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by Melia Kraus-har April 22 <http://www.broadwayworld.com/bwwdance/article/BWW-Reviews-Youth-America-Grand-Prix-Starry-Night-of-a-Gala-20150422>

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"It's like an NFL combine," announced emcee Jared Angle at the [Youth America Grand Prix](#) Gala on Thursday, April 16th at the David H. Koch Theater. [New York City Ballet](#) principal dancer Angle shared "Stars of Today Meet the Stars of Tomorrow" hosting duties with [American Ballet Theatre](#) principal dancer Julie Kent. In a video-illustrated program the [Youth America Grand Prix](#) (YAGP) leadership underscored the tremendous network of resources necessary for young dancers to thrive. Founders Larissa and Gennadi Saveliev distinguished YAGP from other competitions by focusing on relationship building and collaboration. Their passion for their

work and this night strongly resounded in the script, accented with their gregarious demeanor in the theater. The gala night celebrated the potential of the dance community and affirmed the legacy of YAGP alumni.

Angle and Kent acknowledged the tremendous support of teachers and parents before announcing each winner performing a variation. Eleven year old Brazilian dancer Antonio Casalinho's *Don Quixote* variation in celebration of his receiving the Hope Award started the performance. MorningStar Dance Academy of Atlanta's Chinese fan dance was a fluid kaleidoscope of green and pink. Junior division winner Shin-Yong Kim's *Esmeralda* displayed flawless extension. Eighteen year old Matheus Vaz Guimaraes of Brazil in a contemporary piece brought capoeira elements to ballet in languid strokes. Ellison Ballet represented strongly with their ensemble in *Danse Boheme from Carmen Suite* and Theophilus Pilette and Juliette Bosco's exquisite pas de deux from *Grand Pas Classique*, where Ms. Bosco's formidable balance en pointe brought the audience to cheers. The other dynamic pas de deux paired second place senior winner Austen Acevedo and Kennedy Kallas (both fifteen) in an abstract work following their recent Mariinsky Ballet festival experience. Shogo Hayami of the [John Cranko](#) School (Stuttgart Ballet) showed a fun whimsy as first place senior winner in his solo. Of Japan, first place senior winner Yu Kurihara's *Paquita* cemented the joyous note of the evening. A special tradition, *Grand Défilé*, brought over 250 YAGP finalists from 30 countries together for a victory parade choreographed by Carlos dos Santos, Jr.

[Page 2 >>](#)



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by Melia Kraus-har April 22 <http://www.broadwayworld.com/bwwdance/article/BWW-Reviews-Youth-America-Grand-Prix-Starry-Night-of-a-Gala-20150422-page2>

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The shared bill of YAGP winners and professional dancers defined the arc of development in dance performance. Of the artists from around the world, the audience noticeably reveled in [Bolshoi Ballet](#) stars Evgenia Obraztsova and [Semyon Chudin](#)'s pas de deux from *The Pharoah's Daughter*. The Bolshoi dancers' exceptional batterie turned the smallest of actions, like Obraztsova's sur le coup de pied and Chudin's entrechôte jumps into magnificent moments. YAGP alumni and NYCB dancer Zachary Catazaro's traveling lift of [Teresa Reichlen](#)'s piked body showed the complexity of Emery LeCrone's world premiere, *Minuet from String Quartet No. 15*. Xander Parish of Mariinsky Ballet gave the most comedic performance in the New York premiere of Eric Gauthier's *Ballet 101*, with vocal prompts for immediate execution of spoofed ballet poses. Other world premieres included the Joffrey Studio Company in Alexei Kremnev's *Windy Sand* and YAGP alumni Calvin Royal III with Kristina Shapran of Mariinsky Ballet in Anton Pimonov's untitled work.

A very full evening, bursting with talent and possibility. Like an NFL combine in terms of scouting and recruiting, but with the power of collaboration. Unlike most industry competitions, the YAGP community demonstrated its generous core wherein artists overlook geography, language, and background in the pursuit of bettering themselves and their art form. In addition to being an incredible highlight of YAGP's work, what other night can one see the best of the best and the best to be on one stage? From quivering port de bras of an eager eleven year old to the stoic grace of Paloma Herrera, YAGP proudly endorsed its place in supporting generations of premier artists.

*Evgenia Obraztsova and [Semyon Chudin](#) in *The Pharoah's Daughter* courtesy [Youth America Grand Prix](#).*

[<< Page 1](#)

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