

Women we love
CREATORS & INNOVATORS



STAINES ON HER STUDENTS:

"THEIR IS THE VULNERABILITY OF WANTING SOMETHING SO BADLY. I SAY, LET'S EMPOWER THEM."

*Artistic director of Canada's
National Ballet School*

Mavis Staines

I was 10 years old when I met Mavis Staines and I didn't speak a word of English. I had just auditioned for Canada's National Ballet School and was considering leaving my family and home in Northern Quebec to pursue my dream to be a dancer. My parents were reluctant to let their young son go to boarding school 1,000 kilometres away from home and Mavis was the one who made them feel more comfortable with making this big decision.

She assured them that it was something I needed to do and that my future would be brighter for it. During my years at the school, Mavis was demanding of all of her students, including me; I must've been sent to her office every week for one thing or another. But through her constant attention and great diplomacy, she helped me to grow as an artist and as a person. I believe that without Mavis, I would never have left home and would never have become the dancer I am today. I owe my career to her dedication to her students.

Since my years at the school, which is now celebrating its 50th anniversary, Mavis's accomplishments as artistic director have been remarkable. Only 55 herself, she has managed to get the support from the community to build one of the most beautiful dance facilities in the world and she's given Canada's National Ballet School graduates a world of opportunities with her international connections. Mavis's students are now all over the world; we are all part of her lasting legacy of dance.

BY GUILLAUME CÔTÉ

Guillaume Côté is a principal dancer for the National Ballet of Canada. He will dance the lead role of Prince Florimund in The Sleeping Beauty from November 13 to 22 at Toronto's Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts.