

SPRING / SUMMER 2020

# NUEVA

MAGAZINE



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**past and current**  
**students, parents,**  
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**and friends of**  
**The Nueva School.**

# THE NUEVA SCHOOL

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## THE NUEVA SCHOOL

is an independent, co-  
educational, PreK–Grade 12  
school for gifted learners.  
Our school community inspires  
passion for lifelong learning,  
fosters social and emotional  
acuity, and develops the  
imaginative mind. Nueva uses  
a dynamic educational model  
to enable gifted learners to  
make choices that will benefit  
the world.

## WANT TO REACH OUR ALUMNI OFFICE?

Please email us at  
alumni@nuevaschool.org!

**nuevaschool.org**

## Dear Nueva Community,

We are excited about the latest edition of *Nueva Magazine*—we hope you will enjoy its new look and vibrant pages! As we have navigated uncharted waters during the past several months due to COVID-19, we have done our best to capture the remarkable stories and resilience of the Nueva community. We quickly adapted to the challenges of remote learning, and I was astounded by the dedication and perseverance of Nueva students and teachers.

This summer, we said farewell to Head of School Diane Rosenberg, who has inspired young lives for 19 years through her legacy of kindness, compassion, intellectual curiosity, diversity, and inclusion at Nueva. She will be deeply missed by our

community, and her impact will never be forgotten. I know that Diane will visit our campus in the future, and she will stay in touch with her beloved students, colleagues, parents, and alumni.

In July, new Head of School Lee Fertig took the reins. I spoke to Lee about his vision as Nueva's new head of school, and I am excited to share his goals on page 24. Lee is looking forward to embracing his new chapter and propelling Nueva forward, while simultaneously maintaining a culture that is steeped in tradition.

Through our storytelling of the 2019–2020 school year, the Communications Team has been inspired by Nueva's passionate students and faculty, outstanding programs, and notable achievements. As you read their stories, we hope that you will be inspired as well! We are delighted to share the stories of the extraordinary people who make Nueva what it is today—a school where students are free to create, learn, care for one another, express themselves, and strive for excellence while making a significant difference in the world around them.

Go *Mavericks* and best wishes,

### Antonia Ehlers

Director of Communications



**DROP US A NOTE:** Share your thoughts on this magazine—and anything Nueva related—at [communications@nuevaschool.org](mailto:communications@nuevaschool.org)

STAY CONNECTED



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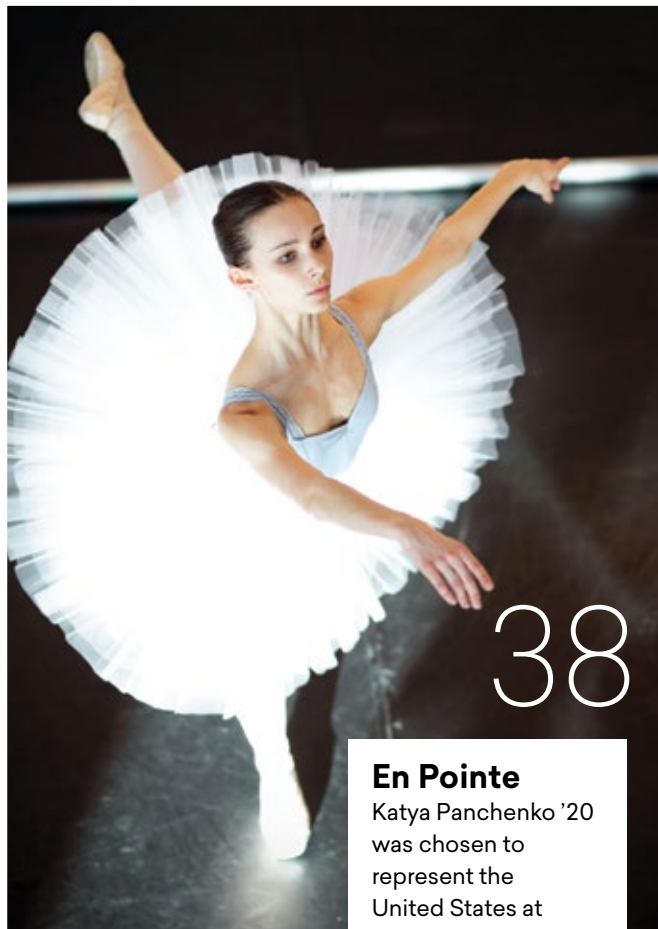
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As we physically distanced this  
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closer than ever in spirit.

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Every instrument has a  
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"I loved driving the  
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is a backhoe.'"   
[Diane Rosenberg](#)  
Nueva head of school  
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ILLUSTRATION BY  
ELEANOR SHAKESPEARE

**A New Era**

Q&A with  
incoming  
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Lee Fertig.



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# K

Katya Panchenko '20 was elated when she learned that she was chosen to represent the United States at one of the world's most prestigious ballet competitions: Prix de Lausanne 2020.

The exciting competition was held in Montreux, Switzerland in February. The majority of dancers applied via video submission, and were chosen by a jury of nine dance judges from around the world who evaluated 377 dancers from 44 countries.

"Growing up as a ballet dancer, I watched the international Prix de Lausanne competitions and it was my dream to participate one day," Katya recounted. "Last fall, I worked with my ballet teacher, Inna Bayer, to prepare and record a video application. A month later, I received an email that I was accepted! I was so excited but also worried if I would be able to prepare in just three months while keeping up with my college applications and academic program at school."

The week-long Prix de Lausanne event hosted 77 candidates from 27 countries. The dancers took classical and contemporary classes for five days. Each dancer presented on stage one classical and one contemporary solo.

"The event was far more than just a competition—it was an opportunity to network with international ballet schools and companies," Katya said. "I worked with incredibly experienced, world-renowned ballet teachers including Elizabeth Platel, the director of Paris

On a family vacation in Lisbon, Portugal, Katya's mom, Yelena, snapped this photo during a mini photo-shoot.

Opera Ballet School. I met and was inspired by talented young dancers from all over the world."

Katya added that the experience also had a few challenges.

"I quickly had to adapt to new, unfamiliar dance styles, fight jet lag, and overcome nervousness and self-doubt about the performance," she explained.

Katya has been dancing at the Bayer Ballet Academy in Mountain View since she was 4. She has pirouetted to the pre-professional level, which means dancing for at least three hours, five days a week.

are many performances and competitions.

"I am so grateful for the support I have received at Nueva—from my teachers offering tutoring hours and extending project deadlines to my classmates sharing their notes and taking time to explain concepts I missed," Katya said. "This year was the most challenging for me because of the heavy ballet performance and competition schedule and college applications."

Katya plans to attend UC Berkeley this fall, where she hopes to double major in computer science and molecular and cell biology with an



"I quickly had to adapt to new, unfamiliar dance styles, fight jet lag, and overcome nervousness and self-doubt about the performance."

# En Pointe

## Katya Panchenko '20 Dances at Prix de Lausanne

"After school, I typically rush to the ballet studio and have class most days until around 9 p.m.," she noted. "I often squeeze in about an hour of homework before my classes, but finish most of my work once I get home, before school, or during lunch."

Balancing pre-professional ballet training with high school academics has forced Katya to stay focused and manage her time efficiently. In addition to her regular high school commitments, there

emphasis in neurobiology. She will continue to dance through college and hopes to one day pursue one of her greatest dreams—dancing in Europe.

"It would enable me to get a feel for the daily life of a professional ballerina," she said. "It is a hard decision to choose between a professional ballet company and my passion for biology and engineering; they both fuel me intellectually and creatively. I am very excited to learn what the future will bring." [N]

STORY BY  
ANTONIA  
EHLERS

PHOTO BY  
YELENA  
PANCHENKO



For more on Katya's ballet highlights, follow her on Instagram @katyaa.ballet

# THE NUEVA SCHOOL

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#NUEVATOGETHER. See page 40.

## Dancer reflects on experience at international competition

By Kaitlyn Huang  
Town Crier Editorial Intern

When Katya Panchenko boarded a plane to Montreux, Switzerland, she was on her way to participate in one of the most prestigious international dance competitions, the Prix de Lausanne. She returned to the Bay Area without making the finals, but the classical ballet dancer still called the competition a “great learning experience.”

“Such competitions have taught me how to calm my nerves and connect with the art and audience, which is why I dance,” said the 18-year-old, a student at the Bayer Ballet Academy in Mountain View.

Panchenko, a senior at The Nueva School in San Mateo, and fellow Bayer Ballet student Alina Taratorin were among 10 dancers selected from the United States to compete. In all, 77 dancers were invited to not only compete Feb. 2-9, but also participate in classes and rehearsals led by ballet and contemporary masters. They spent the first five days training and competed for the final two days. Twenty-one of them advanced to the final round, with eight receiving scholarships to continue their dance education in a renowned dance academy.

A typical day for Panchenko during competition week started with a morning in the gym followed by a warm-up class at 8 a.m.

After warm-up, she took classical and contemporary classes led by dance masters, enabling dancers to expand their knowledge on the classical and contemporary art forms and rehearse their own solo variations with coaches. She finished her day at approximately 6 p.m. and prepared for the next day.

“Something that struck me was how willing the teachers were to support us through the competition,” Panchenko said. “I guess I expected that most of them would simply teach the class and leave, but I found that they were genuinely interested in sharing their knowledge with us.”

However, preparing for a competition also had its challenges.

“I think the biggest challenges I faced while preparing for the competition were both

finding time to rehearse as well as maintaining self-confidence,” Panchenko said.

### Dedication and hard work

Panchenko said she didn’t have much time to prepare for the Prix de Lausanne until December, after she was finished with college applications and rehearsals for Bayer Ballet’s annual winter showcase, “The Snow Queen.”

“It was hard finding a balance between school and ballet – I would be going to the studio in the mornings and catching up on schoolwork in the evenings,” Panchenko said. “But I think it was these long, private rehearsals in which I saw the most improvement and that prepared me the most (both physically and mentally).”

Inna Bayer, artistic director of Bayer Ballet Academy, said, “This is an unquestionably prestigious competition, and when I found out that Katya was selected, I was ecstatic. This is a testimony to Katya’s dedication to her training and work ethic.”

Panchenko began dancing at age 4 at Bayer Ballet. She has trained with Bayer ever since.

“In the 14 years that she’s been my teacher, Ms. Inna has also been a close friend and



COURTESY OF GREGORY BATARDON

**Katya Panchenko, a student at Mountain View’s Bayer Ballet Academy, traveled to Switzerland earlier this year to participate in a selective international dance competition.**

mentor,” Panchenko said. “She has always believed in me, pushed me and been by my side. Her love for ballet shines through in every class and rehearsal, and (she) does everything in her power to shape us into better dancers (as well as better people).”

She also said that ballet school was where she found her closest friends and her “second family.”

“It is very rare for an instructor to teach the same student throughout their entire train-

ing journey, from young child to teenager to young adult. As Bayer Ballet grew, so did Katya,” Bayer said. “After 14 years of teaching Katya, I have established a unique bond with her, similar to a mother/daughter relationship.”

Panchenko offered advice to those who aspire to become a professional dancer.

“I think my general advice would be to work hard and smart,” she said, “but while doing that, not to forget what about ballet made you fall in love with

it in the first place.”

Panchenko plans to attend UC Berkeley in the fall, expanding her interest in human biology and engineering, and finding time to continue dancing.

“I support her in any decision she chooses because I want her to find the career path that brings her happiness and feel that her success in ballet has given her a foundation to help her succeed in any endeavor she decides to pursue,” Bayer said. “It has been a pleasure to serve as a mentor to her on this journey.”

## Congratulations Class of 2020



**Jordana Bischoff**  
Mountain View High School  
Congratulations!  
We are so proud of you, good luck at Chapman University!  
Love,  
Mom & Dad



**Jackson & Abbie Thompson**  
St. Martin of Tours  
Congratulations on your 8th grade graduation. Next stop... Bellarmine and Archbishop Mitty!  
Much love & congratulations from your whole family!!



**Nate Bischoff**  
Chapman University  
Congratulations, your hard work paid off!  
We are so proud of you!!  
Lots of love,  
Grandma & Grandpa

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