



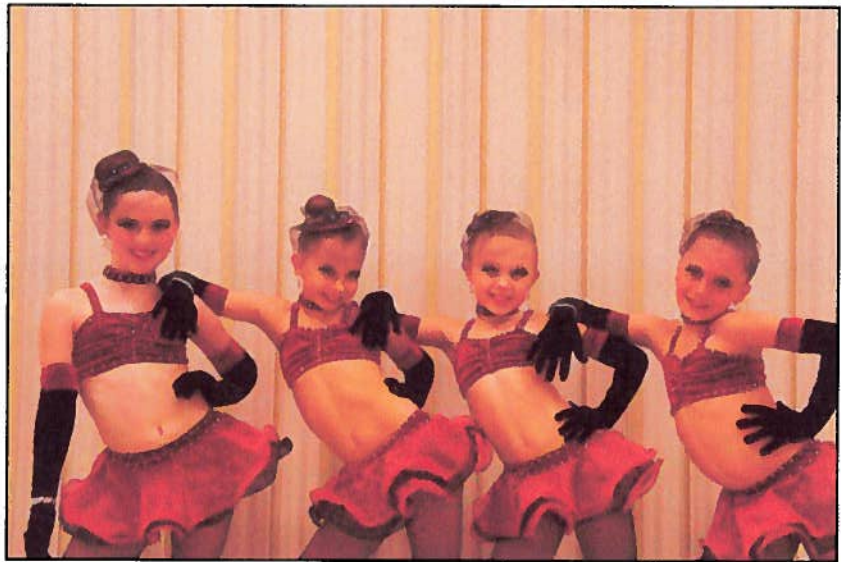
(left to right) back row: Margaret Sablich, Rachael Wexelberg, Kali Yallourakis, Trisha Madura, Raelyn Greene, Jessica Hiestand, Jolene Vincel, Maria Yallourakis, Evan Boersma, Carley Cox, Paige Gurley, Meghan Chaussey, Julia Amones
 middle row: Ryan Hoffman, Morgan Walls, Elizabeth Amones, Briley Boersma
 front row: Isabelle Awald, Adele Megaro

“Your leaps, your faces, your turns I’ve adored...to this school who consistently platinum I’ve scored...” said the poem written by Judge Piper Arpan from VIP regional dance competition to the United Dance Arts Company. Select few dances receive special judges’ awards, but the “UDA CO.” was fortunate enough to walk away from their successful season with three national overall scoring dances, along with the countless platinum medals, category winners, and overall titles. Under the instruction of Va-

Navia Ventura, the twenty-nine competition dances took months to perfect. Such dedication and close bond within the nineteen-member company only helped lead to their success in the long run.

Attending Hollywood Vibe National Dance Competition in Sandusky, Ohio (June 27-30, 2012), United Dance Arts Company resulted with an Overall teen scoring group that contained the full company (“Money”), an Overall Junior group (“Diamonds”) containing the mini dance team, and Isabelle

Awald as a seven-year-old soloist (“Baby I’m A Star”). The full company number “Money” was also entered into the “Battle of the Stars” at the national competition, containing all of the highest scoring numbers of the entire week. “I’m very excited about all our success this season,” said VaNavia Ventura, choreographer and coach for the company, “this one, however, felt like a greater accomplishment based on the level of difficulty of the talent as well as our being judged by some of the top industry choreographers.”



(left to right) Briley Boersma, Ryan Hoffman, Morgan Walls, Elizabeth Amones, & Isabelle Awald (not pictured) won Junior Open Small Group

At studio dance competitions, each number is given a percentage based on an average of three judges’ scores which corresponds with a medal award. Platinum (for most competitions) is the highest possible, followed by High Gold, Gold, High Silver, Silver, and Bronze. For UDA, Platinum scores were very abundant. At this National competition alone, the company received platinum scores for twenty of their twenty-eight competed dances at Nationals. Twelve of their dances placed first in their categories as well, including: “Money” (teen open large group), “Stand Up For Love” (senior lyrical small group),

“Sassy” (junior jazz small group), “Diamonds” (junior open small group), “Hit The Road” (intermediate jazz small group), “Joyousness” (junior ballet small group), “Hiding Underwater” (senior open large group), “Show Me How You Express” (senior musical theater small group), “Ain’t No Other Man” (senior jazz small group), “Glam” (intermediate jazz duet), “Baby I’m A Star” (mini jazz solo), “Use

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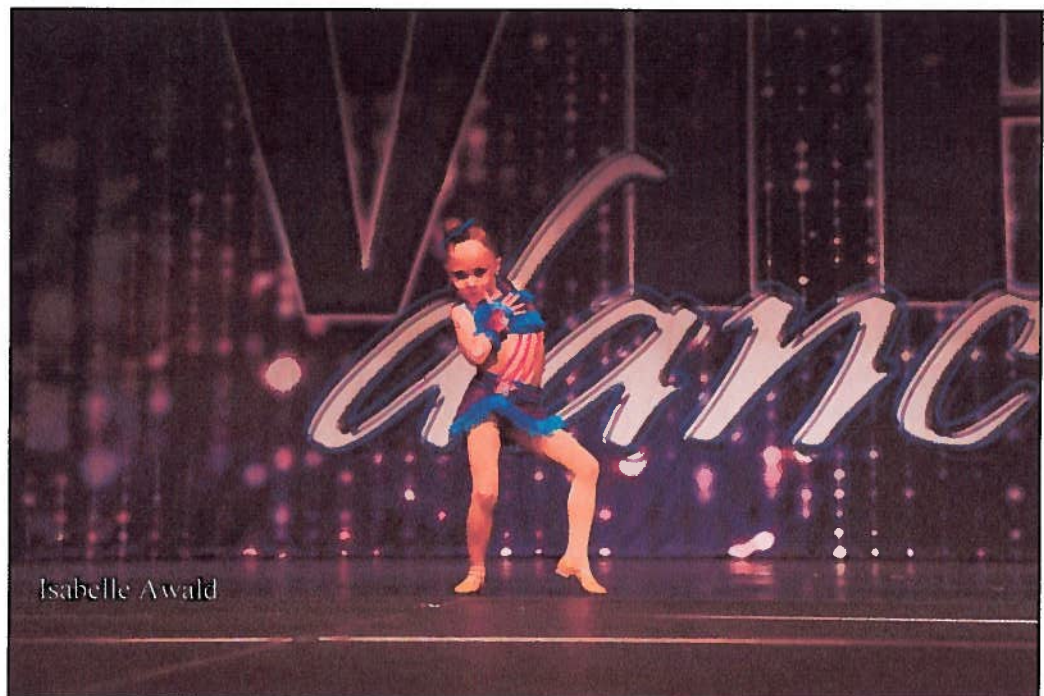
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What You Got” (intermediate open solo). Second place in category dances include: “Sophisticated Lady” (senior jazz large group), “Royal T” (senior jazz solo), and “It’s About That Walk” (intermediate jazz solo). Third place in category dances also include: “Don’t Worry Now” (teen lyrical solo) and “My Discarded Men” (teen jazz solo)

As the year progressed, talent was justified and improved as a group. “The UDA Co. has made incredible improvement since the beginning of this year; through many hours of rehearsal, teamwork, and dedication, we went from being good to reaching the upper echelon of the competition dancers,” says Kali Yallourakis, the graduating senior of the United Dance Arts Company of 2012, “The UDA Co. is a testament to how a small, tight-knit team can compete with poise and defeat their competitors.” The members of company were required to take at least six hours of classes per week, including: Ballet, Turns & Leaps, Jazz, Lyrical, and Stretching & Conditioning. Going above and beyond, many students took more classes than required, such as Tumbling, Contemporary, Pointe, and Hip Hop. The dancers’ weekends were dedicated to the studio while being a company member, also. The “pearls” (Mini Dance Team) rehearsed on most Fri-

day nights, along with select privates to work on solo dances. Saturdays consisted of rehearsal for “Sapphires & Diamonds” (Teen and Senior) that lasted up to ten hours. The pearls would come in to rehearse “Money” (National Winning Full Company Number) with the older girls on Saturdays as well. Sundays were taken by private lessons for soloists and duet dancers competing on the company, also.

“This was a transitional year for us because we obtained several newcomers. With such hard work and training, by the end of the year it was nice to see my new students gel so nicely with my old ones creating one united team,” stated coach VaNavia Ventura. The new company members were pushed to dance the equivalent style as the returning members this year, while the veterans were challenged to have everyone dance as one team as well. Unique skills were worked on during the week in class to improve tech-



Isabelle Awald

nique. Combinations were taught very often to improve musicality, technique, and prepare for competition lifestyle. Improvisation was used by just doing your own best skills and style without any preparation to any song played; most improvisation was done on your own, which prepared dancers for conventions and stage life. Combining these concepts made the dancers stronger and more fearless, leading to the winning company that they were made to be.

The talent from such a team carries a variety of ages: from five to eighteen-years old. The age differences only give the team that much more fire when competing in different age groups and categories. At the Hollywood Vibe Nationals this June, the company won almost every category possible, including Jazz, Open, Lyrical, Musical Theater, and Ballet. Having so much age division between the members opened up more opportunities for competitions and experience in the dance world.

Leading up to nationals, the team had such a successful regional competition season as well. Regional competitions that were encountered this year included: Hollywood

Vibe, VIP, Nexstar, Rainbow Connection, NUVO, and Showstoppers. Overall awards were infinite, along with many choreography and costume awards given to coach Ventura or Stephanie Bell, choreographer and costume designer for mini ballet number and pointe solo competed throughout the company. At VIP dance regionals in Grand Rapids, Michigan, three numbers from United



Dance Arts were scored in the "VIP TOP TEN," which consisted of the top ten scoring dances from the entire competition (that contained over 500 registered dances)! "Money (full company large group) placed third; "Hit the Road" (small jazz group) placed seventh; "Glam" (jazz duet) placed ninth on the VIP list for the

weekend.

As for next year, some even higher goals have been set by the coach, as well as looking forward to new members to join the crew. Ventura states, "My goals for this year include working on a bigger variety of skills, and focusing on their capability of picking up choreography at a faster rate. I want them to be well rounded in their training." With new goals set and a brand new studio coming



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for UDA, the team's only hopes are to become even stronger in their passion and drive for dancing. Graduating and leaving the company after a successful regional season and nationals, Kali Yallourakis says, "Nationals was the perfect end to my best year yet. Overall, I couldn't have possibly asked for a better outcome."

United Dance Arts could not have been more thrilled with the honors they have been given this past season. Throughout twenty-nine phenomenal dances, nineteen dedicated members, and three national titles, the team's goals were far surpassed and overwhelmed by such success. As Judge Piper Arpan said in her poem, "So come on up for me, the fabulous crew from United Dance Arts Company!"

National Overall Scoring Dances

"Money" (Entire Company): Adele Megaro, Briley Boersma, Carley Cox, Elizabeth Amones, Evan Boersma, Isabelle Awald, Jessica Hiestand, Jolene Vincel, Julia Amones, Kali Yallourakis, Margaret Sablich, Maria Yallourakis, Meghan Chaussey, Morgan Walls, Paige Gurley, Rachael Wexelberg, Raelyn Greene, Ryan Hoffman, Trisha Madura (yours truly)

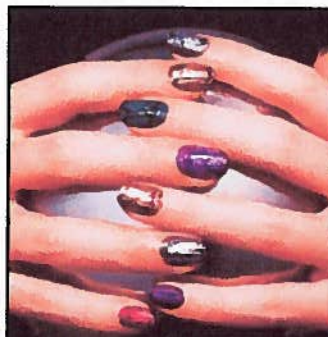
"Diamonds": Briley Boersma, Elizabeth Amones, Isabelle Awald, Morgan Walls, Ryan Hoffman

"Baby I'm A Star": Isabelle Awald



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