

## Universal Dance Academy takes top honors at nationals



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The Midwest National Finals for the Spotlight Dance Cup was held in Branson, Mo., June 17-22.

Universal Dance Academy (UDA) spent six days competing against 30 of the top dance studios in the Midwest. UDA, honored to represent Nebraska, won many top honors.

UDA owners Vivian Ball & Angela Beery credit the high achievements to hard work, dedication, and love of dance from each of their team members.

UDA's Competitive Team for 2013 consisted of 60 members and dancers; 36 traveled to Branson for the National Dance Finals.

In addition to the competition, several UDA dancers were chosen from the Spotlight regional competition in Omaha last April to perform as an "Elite Dancer" in the final performance of the Nationals Extravaganza.

These dancers spent several long hours the week at Nationals learning choreography from Joelle Martinec, artistic director, and choreographer for the Los Angeles-based Sole Vita Dance Company. These dancers included: Hudson Beery, Paige Brophy, Rose Copes, Patia Wolfe, Lillian Ball, Kelsie Bliss, Claire Johnston, and Kristen Delisi.

Many of UDA's students took advantage of several fabulous dance classes that were conducted by the guest judges throughout the week. The judges for Spotlight ranged from current Rockets, Broadway cast members and some of the dance industry's leading choreographers and teachers.

UDA had six students compete for Miss Spotlight. Rose Copes was honored to receive 1st runner – up for the National 2013 Junior Miss Spotlight Title. Rose received her crown from the reigning "Junior Mr. Spotlight 2012," Universal's own Jack Beery.

Universal's instructors and students won many specialty awards including Best Costume Design for a jazz group titled "Bionic Atomic" and the large group production number of "Elf".

The studio was given a "Triple Crown Award," given out for the three highest combined solo scores in the junior division that included: Jack Beery "Can't Touch This", Rose Copes "Mama's Place" and Paige Brophy "Don't Upset The Rhythm". UDA was also given the Triple Crown Award for the highest duo/trio combined dance scores including: Jack Beery & Kelsie Bliss, "Too Cute"; Rose Copes, Halie Gibson and Patia Wolfe, "Close to You" Junior Division and Madalyn Balfany, McKenzie Balfany and Trevin Ball "Home" senior division.

Tap dancer Jack Beery also received a Directors Choice Award for best routine of the day,

for his tap solo “Can't Touch This”.The Competitive Company was also given several judges' choice awards for dances that stood out to them, from the 800 dances they judged throughout the week.

UDA owners and directors Angela and Vivian credit all these awards to a year of teamwork and great attention to technical detail. Each one of the 60 students from their mini teams (ages 5 to 8) to their senior teams (ages 15 to 18) had tremendous success at several regional competitions attended. The Academy won several National titles for solos, duo/trios, small and large groups.

The Academy ended the Nationals weekend with the highest honor given at the competition: the production number of “Elf” was named 1st place production. “Elf “ won a five-foot-trophy and cash award of \$1,000. Universal’s 36 “Elf” members competed against several other studios whose productions included up to 100 dancers per dance.

The UDA dancers and parents also received a studio spirit award for their outstanding team spirit throughout the whole Nationals week.

The following UDA dances ranked in the top 10 overall positions: “My Mama Told Me” - Hudson Beery, Ava Freeman, Lexie Gibson, Holland Maxwell, Tatum Schossow: 3rd overall Petite Jazz Diamond Award, Jazz category cup winner, Judges Choice: Stealing the Spotlight, \$100 Cash ;

“Bye Bye”- Hudson Beery: 4th overall Petite Tap Diamond Award, Tap category cup winner, \$25 Cash; “Can't Touch This” - Jack Beery: National Champion 1st overall Junior Tap Diamond Award, Directors Choice Award, \$250 Cash ; “Boyz” - Halie Gibson: 4th overall Junior Jazz Diamond Award, Judges choice: Showmanship, age 10 Jazz category cup winner, \$25 Cash;

“Mama's Place” - Rose Copes: 9th overall Junior Jazz Diamond Award, age 11 Jazz category cup winner ; “Wicked Little Girls” - Paige Brophy & Emery Wenz: 4th overall Junior Diamond Open Duo/Trio winner, Open Division Duo/Trio category cup winner, \$25 Cash ;“Gravity” - Rose Copes, Olivia Foster, Carrie Keating, Sammy Nielson, Emery Wenz: 2nd overall Junior Lyrical small group Diamond Award, age 11 Lyrical category cup winner, \$150 Cash;

“Mr.Saxobeat”- Allison Benson, Rose Copes, Mackenzy Ehlers, Dalton Pinzon, Brecken Schossow: 3rd overall Junior Tap small group Diamond Award, Tap category cup winner, \$100 Cash; “Bionic Atomic” - Rose Copes, Halie Gibson, Carrie Keating, Sammy Nielson, Emery Wenz, Patia Wolfe: 6th overall Junior Jazz small group Diamond Award, Costume Award, Jazz category cup winner, ; “Hit The Floor” - Lillian Ball, Beaudree Ball, Jack Beery, Hudson Beery, Paxton Beery, Allison Benson, Kelsie Bliss, Rose Copes, Danielle Delp, Olivia Foster, Ava Freeman, Lexie Gibson, Halie Gibson, Brittany Leschinsky, Bailey Leuty, Sadie Lewis, Dalton Pinzon, Payton Prall, Laurel Preuit, Lucy Schwarts, Emery Wenz: 4th overall Junior Hip Hop Line Diamond Award, \$75 Cash ; “Too Cute” - Jack Beery & Kelsie Bliss: 3rd overall Teen Tap Duo/Trio Award,

Dynamic Duo Award, \$50 Cash ; “Lifeline” Lillian Ball, Madalyn Balfany, Claire Johnston, : 6th overall Teen Contemporary Duo/Trio Diamond Award, “Royal T”- Lillian Ball, Madalyn Balfany, Kelsie Bliss, Claire Johnston: 6th overall Teen Jazz small group Diamond Award, Jazz category cup, Ruby Championship Finalist;

“Home” - Trevin Ball, Madalyn Balfany, McKenzie Balfany: 2nd overall Senior Tap Duo/Trio

Diamond Award, \$75Cash ; “Elf” - Madalyn Balfany, McKenzie Balfany, Trevin Ball, Lillian Ball, Jack Beery, Hudson Beery, Allison Benson, Paige Brophy, Rose Copes, Kristen Delisi, Danielle Delp, Olivia Foster, Ava Freeman, Lexie Gibson, Halie Gibson, Addison Hasenpflug, Claire Johnston, Carrie Keating, Brittany Leschinsky, Bailey Leuty, Sadie Lewis, Madilyn Lundy, Sarah Mathis, Holland Maxwell, Sammy Nielson, Liza Piccoli, Dalton Pinzon, Payton Prall, Laurel Preuit, Tatum Schossow, Brecken Schossow, Lucy Schwartz, Emory Throener, Paxton Wenz, Emery Wenz, Patia Wolfe: National Championship 1st overall Production Specialty Division Diamond Award, Costume Award, \$1,000 cash.