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BLAKE BEAT

Junior Dilawari given opportunity to dance beside star, show off talent

Dancer prepares to showcase skills at

By Amey Owen

Not many 16-year-olds can say that they have the opportunity to dance beside an international superstar.

Then again, junior Komal Dilawari is no ordinary teenager.

Dilawari first heard about the opportunity to be a dancer for famous singer Raghav, whose album Storyteller has sold over 1.5 million copies worldwide, at Aryan Dance Company, where she is a student. Performing hip-hop and R&B type music, Raghav uses old Indian song beats and choruses in his songs and adds English lyrics. Says Dilawari, "I was...so thankful and excited for the opportunity to at least try out." Dilawari made the audition and will perform a hip-hop style dance alongside Raghav for the Bollywood Movie Awards May 26 at the Nassau Coliseum in Uniondale, New York.

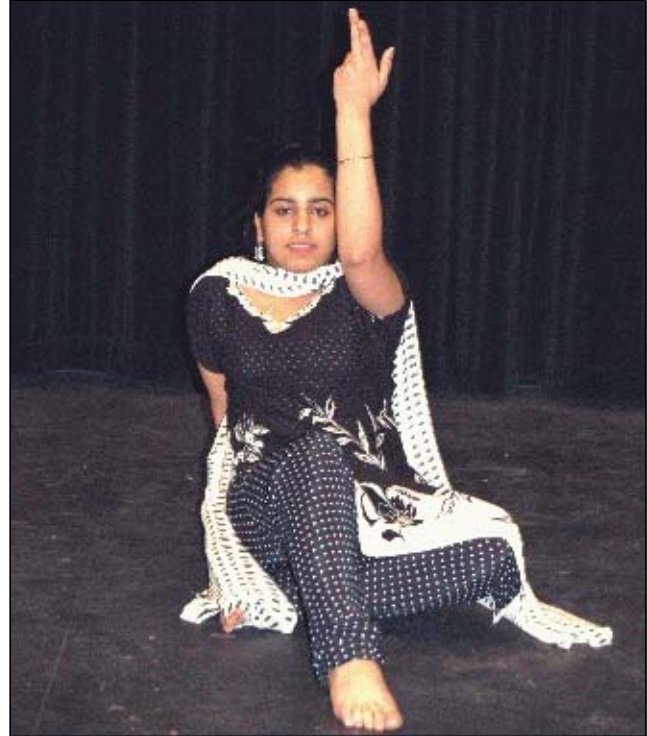
Dancing since she was six, Dilawari has performed numerous times. Says Dilawari, "I usually get nervous before I go on stage, but once I am on stage I feel really excited ...especially when I see the audience." One of Dilawari's most memorable performances was at the Kennedy Center, where she performed Kuchipudi, a type of classical dance.

Currently, she is practicing at Ballet Petite in Cabin John Mall to prepare for the Bollywood Movie Awards. "The choreographer wants you to pick it up fast so he only shows the moves once [or] twice and then moves on," says Dilawari. "You just basically...need to move fast and learn...quickly." Along with these rehearsals, Dilawari also attends weekly practices with her dance company at Peter's Dance Studio in Wheaton.

When not performing or practicing, Dilawari spreads her passion for dancing onto others. Every Sunday at her temple Chinmaya Mission in Silver Spring, Dilawari teaches "Bhangra", a type of folk dance originating from the state of Punjab in India. "I love teaching because I love to dance," adds Dilawari. "It's a great opportunity and it's great to teach others who also have a passion for dance."

With such a busy schedule, Dilawari feels fortunate to have a family that supports her. Adds Dilawari, "I am thank[ful to] my entire family for always being there for me and supporting my dancing."

"I am very excited for this performance," says Dilawari, "This is my dream come true."



Junior Komal Dilawari has the opportunity of a lifetime by being able to dance along the famous singer Raghav. Her performance with him will happen for the Bollywood Movie Awards May 26. --photo by Sarah Waterworth