

NYC Dance Stuff

Dance in New York City by Darrell Wood



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2014 YAGP Grand Prix winner Cesar Corrales, age 17, in Variation from Don Quixote. Photo by Siggul/VAM.

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Every year some of the most world's most gifted dancers converge upon New York City in order to take part in the **Youth America Grand Prix** "*Stars of Today Meet the Star of Tomorrow Gala.*" These internationally recognized dancers, many of whom are YAGP alumni, are from the ranks of such renown companies as the Bolshoi Ballet, the San Francisco Ballet, Stuttgart Ballet and of course NYCB and ABT. They come to perform side by side with the YAGP award winners, young dancers that can range in ages from 9 to 19 years of age. They have been handpicked, some of the brightest talent of their generation, future stars of the dance world at the very start of their careers. Clive Barnes hailed it is as the "*highlight of the New York ballet season.*"

The evening began with Elizabeth Aoki; part of YAGP's "Music Protégé Series", she performed the most amazing *Paganiniana*. Ms. Aoki, who is a student at Juilliard, performed the piece with such precision that when she finished I found myself just staring at her with mouth agape. She could not have been older than 10 or 11...she was so tiny I was surprised she could hold the violin much less play it so masterful.



James Sierra's Legion won the Silver Medal for YAGP's Ensemble Competition, performed by the of Escuela Superior de Music y Danza de Monterrey, Mexico. Photo: Photo by Siggul/VAM.

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James Sierra's *Legion* won the Silver Medal for YAGP's Ensemble Competition. It was a testosterone fueled work for 23 men that ranged in age from 13 to 23, all from the Escuela Superior de Music y Danza de Monterrey, Mexico. It was a very daring work with men running on stage and throwing themselves through the air with abandon. It gave me chills and I would love to see it again.

Harou Niyama, 17, won the Gold Medal for the Men's Senior Division and performed a Variation from *Le Bayadere*. Mr. Niyama exhibited great elevation with brilliant double cabrioles. He's someone to watch...



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Harou Niyama, 17, won the YAGP Gold Medal for the Men's Senior Division and performed a Variation from Le Bayadere. Photo: Siggul/Visual Arts Masters

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Cesar Corrales, 17, won the Grand Prix which is awarded to the best over all of an age division. Mr. Corrales performed a *Variation from Don Quixote* and at only 17; it was impressive to say the least. He finished his variation by doing eight double tour en l'air with a double pirouette between each and then finished with another double tour en l'air but to the knee. Luscious is the only way I can describe it!

Sara Meams and Tyler Angle performed Jerome Robbins *In G Major*. The performance was impeccable and Ms. Meams gave a master class in artistry for all the young budding ballerinas. She would surrender to Mr. Angle's embrace only to pull away moments later. There was an emotional intimacy that ran through piece an electric undercurrent, pulsing and alive.



Mathias Heymann from the Paris Opera Ballet performed a solo from Rudolph Nureyev's *Manfred*, a ballet Nureyev choreographed in 1979 about Lord Byron's life and poetry, set to Tchaikovsky's "Manfred Symphony." Mr. Heymann was poetry in motion himself, he possessed the right amount of emotion and sense of drama the role requires. His dancing was so smooth and lyrical I could not take my eyes off him for a moment.

Derek Hough's World Premiere of his *Ameska* was a resounding success. A quartet for Misty Copeland, who danced en pointe and three male Ballroom Guest Artists, Paul Barris, Alexander Demkin and Roman Kutsky. Ms. Copeland is sent sliding on her point shoes from one man to the next while the men proceeded with hips swiveling and a thrust or two. The men handled Ms. Copeland expertly, lifting and exchanging, carry her all together are one at a time. A brilliant performance of a brilliant work and my only regret was that Mr. Hough did not dance...



Matthias Heymann (Paris Opera Ballet) in Solo from Manfred. Choreography by Rudolph Nureyev. Photo by Siggul/VAM.

Lucia Lacarra and Marlon Dino from the Bavarian State Ballet performed one of the best *White Swan Pas de Deux* from *Swan Lake* I have ever seen. It ranked up there with Natalia Makarova's performance of the duet with Ivan Nagy. Ms. Lacarra made an exquisite swan, she was ethereal, a creature of myth and dreams.

This audience truly appreciates a great balletic performance and they let the couple know it. Everyone was on their feet and gave the couple several curtain calls. I am richer for having experienced it, thank you...

Incredible performance from Swan Lake - Lucia L...



Nicole Loizides and Steven Ezra from Momix performed Moses Pendleton's *Millenium Skiva*. This was my first introduction to both Momix and the work of Mr. Pendleton but I certainly hope not my last. The lights come up with two figures in shiny silver bodysuits and when they start to move and unfold their bodies you discover they are on skis. It was perplexing, intriguing and wonderful...

The Youth America Grand Prix is the world's largest student ballet scholarship competition that awards over \$250,000 annually in scholarships to leading dance schools worldwide. The competition is held annually around the world and in New York City, and is open to dance students of all nationalities 9-19 years old.

Launched in 1999 by two former dancers of the world-renowned Bolshoi Ballet, Larissa and Gennadi Saveliev, YAGP is also a 501(C)(3) non-profit organization created with a mission to provide extraordinary educational and professional opportunities to young dancers, acting as a stepping stone to a professional dance career.