



Students practice ballroom dancing at the Fred Astaire Studio on Second Avenue in preparation for the Viennese Winter Ball to take place February 20.

## Viennese Ball a night of elegance and magic for students

By Reba Wilson

Ottawa's 19th Viennese Winter Ball will take place on February 20. The event, which is presented by Music and Beyond, has a sense of magic and fun about it. Hailing from an 18th century Viennese tradition that continues to this day, it is elegant, stylish and the perfect place to dance the night away. It will also be a modern fairy tale for the 24 Ottawa high school and university students who have applied, been selected and trained for the honour of presenting the opening Polonaise. Glebe Collegiate has three student participants: Griffin Barr, Jona Thomas and Robin Scheeren.

The debutantes and cavaliers gathered at Fred Astaire Dance Studio on Second Avenue for their first rehearsal on a recent January weekend. The teens began practising their steps led by its vivacious owner, Melissa Krulick, who has long been involved with this fantastic event.

Many of the debutantes and cavaliers have long wanted to be a part of this magical event. Erin Lange of Holy Trinity Catholic High School has been waiting for the chance to dance since she first heard of the ball when she was eight years old. Ashbury College student Bennett Bleeker learned about it from his two siblings who both participated in past years. This is an event students seem to hear about and aspire to participate in.

Jordan Thompson of Immaculata High School applied after hearing about the event from his mother who attended years ago. Though Thompson has a profound appreciation for classical music, having been a member

of the Ottawa Youth Orchestra for four years where he was second violin, he did not have any dancing experience. "It is like learning how to become a gentleman," Thompson said about the dancing, calling it a traditional skill that requires respect for one's partner.

Melissa Krulick joked at a recent cocktail party in support of the ball hosted by Austrian Ambassador Arno Riedel and his wife, Loretta Loria-Riedel, that she will only stop teaching the dancers when one of the past debutantes or cavaliers has their own debutante or cavalier.

In addition to offering an incomparable evening, the ball has always been dedicated to giving back to the community, with over \$700,000 raised over the past 18 years. This year's beneficiaries are Music and Beyond's young people initiatives: the Junior Thirteen Strings and Orkidstra. Several of the debutantes and cavaliers are passionate about classical music and one, Karina Wang of Ashbury College, summed up why she thinks it is so important for young people. "Listening to classical music has been proven to have a calming and relaxing effect. I find this helpful when I get stressed with work from school," said Wang.

If you are interested in participating in this wonderful event, you can purchase tickets at [www.viennesewinterball.ca](http://www.viennesewinterball.ca) for \$450 or an eight-person table for \$3,500.

*Reba Wilson is a former Viennese Winter Ball debutante and current committee member. Her interviews with chefs and celebrities have been published in various magazines.*

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4			1
3			2

**How to play:** Numbers 1 to 4 must be in every row, column & box without being repeated.

*Happy Valentine's Day!*

2	4	1	3
1	3	4	2
4	2	3	1
3	1	2	4

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