

## Ballet's Brightest Stars—The Before Videos

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NYC is bursting with promising ballet dancers this week, thanks to the Youth America Grand Prix finals held at Lincoln Center's Koch Theater. To all the competitors (at YAGP and beyond), we're shouting a big "Merde!!" your way.

We can't wait to see what amazing things these kids will do next. Don't believe us? Just take a look at these teens competing in the '90s and early '00s. They sure turned out (more than) OK.

Before she was New York City Ballet principal Sara Mearns, she was simply the amazingly talented 15-year-old Sara Mearns, competing at YAGP:



Recognize this guy? It's none other than the dreamiest of all American Ballet Theatre principals, Marcelo Gomes, competing at the Prix de Lausanne in 1996.



Here's international ballet superstar Alina Cojocaru at the Prix de Lausanne in 1997:



No surprises here: ABT soloist Sarah Lane's port de bras was just as glorious in 2002!



And San Francisco Ballet soloist Simone Messmer was just as regal at 16, competing at YAGP regional finals in 2001:



It's hard to imagine Diana Vishneva before she was a star of the Mariinsky Ballet and ABT. Nevertheless, here she is in 1994, competing at the Prix de Lausanne:



And finally, here's a special treat: Alex Wong in leopard booty shorts at the Prix de Lausanne in 2004. Go ahead, watch it sixteen times. We have.

