



吳振紅

Chan Hon Goh

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突破局限 創造歷史 ——吳振紅的芭蕾舞夢想與人生

藝術家給人的感覺通常要麼不羈，要麼精緻，而吳振紅的舉手投足間都透著一種純淨的氣質--那種心無旁騖、一心一意創造美的純淨。她說：「藝術就是要感染別人，是為了帶給觀眾更美好的感受。」

攀登藝術巔峰

她的確做到了，而且達到了頂峰。芭蕾舞是西方傳統藝術項目，在西方國家更是白人一統天下的領域。但生於中國、有一張東方面孔的吳振紅，卻在這個領域創下多個歷史紀錄。

她十幾歲時就成為首位贏得瑞士洛桑國際舞蹈賽大獎和英國皇家芭蕾舞學院的Genée國際芭蕾舞賽銀獎的加拿大舞者。高中一畢業她就被加拿大國家芭蕾舞團召入旗下，24歲成為該團第一位華裔首席舞者，並多次應邀到歐美和澳洲、亞洲的芭蕾舞團客串主演。

在國家芭蕾舞團的21年間，除了天鵝公主、睡美人以及朱麗葉等經典角色，吳振紅還扮演過蝴蝶夫人等專門為她量身打造的角色。無論是扮演天真少女還是悲情幽靈，她的表演都以至臻至善深入人心。藝術評論家蘇珊·沃克這樣評價吳振紅：「作為一位舞蹈家，她纖細的身軀下蘊含著強大力量 and 高度，作為一位表演家，她對悲劇角色的詮釋令人難忘，深深打動了觀眾」。

2009年吳振紅從國家芭蕾舞團退役，選擇《吉賽爾》作為告別演出劇目。演出結束時掌聲經久不息，加拿大主流媒體毫不吝惜讚美之詞，給予她極高評價。例如《多倫多星報》的評論文章說：「吳振紅和康瓦利納（劇中與吳搭檔的男主角扮演者）通過震撼人心的表演，給了現代觀眾一個理由相信愛情的救贖力量。」

卓絕的藝術成就為吳振紅帶來許多榮譽，她曾先後榮獲伊麗莎白女王二世鑽禧獎章、YWCA傑出女性獎、傑出移民獎以及加拿大公民的最高榮譽——加拿大勳章，卑詩大學還授予她榮譽博士學位。

天份與汗水

在這些成就背後，是與生俱來的天份，更是非凡的執著和毅力。芭蕾是一種充滿矛盾張力的藝術：在觀眾眼裏，芭蕾舞者的跳動總是無比輕盈，他們的身姿總是那麼舒展；但對芭蕾舞者而言，每一個跳動和姿勢都需要極強的掌控力，而這必須通過經年累月的艱苦訓練和付出無數汗水才能達到。

因為熱愛芭蕾，吳振紅從來不怕練習的苦累與傷痛。一談起舞蹈，她的眼睛就熠熠發光。她說：「當舞蹈演員是一種享受，因為永遠有可以再進步再提高的地方。」她覺得自己很幸運，能夠一直做自己最愛的事情。

她唯一怕的只是受傷會影響訓練和演出。20多年的舞臺生涯中，她曾有過三次骨折，其中一次是車禍導致的。她一度很焦慮，擔心自己從此要依靠拐杖。靠著極大的毅力，她終於重返舞臺。

家庭的影響

吳振紅生於藝術之家。她父親吳祖捷生於新加坡（也正因此他們的英文姓氏是Goh而不是漢語拼音的Wu，前者是新加坡通用的閩南和潮汕音譯拼法），上世紀50年代初慕名到北京求學於當時在中國任教的蘇聯芭蕾舞名師，因此與張令儀結緣，後來兩人雙雙成為中國中央芭蕾舞團的首席舞蹈演員。

吳祖捷夫婦原本不想讓女兒走芭蕾舞這條路，因為他們深知這條路的艱辛，芭蕾舞演員的事業黃金期又很短暫。他們常說：「這個家已經有兩個只會跳舞、其他什麼都不會做的人了，不能再來一個都是這樣的。」吳振紅卻偏偏對芭蕾舞情有獨鍾，她從小就夢想成為舞蹈家，常試穿母親的芭蕾舞鞋。移民加拿大後，吳祖捷夫婦成立了Goh芭蕾舞學院，教授學生跳芭蕾舞。吳振紅常常在旁邊「偷師學藝」。當她11歲時，父母終於拗不過她的執著，開始對她進行系統培訓。

除了父母在舞蹈藝術上的精心培養，吳振紅的姥姥對她影響也很大。小時候因為父母忙於事業，姥姥照顧她的時間更多。在吳振紅眼裏，姥姥非常正直且嚴於律己。她始終記得姥姥對她說的話：「你想要得到什麼東西，就要加倍努力。如果你做到比別人雙倍好，人家也沒法不給你。」

一直以來，吳振紅就是以這樣的標準要求自己的。在國家芭蕾舞團，短短幾年就晉升到首席舞者，並非她格外幸運，而是因為她的專注：每當沒有被編導選中時，她從不去想是不是自己的膚色和背景妨礙了她獲得認可，而是反省自己的技藝還有那些可以提高的空間。並非她天真到以為加拿大完全不存在

種族歧視，而是因為她專注於精益求精，所以不會去客觀因素裏尋找安慰。

傳承藝術 回饋社會

退役後，吳振紅回到溫哥華，擔任Goh芭蕾舞學院和青年舞團的藝術總監。這所學院培養出了包括吳振紅在內的一批頂尖芭蕾舞人才，從這裏走出的學生屢屢在國際比賽中獲獎，所以早已聲名遠揚，甚至有很多人從海外慕名前來求學。但吳振紅沒有滿足於現狀，就像在舞臺上時一樣，她總想著達到新的高度。

聖誕節時上演芭蕾舞劇《胡桃夾子》是西方的一個傳統。吳振紅覺得「每個城市都應該有自己的《胡桃夾子》，」所以從2009年起，她開始為第二故鄉溫哥華打造她專屬的《胡桃夾子》。Goh芭蕾舞青年舞團的演員是這齣劇的主力，吳振紅還邀請一些芭蕾舞明星來客串演出，既為這出劇增加亮點，也為青年舞團的學生提供難得的機會與明星同臺演出大型劇目。如今Goh芭蕾舞青年舞團的《胡桃夾子》已成為溫哥華值得驕傲的新傳統。

除了教授Goh芭蕾舞學院的學生，吳振紅還經常參加國際活動，與世界各地的藝術界同行交流，分享經驗，為青年舞者特別是第三世界國家的舞者提供支持。

創新與夢想

2020年開始的全球疫情，給Goh芭蕾舞學院和青年舞團帶來

巨大挑戰。如吳振紅所說：「芭蕾舞是一種活的藝術」。不能在劇場演出，不能進行集體訓練和排練，幾乎等於宣告了芭蕾學院和舞團運作的終結。但吳振紅沒有放棄，她仍然尋求著突破。

為了幫助學生保持對舞蹈的興趣和信心，她和團隊創造了很多「替代項目」。她租下劇場，把學生們分別預約來，將他們的表演拍攝下來，送去參加舞蹈節或者國際比賽，或者將不同片段剪輯合成影片，上傳至網絡讓學生和家長們觀看和進行交流。

2020年，吳振紅找來編劇和導演，拍攝了一部微電影，從一個芭蕾舞者的視角講述了Goh芭蕾舞團的《胡桃夾子》十年發展歷程的故事。2021年，吳振紅作為製作人又拍了一部紀錄片，講述了Goh芭蕾學院不同學生的舞蹈和人生夢想故事。他們有著不同的種族和文化背景，所面臨的困惑或困境也各不相同，甚至他們並非都擁有傳統的「芭蕾身材」條件，但他們都有一顆對舞蹈的赤誠之心，在Goh芭蕾學院，他們找到了實現夢想的信心。

在記錄片中，吳振紅說：「當我接手〔Goh芭蕾〕學院的時候，我就想著要把它帶進新時代、新世紀。芭蕾舞有一些特定的規則，但是規則是可以被打破的。」今年底，因疫情中斷了兩年的《胡桃夾子》將回歸溫哥華的伊麗莎白女王劇院舞臺。讓我們拭目以待，吳振紅這次又將帶給觀眾什麼樣的驚喜。

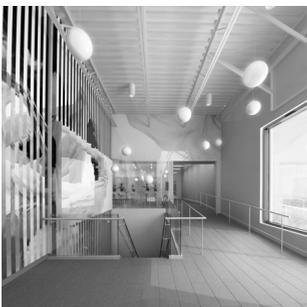


Ms Chan Hon Goh C.M. and family with the Governor General of Canada | Her Excellency the Right Honourable Mary Simon, at a private reception following the Order of Canada investiture ceremony Rideau Hall.



在家人陪同下出席卑詩大學榮譽博士授予典禮
Family at UBC 2020 Honorary Degree Ceremony

GOH 芭蕾舞院
GOH Ballet



吳振紅和父親吳祖捷
Chan Hon Goh and her father Choo Chiat Goh



吳振紅舞臺劇照
Chan's performance



2009年 Montecristo
雜誌冬季刊
Montecristo Magazine,
winter 2009



吳振紅自創品牌芭蕾舞鞋
Chan's shoe



2021年7月出席學員的試演
Goh at an audition, July 2021



在課堂指導學生
Teaching in class



吳振紅勉勵學生
Encouraging students



吳振紅在課堂指導學生
Goh at class



與學員分享
Sharing with students in class



學生演出照
Student's performance

Break Through Barriers and Make History — Chan Hon Goh's Ballet Dreams and Life

Artists often give the impression that they are uninhibited or refined. But Chan Hon Goh's every gesture is infused with a purity, a focus to create beauty. She says, "Art is to affect others, to bring to the audience a more beautiful feeling."

Reaching the Pinnacle of Art

She really did it, and she reached the top. Ballet is a western tradition, a white-dominated territory. But Chinese born Chan Hon Goh, with an Asian face, has made history in this territory.

In her teens she became the first Canadian dancer to win an award at Switzerland's Prix de Lausanne International Competition of Dance and the silver medal at the British Royal Academy of Dance's Genée International Ballet Competition. She was recruited by the National Ballet of Canada upon graduation from high school and at 24 became the first Chinese Canadian to be a principal dancer. She was invited many times to dance with ballet companies in the USA, Europe, Australia and Asia.

In her 21 years with the National Ballet of Canada, besides typical roles in Swan Lake, Sleeping Beauty and Romeo and Juliet, Chan Hon has danced Madam Butterfly and other roles specifically choreographed for her. Whether an innocent young girl or a tragic romantic figure, her performances deeply touched the hearts of

audiences. Critic Susan Walker had this to say about Chan Hon Goh: “A dancer with strength and elevation belies her slender frame, a performer who moves audiences with her indelible interpretation of tragic heroines.”

Chan Hon retired from the National Ballet Company in 2009, choosing Giselle as her farewell performance. At the end, the audience’s applause was thunderous and long. Canadian media raved about her performance. The Toronto Star said: “ ... Goh and Konvalina ... give a contemporary audience a reason to believe in the redeeming power of love through their stirring performance”.

Her excellent artistry brought Chan Hon much recognition - she has received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, YWCA Outstanding Woman Award, Outstanding Immigrant Award and Canada’s highest honour for Canadians - the Order of Canada. UBC granted her an honorary doctorate.

Talent and Sweat

To achieve this success, there was her natural born talent, and extraordinary perseverance. Ballet is full of contradictions: the audience see ballerinas jump light as feather, their bodies always so soothing and elegant. But for a ballet dancer, every jump, every pose requires extreme control that takes years of training and sweat.

Because of her love for ballet, Chan Hon never minded the exhaustion and physical toll of practice. Mention dance, and her eyes light up. She said: “Being a dancer is a joy because there is always

room for improvement, a higher level.” She feels very fortunate because she was doing what she most loves.

Her only fear was that injury would impact her practice and performance. In her over 20 years dancing career, she has had three fractures, one from a car accident. She was worried she would need to walk with crutches. But hard work brought her back to the stage.

Family Influence

Chan Hon was born into an artistic family. Her father, Chu Chiat Goh, was born in Singapore (this is why their last name is spelled Goh, from the Hokkien and ChaoShan dialects common in Singapore, and not spelled Wu, as in the Chinese Pinyin used in China). He studied in the 1950s with a USSR ballet master in Beijing, where he met his wife (Lin Yee Goh). Together they later became principals with the National Ballet of China.

The Goh parents did not want their daughter to get into ballet because they knew how difficult it would be and how short lived a ballerina’s career is. They often said: “This family already has two dancers who can’t do anything else, there can’t be another one like that.” But Chan Hon loved ballet. She has dreamed of being a dancer since she was a little girl, often dressing up in her mother’s ballet slippers. After immigrating to Canada, the senior Gohs opened Goh Ballet Academy to teach ballet. Chan Hon often sat on the sidelines to observe. When she was eleven her parents finally gave in and started teaching her formally.

Besides her parents, Chan Hon's grandmother was a big influence. When her parents were busy with work, young Chan Hon spent a lot of time with her grandmother. She remembers her grandmother being an upright and highly disciplined woman. She told Chan Hon, "Whatever you want to do, you must work extra hard. When you are twice as good as other people, they will not be able to not give it to you."

This is the standard Chan Hon sets for herself. At the National Ballet of Canada, she rose to principal dancer in a few years not because she was lucky but because she was focused. Whenever she was not picked by the choreographer, she didn't blame her skin colour or background as barriers, she would reflect on her technique to see where she could improve. That's not to say there was no racial discrimination in Canada at all. But because of her focus on continuing to improve, she did not settle for excuses.

Art Legacy Giving Back to Society

After retirement, Chan Hon returned to Vancouver to work at Goh Ballet Academy, and became the artistic director of Goh Ballet Youth Company. Besides Chan Hon, this dance academy has produced many exceptional ballet dancers, many of whom have won competitions internationally thus earning the school such a reputation that students come from around the world. Still Chan Hon is not content to rest on her laurels. She is looking for that next level.

The ballet Nutcracker is a Christmas tradition in the west. Chan Hon feels that every city should have its own Nutcracker. Since 2009, she has been working on her own Nutcracker in her second home town Vancouver with Goh Ballet Youth Company. Chan Hon invites star dancers to guest dance to bring more celebrity to the show, and to provide her students with a rare opportunity to dance with well known ballerinas. Goh Ballet's Nutcracker has become a proud new Vancouver tradition.

Besides teaching her students, Chan Hon often participates in international events, sharing and liaising with artists from around the world, as well as supporting young dancers from Third World countries.

Innovation and Dream

The pandemic that started in 2020 posed a great challenge for Goh Ballet Academy and Youth Company. As Chan Hon said, "Ballet is a living art." When dancers cannot perform on stage, or practice collectively, it is like someone announced the end of the ballet school and dance group. But Chan Hon did not give up, she continued to look for breakthroughs.

In order to sustain her students' interest and confidence in ballet, she created "alternative programs". Chan Hon rented a theatre where students could schedule individual time slots to record their dancing in a video to be sent to dance festivals or international competitions. Video clips are also combined together to form a complete show

and uploaded online for students and their families to enjoy and share.

Also in 2020, Chan Hon found a screenwriter and director to make a movie that tells, from a young dancer's perspective, the 10 year journey of developing *The Nutcracker* at Goh Ballet Academy. In 2021 Chan Hon produced a documentary about different Goh Ballet Academy students and their dance and life stories. They are from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, face all kinds of struggles and dilemmas including doubts about their own physical suitability to be a ballet dancer. But they all have a passion for dance, and at Goh Ballet Academy they have found the confidence to make their dreams a reality.

In the documentary, Chan Hon said: "When I took over the school, I wanted to move into the new era, the new century. There are certain rules in ballet, but rules can be broken."

Later this year, *The Nutcracker* will return to Vancouver's Queen Elizabeth Theatre after a two year hiatus due to Covid. We all eagerly await what new surprises Chan Hon would bring to her audience.