

For Immediate Release



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Darcey Bussell and Polina Semionova to perform in Youth America Grand Prix Galas, “Stars of Today Meet the Stars of Tomorrow” and “Dancers’ Choice Gala” at NY City Center

THE TWO GALAS WILL FEATURE TOP WINNERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT BALLET COMPETITION AND:

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| ■ Darcey Bussell, David Makhateli | (The Royal Ballet) |
| ■ Polina Semionova, Artem Shpilevsky | (Berlin Staatsoper) |
| ■ Maria Alexandrova | (Bolshoi Ballet) |
| ■ Denis and Anastasia Matvyenko | (Ukrainian National Opera) |
| ■ Marcelo Gomes, David Hallberg | (American Ballet Theater) |
| ■ Sofiane Sylve | (New York City Ballet) |
| ■ Gregor Hatala | (Vienna State Opera) |
| ■ Irena Veterova | (Wiesbaden Ballet) |
| ■ Christopher Wheeldon (emcee/host) | |

“Stars of Today meet the Stars of Tomorrow” GALA ■ NY City Center ■ Saturday, April 22, 2006 ■ 7:00pm
“Dancers’ Choice” GALA ■ NY City Center ■ Sunday, April 23, 2006 ■ 3:00pm

New York, NY (January 13, 2006) – International ballet super-star Darcey Bussell and Europe’s hottest ballet sensation Polina Semionova will lead an unprecedented gathering of ballet stars from around the world in Youth America Grand Prix’s annual “Stars of Today Meet the Stars of Tomorrow” Gala on April 22nd and the “Dancers’ Choice Gala” on April 23rd, 2006 at New York City Center. The two Galas will conclude the 7th season of America’s premier international student ballet scholarship competition – which in only 7 years has become the largest student ballet competition in the world. The YAGP 2006 New York City Finals will take place on April 19-22, 2006, when finalists selected from semi-final rounds all over the globe will compete for over \$150,000 in scholarships to 30 of the world’s leading dance schools and the professional contract to the ABT Studio Company. The culmination of the Finals – the two Galas held at NY City Center on April 22nd and 23rd – will feature the all-star cast alongside some of the best young dancers from around the world in two programs. “**Stars of Today Meet the Stars of Tomorrow” Gala** on April 22nd will feature a more traditional, classically oriented repertoire, while “**Dancers’ Choice” Gala** on April 23rd will present an entirely different program featuring never-before-seen pairing of dancers from the world’s leading dance companies and groundbreaking, contemporary choreography. Both Galas will be hosted by special guest emcee, **Christopher Wheeldon**.

Tickets to “Stars of Today meet the Stars of Tomorrow” Gala (Saturday, April 22, 2006 at 7:00pm) and “Dancers’ Choice” Gala (Sunday, April 23, 2006 at 3:00pm) are \$150, \$100, \$75, \$50, and \$35 and can be purchased by calling CityTix® at 212.581.1212, online at www.nycitycenter.org or in person at City Center Box Office located on West 55th Street between 6th and 7th Avenues. For more info, visit www.YAGP.org.

Tickets (day passes) for each round of the competition – to be held at the Martin Luther King High School Auditorium (Amsterdam avenue at 65th Street) – are available at the door for \$15. **CONTEMPORARY DANCE** round will be held on Wednesday, April 19th from 12-11pm; **CLASSICAL BALLET** round on Thursday, April 16th from 12-11pm, and the **FINAL ROUND** featuring the top finalists in Junior and Senior age divisions – on Friday, April 17th from 4:00-6:00pm.

YAGP 2006 Season is sponsored by Capezio, Grishko, So’Dança, Discount Dance Supply, Dance Distributors, Dance Magazine, Pointe magazine, Dance Teacher magazine, Sylvia Co., and Tutu.com.



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D. Bussell and P. Semionova to star in YAGP Galas
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Darcey Bussell is a legendary ballerina, whose contributions to the world of ballet were recently recognized by the English Queen, who inducted Bussell into the Order of the British Empire. After graduating from the Royal Ballet School, Bussell was invited by Sir Kenneth MacMillan to join The Royal Ballet in 1988 and in 1989 became the youngest ballerina in the history of the company to receive the title of Principal Dancer. She has originated many roles in The Royal Ballet repertory, including Masha in *Winter Dreams* and Princess Rose in *The Prince of the Pagodas* by MacMillan. Her repertory also includes most leading roles in the classical ballet repertoire. Throughout her illustrious career, Bussell has appeared as a guest artist with many companies around the world and has received numerous awards and honors. She will perform MacMillan's *Manon* in this rare New York appearance.

Hand-picked by Vladimir Malakhov to become a Principal Dancer with the Berlin Staatsoper directly after graduating from the Bolshoi Ballet Academy, **Polina Semionova** has become an instant sensation in the ballet world. She is the recipient of the gold medals at the Moscow International Ballet Competition, Nagoya International Ballet Competition, and the Vaganova Prix in St. Petersburg. Her repertoire with the Berlin Staatsoper includes lead roles in *The Nutcracker*, *La Bayadere*, *Onegin*, *Giselle*, *Swan Lake*, and other ballets. First introduced to the U.S. audiences by Dance Magazine in 2004, Semionova will perform in New York City for the very first time. "I am very much looking forward to my **New York debut**," says the young ballerina, "And I am excited about sharing my artistry not only with the New York audiences, but also with the young participants of Youth America Grand Prix."

"Youth America Grand Prix's goal is to educate dance audiences worldwide about the rich contributions of ballet to the world culture," says Founder and Artistic Director of YAGP, **Larissa Saveliev**. "We are thrilled to introduce to our participants – and to the New York audiences – the three generations of ballet dancers, ranging from the stars of the future, our young participants; to currently rising stars, such as Polina Semionova; to the established, legendary ballerinas such as Darcey Bussell, who has already enjoyed worldwide recognition as a result of her prominent career."

Founder and Executive Director, **Gennadi Saveliev**, adds, "This is not just another Gala. We are very proud to present a gathering of artists that has never before been seen in New York. From the New York debut of Polina Semionova, to Darcey Bussell's rare New York appearance, to introducing some of the most vibrant new voices in American and European choreography, to the unusual pairing of foremost dancers from different countries and continents – we believe that New York dance audience and our participants are in for a real treat."

Youth America Grand Prix is America's first student ballet scholarship competition, founded in 1999 by two former Bolshoi Ballet dancers, Larissa and Gennadi Saveliev. In only 7 years, it has become the largest student ballet competition in the world. The competition and its workshops are open to students of all nationalities ages 9-19. Conducted annually throughout the United States and abroad (China, Brazil, Mexico, and Japan), YAGP culminates each year with a Final Round in New York City and a Gala performance at NY City Center.

Since its inception, Youth America Grand Prix has become an important part of New York City's cultural life. It has grown into an internationally known annual meeting place for dance students and teachers, where they can exchange their ideas, share their experience and learn the most up-to-date information on a variety of issues in ballet and contemporary dance.

In YAGP's 7 years of operation, almost 10,000 young dancers from around the world have participated in Youth America Grand Prix competitions and workshops worldwide. Well over half a million dollars have been awarded in scholarships to the world's foremost dance schools. And over 100 YAGP Alumni are now dancing with some 50 companies around the globe, including American Ballet Theatre, New York City Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, Eifman Ballet of St. Petersburg, and many others.

YAGP 2006 Jury Panel will include, among others:

Eva Evdokimova, Prima Ballerina Assoluta

Gloria Govrin, Associate Director of the San Francisco Ballet School

Deborah Hess, Leading faculty member of Canada's National Ballet School (Canada)

Denise Jefferson, Director of The Ailey School

Tadeusz Matacz, Director of the Stuttgart Ballet's John Cranko School (Germany)

John Meehan, Artistic Director of the ABT Studio Company

Anna Maria Prina, Director of the La Scala Ballet Academy (Italy)

Marilyn Rowe, Director of Australian Ballet School (Australia)

Gailene Stock, Director of the Royal Ballet School (U.K.)

Garry Trinder, Director of New Zealand School of Dance