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30 Years Apart, Mom, Daughter Dance Same Role

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Emily Gershowitz stars as the Snow Queen opposite Jackson Fort in New York Dance Theatre's production of "The Nutcracker," 30 years after her mom danced the same role.

A banner for Daniel Gale Sotheby's International Realty. It features the text "LIVE PLAYFUL" in large white letters and "Find Your Home" in a white button. The background is a photograph of a man and a young girl smiling and looking at a tablet together.

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By **Sophia Ricco**
sricco@longislandergroup.com

When Marnie Gershowitz was cast as the Snow Queen in "The Nutcracker" at 15 years old, she never would have imagined that 30 years later her daughter Emily would follow in her pointe shoes.

Emily, a junior at Half Hollow Hills High School East, is set to perform for the second year as the Snow Queen in the New York Dance Theatre's production of "The Nutcracker", under the same company and dance teacher as her mother. The part of the Snow Queen is highly coveted as one of the lead female roles in the production and the first to dance the pas de deux, a classical male/female partnering.

"Our lives in the ballet world parallel each other," Marnie said. "We both started young and when you're young and involved in the Nutcracker, you see the older dancer and aspire to become one of them one day... The Snow Queen is a role you aspire to."

In preparation for the performance, the production has held weekly practices since September. Emily also takes classes five days a week that total 12 to 14 hours of technique work.

"In class I heard a little girl watching through the doorway say, 'Oh my gosh she's wearing pointe shoes.' And I don't know when I became one of the older girls that a little girl looks up to, but I guess I did," Emily said.



Marnie Gershowitz dances with James Garland in the 1987 production of "The Nutcracker."

This year, Marnie will watch her daughter from the wings and admits she still holds her breath when she hears the overture for the dance. As a ballet teacher, she can give Emily corrections, considered compliments in the ballet world, for the role she once danced.

"It's special because there's certain things that she understands about the role more," Emily said.

"The Nutcracker" is scheduled for four performances at Hofstra University's John Cranford Adams Playhouse, Dec. 15 and 16 at noon and 5 p.m. Emily will be playing the Snow Queen during the opening and closing shows, Half Hollow Hills High School West's Amanda San Jose will alternate with her. Purchase tickets at ohmanballet.org.

Emily hopes to continue dancing in the future.

"I want ballet to be in my life," Emily said. "It's always been a part of my life and I can't really picture life without it at all."

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