

# Young gun aims for the Great White Way

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Viveca Chow Hung-ka was just nine when she first set foot on the stage, as an ensemble member in a local production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat*. That moment eight years ago changed her life.

Since then, she has steadily polished her singing and dancing skills, and is routinely selected for leads in Hong Kong's summer musicals. She has had training stints in New York, and in January she beat 36 other young performers to win a scholarship to attend a Summer Broadway Camp at the Franklin School for the Performing Arts in Massachusetts.

Viveca first heard about the competition from her mother, but both her parents helped her prepare the song *It's a Perfect Relationship* from the musical *Bells are Ringing* for the auditions.

"You go into a room and all the faculty is there, and you sing one song for 32 bars and they assess you based on your voice technique, acting, how you dress and how you express the song and your interpretation."

Despite her stage experience, Viveca says she was astonished by her win. "The talent there was amazing, so I was very surprised."

That's pretty good going for the 17-year-old who describes theatre as "my life". Still, she recognises she's just getting started.

Viveca is quick to attribute her successes to a combination of luck and the help from her coaches and parents, but it is clear that



Viveca Chow, who played Ariel Moore in a local production of *Footloose* in 2010, is off to a Broadway Camp in the US

she is a hard worker and consummate perfectionist.

A member of the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts' chamber choir, Viveca attends a singing lesson with her voice coach, Owen Wong, as well as two dance classes, one in jazz and one in ballet, every week. All on top of a strict training regimen she imposes on herself every day.

"As a performer I definitely have

to practise every day, rehearse every day. I practise in front of a mirror and watch my facial expressions ... I also try to do some paperwork before I sing a song. I ask myself questions: What is the obstacle the character is facing in the song? What is her ultimate goal in the song? Why is she singing the song? What feelings is she going through?"

Hard work aside, it is impossible not to notice she is a natural:



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"The stage feels like a home to me. It feels very comfortable and it's where I can truly express myself and not worry what other people think of me."

A seminal experience for her happened in the summer of 2010, when she spent five weeks in New York, studying and performing with Collaborative Arts Project 21, a professional theatrical company and conservatory in Manhattan.

"It was an eye-opener for me definitely," Viveca says. "It was just so professional ... we danced, sang and acted every day. It was overwhelming ... I got to work with amazing faculty. It was just an amazing experience."

With her recent win, Chow will be returning to the US, where, over the course of just two weeks, she will be expected to step into a lead part in the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta *The Pirates of Penzance*, take on a dramatic role in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and perform in a one-act play as part of the Broadway Camp experience.

Her long-term goal is no surprise: "I would dearly love to be on Broadway one day."

She seems well on her way. She has already accepted a position this autumn at Point Park University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where she will focus on dance.

Even so, she knows she can't take anything for granted. "It's a very hard and long journey. I'm very excited, but I'm also very nervous," she says. "I just feel there's a lot of great talent out there. There's a lot of competition out there, so I just want to be the best I can be."