

Bruendl soars with spot in Cinderella

By Tim Fitzgerald
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Erik Bruendl may have taken the road less travelled, but he has a clear idea of where he's heading.

While sports traditionally dominates a vast majority of youth's athletic past time, Bruendl's focus was not on wins and losses, but rather on technique and practice. Lots of practice.

Bruendl, a Thomas Haney grade 12 student, has spent his youth dedicating his life to dance, and has landed several roles in Coastal City Ballet's spring production of *Cinderella*.

The show will make its premiere May 15 at Centennial Theatre in North Vancouver and May 30 at the Surrey Arts Centre.

"It's great to be able to perform in a full-scale production like *Cinderella* because chances to dance at this level for people my age are very rare," said Bluendl.

He said while productions like the *Nutcracker* dominate at Christmas time, other productions with varied dances don't come up that often.

"It's not just a great opportunity



Contributed

Thomas Haney's Erik Bluendl will take on several roles in Coastal City Ballet's production of *Cinderella*.

for me, but for everyone taking part. It offers a broad range of what we can perform."

The road to *Cinderella* was paved during Bruendl's early years when there were few male dancers in the

area and none in Pitt Meadows when he started out.

But like all great students, the

spark of passion stems from leaders.

His mother Roxanne believed that it was largely due to the constant enthusiasm and encouragement of his early ballet teachers, Louise Warren, Keri-Lyn Battrick, and Karrie Hill.

She also attributed his drive to succeed to the Pitt Meadows dance community as a whole, where Erik felt confident enough to pursue his love of ballet in his middle school years.

Bluendl thrived on his numerous performances at dance recitals, dance competitions and with the Royal City Youth Ballet at the ACT in Maple Ridge.

In Grade 9, realizing the need to train seriously, Bluendl transferred to Thomas Haney secondary, where he could complete his academics in the morning and train at the Half Day Intensive Program at Pacific Dance Arts in Vancouver.

During the summer of 2013, he was asked by the Royal Winnipeg Ballet School to join their year-round training program.

While the allure of training at one of Canada's most renowned schools was enticing, Bluendl once again chose a different path.

"There's lot of different paths to follow. I just wanted to keep training locally and it's been a great opportunity."

• costalcityballet.com.