

## For Immediate Release



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# **Spoletto Dance Festival (Italy) partners with Youth America Grand Prix to bring student performances to its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala, YAGP students also to perform at IBFM**

**Miami International Ballet Festival ■ Miami, FL ■ September 9, 2007**  
**Spoletto Dance Festival 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration ■ Spoleto, Italy ■ July 6 and 8, 2007**

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**New York, NY** (June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007) – The oldest and most prestigious dance festival in the world, Spoleto Dance Festival (Italy) has partnered with Youth America Grand Prix (YAGP) – America’s first and the world’s largest student ballet scholarship competition – in an unprecedented effort to bring student performances to the world-renowned dance festival during its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration on June 29 – July 15, 2007 in Spoleto, Italy. Spoleto Dance Festival will use YAGP’s highly successful “Stars of Today Meet the Stars of Tomorrow” Gala as a model, thus marking the first time in the Festival’s 50-year history that pre-professional student performances will be featured as part of its two-week program.

The **Gala performances at the Spoleto Dance Festival** featuring YAGP participants and professional ballet artists will take place on **July 6 and 8, 2007**. The young performers have been chosen by YAGP during its 2007 season semi-finals conducted in Mexico, Brazil, Japan, and throughout the United States.

In addition, YAGP will also select some of its participants to perform at the **International Ballet Festival of Miami** scheduled to take place in Miami, FL. The performance is scheduled to take place on September 9, 2007.

“As the world’s largest network for finding the most talented young dancers worldwide, Youth America Grand Prix is a perfect partner for Spoleto Dance Festival in introducing this fresh and exciting element to our Festival programming,” says **Gregor Hatala, Spoleto Dance Festival’s Artistic Coordinator**. “YAGP’s groundbreaking Gala concept, “Stars of Today Meet the Stars of Tomorrow” featuring top international ballet artists on the same program with the most promising young dancers of the next generation has been extremely successful since its premiere in New York 8 years ago – and we are very excited to bring it to Spoleto.” **Francis Menotti, Spoleto Festival’s Artistic Director**, adds, “For 50 years, Spoleto Dance Festival has been setting the standards in dance, having introduced some of today’s most celebrated dancers to the international dance community. It is only fitting that on our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, we would expand to include not only professional dancers’ performances, but also performances by the next generation of ballet stars.”

**Larissa Saveliev, Artistic Director of YAGP**, says, “We are thrilled to partner with the world’s oldest and most renowned dance festival. Youth America Grand Prix began as a national ballet scholarship competition designed to give American students a chance to study at some of the nation’s best ballet schools. Today, it has grown to become the largest ballet scholarship competition in the world that not only gives ballet students up to \$200,000 annually in scholarships to the world’s leading dance schools, but also a chance to be seen by the world’s leading dance professionals and be offered professional job contracts to companies around the world. This partnership with Spoleto Dance Festival is a continuation of YAGP’s mission to provide extraordinary educational and professional opportunities to dancers worldwide.”

YAGP 2007 Season is sponsored by Capezio, Grishko, So’Dança, Gaynor Minden, Discount Dance Supply, Dance Magazine, Pointe magazine, Dance Teacher magazine, Bloch, Sylvia Co., Swarovski, and Tutu.com.



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***Spoletto Dance Festival (Italy) and Youth America Grand Prix bring unprecedented student performances to the Festival's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration in July 2007***  
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**The Spoleto Dance Festival (Italy)** was created in 1958 by **Gian Carlo Menotti**, one of the most influential composers of American opera in the twentieth century. Often referred to as the "Festival of Two Worlds" because of its twin festival in Charleston, SC – also founded by Menotti – the Spoleto Festival has become one of the world's most important cultural forums, presenting to its audiences some of the most significant achievements in international opera, music, theater, and dance. The Festival has introduced to the international dance community some of America's most prominent dancers and choreographers such as Jerome Robbins, Mikhail Baryshnikov, and Twyla Tharp, among many others. Celebrating its fiftieth year, the festival honors its founder and his contributions to the arts.

Created in 1995 under the artistic direction of Pedro Pablo Peña, **International Ballet Festival of Miami** has become one of the most important ballet festivals in the United States. Now in its 12<sup>th</sup> season, it has presented such important dance companies as the English National Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, Stuttgart Ballet, Miami Contemporary Dance Company and the Cuban Classical Ballet of Miami among many others. The Festival has become a Fall staple on the South Florida dance calendar with five performances at four theaters in three cities. It also includes other arts-related activities such as Dance Films, official IBFM poster unveiling a fine arts competition inspired by dance, workshops, master classes and the Lifetime Achievement Award presented at the Grand Classical Gala of the Stars.

**Youth America Grand Prix** is America's first and the world's largest student ballet scholarship competition, founded in 1999 by two former Bolshoi Ballet dancers, Larissa and Gennadi Saveliev. Through its grassroots competition and mentoring programs, this New York-based 501(C)(3) international non-profit educational organization helps talented young dancers by providing annually over \$200,000 in scholarships to the leading dance schools worldwide, as well as professional job contracts to dance companies around the world. YAGP offers dance students the rare opportunity to be seen, taught and professionally guided by the directors and faculty of the world's foremost companies and schools, including American Ballet Theatre, New York City Ballet, The Ailey School, Australian Ballet School, Canada's National Ballet School, John Cranko School of Stuttgart Ballet (Germany), La Scala Ballet Academy (Italy), Paris Opera Ballet, and The Royal Ballet School (England), among others.

Through its programs and activities, YAGP serves as the "internet of the dance world," a global network of opportunity for young dancers. In 2005, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recognized YAGP's contribution to international dance education by awarding it with a membership in UNESCO's prestigious *Conseil International de la Danse (CID)*.

In YAGP's 8 years of operation, YAGP has awarded over \$1,000,000 in scholarships to the world's leading dance schools. Over 15,000 dancers worldwide have participated in YAGP's international workshops, competitions, and audition classes. Over 150 YAGP alumni are now dancing with 50 companies around the world, including American Ballet Theatre, New York City Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, Paris Opera Ballet, Stuttgart Ballet, and Eifman Ballet of St. Petersburg, among others.

YAGP's annual competitions and workshops, conducted worldwide, are open to students of all nationalities ages 9-19. Each YAGP season culminates in a Final Round in New York City and the Closing Night Gala performance – "Stars of Today Meet the Stars of Tomorrow." The annually sold-out Gala featuring YAGP international finalists on the same program as the stars of the world's leading dance companies took place at NY City Center on Monday, April 30, 2007.

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