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August 01, 2014 at 03:00 AM EDT

# Canadian Dance Choreographer's Award-winning 'Forget About the Boy' Selected for World Dance Championship

The Kelli Gautreau choreographed, Broadway Dance Academy performed 'Forget About the Boy' is heading to the World Dance Championship next week in Secaucus, N.J.

LOS ANGELES, CA, August 01, 2014 /24-7PressRelease/ -- Kelli Gautreau, a dancer, choreographer and performing artist extraordinaire from 1000 Islands, Ontario, Canada, choreographed a dance number called "Forget About the Boy," which has been selected for competition at the World Dance Championship August 4-7 at the Meadowlands Exposition Center in Secaucus, N.J.

The championship is sponsored by the Star Dance Alliance (SDA), which hosts top international dance competitions such as Nexstar, Starpower, the Revolution Talent Competition, and the Believe and Imagine national competitions. Competitions are held in more than 70 locations a year.

The World Dance Championship features select dance groups in divisions spanning Petite (8 years old and under) through Senior (15-19 years old), and includes dancers from the U.K., the U.S., Canada, Australia and Japan. Groups may qualify by winning a SDA regional championship, a Victory Cup, a combination of first and second place high score awards or by invitation at a SDA national competition.

"Forget About the Boy" is a song from the six-time Tony Award-winning musical "Thoroughly Modern Millie," which made its Broadway premiere in 2002. The show, with music by Jeanine Tesori and lyrics by Dick Scanlan, is set in 1920s New York City when women began entering the work force. The song begins when a group of stenographers and telephone operators gossip about Millie's no-good boyfriend.

Gautreau, who has won many awards for her choreography in musicals, music videos, film, dance competitions and theme park shows, choreographed "Forget About the Boy" for the Broadway Dance Academy, a collective of outstanding child dancers from Brockville, Ontario, Canada. The dancers for "Forget About the Boy" are Cassie McClinton, Hannah Disney, Emma Tallon, Kea Buote, Sarrah McCarthy, Erica Csikany, Erika Fairbanks, Evan Oldfield, Alexa Waycik, Taylor Livingstone and Kayla Maggio.

Engaging her superlative experience in singing, dancing and acting, along with extensive training in New York City, Gautreau crafted the musical theatre number as a triple threat performance. The choreography enhanced the number to feature dancers who acted as characters, who sang and who all together told a story.

"Because I was choreographing the dance on kids, I decided to change things up in order to make the storyline more relatable for them," said Gautreau. "Instead of having them dress in professional 1920s secretary garb, I put them in private school uniforms. I changed the era and the location from 1920s secretary's office to present day school classroom. Instead of having a strict boss checking in on their work, I had a scary principal. Instead of having typewriters, I had the kids texting on their cell phones. Every singer/dancer was given a very specific character to work with. I had 11 kids in the dance and we had everything on stage from the teacher's pet, to the popular girl, to the sleeper in

the back, to the bratty kid throwing paper airplanes, to the book worm. Because everyone had different characters, there was a lot going on on stage all at once."

Buote, a dancer who plays the shy, studious student in "Forget About the Boy," said, "It was so much fun working together as a team and bringing our characters to life. Our group works so well together and I just had a blast being in this number. Such a great dance!"

Broadway Dance Academy first performed the number at SHINE, a dance competition in April in Kingston, Ontario, Canada. Claiming their first win, Broadway Dance Academy finished in first place out of 300 entries, and with it, earned qualification for national competition.

"At the Shine competition, the win was well deserved, but Kelli warned us about keeping a good head on our shoulders and not letting our victory stop us from working even harder towards the next competition," said Livingstone, who plays Millie's uppity best friend. "From there, the number exploded with us winning an invite to New Jersey to perform to countless overall awards and special awards from the judges. We worked really hard for everything we won, but the team and Forget About the Boy would be nothing without Kelli."

In May, Broadway Dance Academy performed "Forget About the Boy" at the Starpower Dance Competition in Syracuse, N.Y. Starpower competitions are often featured on the hit Lifetime TV series, "Dance Moms."

The number finished in first place in the All-Star, Large Group, 12-14 category. Gautreau's choreography was honored at Starpower with the Capezio Star Dance Alliance Award. Only seven other dances out of 600 were honored with the Capezio Award. Just three dances at Syracuse's Starpower competition were chosen to enter the World Dance Championship.

"When I choreographed this dance, I wasn't choreographing to win a competition," Gautreau said. "My goal was to make the audience and the judges feel like they just watched a full blown two hour musical in a four minute dance."

Vocal coach Krystal Belanger collaborated with Gautreau to create "Forget About the Boy." "Working with Kelli over the years is a true inspiration," she said. "Our kids are so lucky and fortunate to have instruction and choreography straight from the Big Apple. We were definitely unstoppable at every competition we went to - not bad for a small town studio in Brockville, Ontario."

Gautreau's choreography led to 10 other numbers receiving first place finishes for Broadway Dance Academy at the Syracuse Starpower competition, along with a second place finish for "Incarcerated," which finished just behind "Forget About the Boy." She also received an award in the 12 and over Entertainment category for a number called "Naughty Notes," where one dancer (Oldfield) played a conductor and six other dancers played musical notes that came to life.

"When I choreograph," Gautreau said, "even outside the context of a full musical, there has to be conflict that is being solved by the end of the song. Sometimes I am given a set story line - with in a musical - that I must follow and sometimes I am handed a blank slate. But either way, I make sure to create a beginning, a middle and an end to the choreography so that the viewer feels like they have accomplished something by watching it."

McCarthy, a dancer who plays the mean-spirited teacher in "Forget About the Boy," said, "Working with Kelli as my choreographer is an incredible and unique experience. She is able to choreograph pieces that challenge you as a dancer, actor and performer. Yet the piece fits the performer extraordinarily well. Every one of Kelli's pieces tells a story and I believe that is one of the most important things a choreographer can do."

McClinton, who plays the popular girl in "Forget About the Boy," agrees. "Kelli is the reason I can dance," she said. "She has been my teacher/choreographer for 10 years. This year the solo she

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choreographed for me won me a \$1000 scholarship to the dance university of my choice in Canada, as well as an invitation to perform in a dance showcase in London, Ontario, Canada."

Gautreau has led dance workshops throughout North and Central America, including a 2007 trip to San Pedro Sula, Honduras, to teach dance to underprivileged children. She is an annual performer in "Broadway Backwards," a Broadway Cares Equity Fights Aids benefit, and she also founded The Groove Train Performing Company, a children's theatre organization in Canada.

Her selected performing credits include critical roles in such acclaimed productions as "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" (Broadway tour/First National), "High School Musical" (North Shore Music Theatre), "The Great Unknown" (New York Musical Theatre Festival), "Invisible Child" (Midtown Theatre Festival), The bergenPAC Annual Spring Gala, choreography for "Spellbound" (New York City Fringe Festival official selection), opening for music icons Tony Bennett, Chaka Khan and Paul Anka and dancing in a live Times Square XBOX promo event with Grammy Award-winning R&B artist Ne-Yo. Gautreau's selected film credits include Cyndi Lauper's music video, "Into The Night Life" and the new Broadway Bares documentary, "BARED."

For more information, visit [www.kelligautreau.com](http://www.kelligautreau.com).

Kelli Gautreau is a dancer, choreographer and performing artist from 1000 Islands, Ontario, Canada.

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