

Dancer's dream

By [Melissa Fryer - Nanaimo News Bulletin](#)

Millions of little girls dream of pirouetting across the stage as Sleeping Beauty.

Few realize that dream, but among the fortunate is Nanaimo's Jillian Vanstone, who will perform a pas de deux from Sleeping Beauty during the National Ballet of Canada's performance at the Port Theatre.

"I just knew that's what I wanted to do," said Vanstone, who was promoted to first soloist in the company in 2006.

She was just eight years old – two years into ballet lessons at Kirkwood Academy of Performing Arts – when she decided ballet was her career.

"I remember telling my mom – how many little girls must say that?" Vanstone said.

She returns to her hometown with the national ballet's show of four selections from previous works – Sleeping Beauty, Apollo, Musings and The Lady of Camellias.

Vanstone performs in three of the four works, including the title role of Sleeping Beauty, which she will perform for the first time.

"It's sort of a debut for me," Vanstone said. "It will be one of my top favourites."

She also performs in Musings, a James Kudelka choreographed work to the music of Mozart, and Apollo, where she plays Calliope, the goddess of poetry.

"It's a busy night for me, actually," Vanstone said.

To help switch between styles and from one character to another, Vanstone practises her steps during intermission.

"There is a bit of a mental shift between each role," Vanstone said.

She and her national ballet colleagues rehearse upwards of six hours a day, often moving between several different ballets during one rehearsal.

"It's very similar doing a mixed show," Vanstone said.

The variety of pieces chosen for this show is the result of the Port Theatre and the national ballet trying to salvage the ballet's touring show, which was cancelled earlier in the year due to budget shortfalls caused by the recession. Nanaimo and Victoria are the only two cities to see this show.



Jillian Vanstone performs with the National Ballet of Canada in three roles Sleeping Beauty, Calliope in Apollo and the Port Musings at Theatre Sept. 28. Sian Richards photo