

**HIDEKO KARASAWA**

**Ballet Memphis**

Competing helped me develop a good work ethic. There were so many things happening around me when I was at competitions, so at a young age I learned to focus on my work and block out everything else. Competing also opened many doors for me professionally. Youth America Grand Prix led to a scholarship at San Francisco Ballet School, which allowed me to move from Japan to America in 2005. I learned so much being around San Francisco Ballet's professional environment—particularly that maturity, elegance and passion are so important in dance.



From top: VAM; Erik Tomasson; Jeremy Cowart

*Reported by Jessica Gadzinski and Kathleen McGuire*

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Nayara Lopes at the YAGP NYC Finals

**YAGP in NYC**

New York City was teeming with ballet-stars-to-be late this March, when hundreds of young dancers arrived to compete in the Youth America Grand Prix NYC Finals. After the whirlwind week of classes and competition performances, seven American dancers walked away with solo medals—and 14 with contract offers, to companies including National Ballet of Canada (Nayara Lopes), Houston Ballet II (Lauren Cregan) and Tulsa Ballet II (Jaimi Cullen, Andrew Silks, Chelsea Keefer and Bailey Moon).