



## EDMONTON'S 100% INDEPENDENT NEWS & ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

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### FILM

## TuTuMUCH

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With all the mainstream hype churning out from shows like *So You Think You Can Dance?*, it's nice to see a film that examines where many dance careers often begin: in the corps of aspiring young ballerinas.

TuTuMUCH documents the intensive summer program at the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, following nine dancers on the annual four-week journey that only 70 kids from around the world are invited to experience—the program teaches techniques to dancers aged 10–15 years old, and essentially acts as a month-long audition process for a few coveted spots in the Royal Winnipeg's professional school of ballet.

Considering a helluva lot of people flounder existentially about their careers into their 20s and 30s, it's astonishing to see the determination that a 10-year-old girl has when it comes to a possible profession in ballet. These kids talk about the gruelling classes in pointe shoes and their constantly burning muscles with grins and giggles while eating junk food—"You have to love it that much that you even love the pain," says 12-year-old Sidnie. It's kind of disconcerting to see such steadfast certainty in kids that age—the film kind of reminded me of *Jesus Camp* in that way—but you can't help but root for the ones who really, really want it.

Of course, some are disappointed and there's no shortage of tears, but it's interesting to see the girls' parents showing the most emotion about their daughters' futures.

"I feel heartbroken actually," says one mother after she finds out her 12-year-old daughter has been accepted into the professional school, and will move to Winnipeg from her home in Wisconsin. "But how do you tell a child 'no' to a dream?"

Indeed, the ballet's staff do dash dreams sometimes, and harshly too. No matter how much some want it, it comes down to the physique a dancer is born with—despite her strong drive, young Lauren is told that her shoulders are too broad and her neck is too short for the RWB's liking. It might be a ballet reality, but it's an awful, gut-wrenching thing to see a 12-year-old girl being told that her body just isn't right.

It is inspiring to watch girls like Melissa, though—it's apparent that at 13, she is already a talented dancer, but she's also reluctant to accept the path that the ballet lies out for her. With grace and a cool head, she makes the biggest decision of her young life, offering us a glimpse of the thoughtful, judicious woman she may grow up to be.

While the supposed feel-good moments should be of them making the cut, there's a lot to be surprised by in the girls' reactions to their fates. The film balances an impending feeling that life might just end at age 13 for a dancer, but finishes with a sense of hope that it actually doesn't—and that's why it's important to

keep dreaming, kids.

TuTuMUCH

Sun, Jan 17 (1 pm), Wed, Jan 20 (7pm)

Directed by Vonnie Von Helmolt

Cineplex Theatres Only

★★★ • •

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