

Bolton teenagers perform in first Virtual Concert Reality event

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Two Bolton teens performed in a new virtual concert event organized and performed all by youth members.

The online concert was live streamed on February 27 and was headlined by 14-year-old Mini Pop Kids star Peyton Garcia who performed a variety of cover songs from artists like Justin Bieber and Dua Lipa, as well as originals.

In addition to Garcia, performances also featured America's Got Talent finalists GEN: ZED, and OPUS Dance Collective dance group. The show was put together with the help of industry producer Jamie Hodgins.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the online virtual concert allowed the young talent to continue to put on a show while keeping safe from the virus.

Two of the participants were 14-year-old Caledon residents, Ava Barbuto and Hailey Vultao, who dance with Joanne Chapman's School of Dance located in Brampton. Both girls have been dancing with each other since a very young age, and excitedly enough, are also best friends.

"I started dancing when I was three years old, and I guess I loved it ever since. When my mom took me to my first ballet class, I remember that all the kids were crying and I wanted to be there," said Ava. "I wanted to go to the next class, so I knew from there that that was something I wanted to continue to see how far I'll go, and where I'll go, and how much I'll accomplish."

"I started dancing when I was two, and my sister danced, so when my mom put me in there to try it, I just found the love for it," added Hailey.

At the Joanne Chapman School of Dance, the girls learned not one, not two, but a variety of different types of dance, including ballet, jazz, hip-hop, contemporary, just to name a few.

Both Hailey and Ava began competing in dance at the dance school when they were three years old, and have grown into successful, competitive and talented dancers.

Ava has danced in music videos and commercials, including Mini Pop Kids. She has also won several scholarships and awards at workshops and competitions.

Hailey, same as Ava, began competing with Joanne Chapman School of Dance, and also danced for Mini Pops Kids concerts and videos. She has won several scholarships and awards as well including Miss Mini CanDance, Fever's Junior Powerhouse and a DancerPalooza's Beat Squad.

Additionally, Hailey has also modelled for companies like Walmart and Joe Fresh.

The online virtual concert was a huge success for not only the audience who got to watch from the comfort of their own homes, but by all performers and crew.

"I think it went very well. I love how all the effects came together and all the different lighting. When we were filming it, we didn't really know how it would turn out since we were behind the camera," said Ava. "One of my favourite parts was the Bieber mash-up to perform and watch, because it has some of my favourite songs."

?My favourite part of the show was my favourite number, which was Levitation (by Dua Lipa), because it was really upbeat and just overall a very fun to dance too, but I also liked Falling because I got to do a duet with my best friend Ava,? explained Hailey.

Although they weren't able to perform in front of a physical audience, they were able to experience a different way of performing for an audience ? but it did prove to have its challenges.

?It's really different,? said Ava. ?It makes it harder for the dancers to try and learn and practising the choreography if we don't know the exact steps. So, it's more challenging than what we're used to, but it was a fun experience.?

A second part of the Virtual Concert Reality (VCR) is hoped to be coming this upcoming summer, where both girls will once again get to perform for a large online audience.

You go girls!