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EXQUISITE YAGP GALA AT
LINCOLN CENTER

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I love galas so much that it's hard to pick a favorite, but if I had to choose, it might very well be the Youth America Grand Prix annual gala at Lincoln Center in New York City!

Lincoln Center is one of the greatest performance halls in the United States, with an amazing ambience and energy. Arriving for the gala, I'm always struck by the eager anticipation of the dancers and artistic directors, as they gather around the fountain in Lincoln Center's courtyard and in the performance

and exhibition spaces.

Youth America Grand Prix, one of the world's most prestigious ballet competitions, conducts semi-finals throughout the U.S. and abroad before the finals in New York. Young dancers have the opportunity to perform in front of artistic directors of dance companies and schools, and to win scholarships and even jobs in companies.

The gala evening begins each year with an amazing performance by top professional dancers alongside YAGP finalists. "Stars of Today Meet the Stars of Tomorrow" is considered one of the highlights of the dance year, which is saying a lot in a city that is one of the world's most vibrant centers for dance. This year's program included world and New York premieres.

The post-performance dinner is always star-studded! This year's illustrious attendance list included inspirational, influential figures from the dance world such as **Alexandra Koltun, Anna Reznik and Alexei Kremnev**, and **Irina Dvoroenko and Maxim Beloserkovsky**, alongside supporters of dance from the spheres of business and politics, and other celebrities including Woody Allen.

I felt honored to be seated between **Sergei Filin**, artistic director of the Bolshoi Ballet, and Irina Churkina, wife of Vitaliy Churkin, permanent representative of the Russian Federation to the United States. The conversation was fascinating and stimulating, as we dined on the mezzanine level of Lincoln Center overlooking the courtyard.

I'm proud that my company, **Russian Pointe**, is an annual sponsor of YAGP, which does so much to advance the study and performance of ballet. Russian Pointe representatives attended all the U.S. semi-finals, which were a great opportunity to meet with dancers, talk about Russian Pointe and share our products.

We're delighted that **Melissa Chapski**, one of Russian Pointe's featured dancers and models, finished in the Top 12 in the finals, and we're proud of the Russian Pointe ballerinas who placed in the semi-finals, and of all those who were willing to put in the hard work that it takes to compete at YAGP.

Being at Lincoln Center had an extra element of resonance for me this year, because I've just premiered my new **Stages of the World** collection, which features specially commissioned drawings of

which features specially commissioned drawings of the world's most beautiful theaters. Wearing my Lincoln Center tee reminds me of all the exciting hours I've spent there!





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