior company,” he said.

The training is intense and Collin outlined some of his areas of focus. “You really have to build up your legs. You've got to be able to really jump and balance is key. I'm just getting into partnering so I have to build up my upper body too.”

Other critical components of partnering are communication and trust. “You need to tell your partner what's going on and what needs to happen. You basically need to be one. If you're not, it goes all out of whack,” Collin said.

Collin shared that his strong suit is leaping and jumping and he's currently working on “ballon.” He explained that ballon is “when you're in the air and you kind of hold the jump up so it looks like it's longer than it should be, like it's frozen.”

Aside from defying gravity, Collin enjoys ballet because it allows for self-expression through the choreography. “I love theater and storytelling and you can put all that into dance,” he shared. Addressing other boys and young men who are contemplating ballet training, Collin stated boldly, “just go for it. There's no real consequences. It's really fun and you get a lot out of it.”

No doubt Nureyev would agree.

Pas de Vie Ballet's community ballet classes for men and boys are offered for free every Saturday. For more information about participating, visit their website at [pasdevieballet.com](http://pasdevieballet.com).

*Amanda Karioth Thompson is the Assistant Director for the Council on Culture & Arts. COCA is the capital area's umbrella agency for arts and culture ([www.tallahasseearts.org](http://www.tallahasseearts.org)).*