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Odasz Dance Theatre Wins Top Prizes at International Ballet Competition

GREECE, NY. March 1, 2015. -- At the Youth America Grand Prix competition in Chicago over the weekend of February 20-22, 2015, the Odasz Dance Theatre of Greece, NY took top honors.

Youth America Grand Prix is the world's largest student ballet competition and holds semi-final competitions in approximately 5 international locations and 15 US cities. 50 schools from across the country and Canada competed at the Chicago semi-finals on February 20-22, 2015. Out of a total of over 150 teachers and choreographers, Odasz Dance Theatre's founder and Artistic Director, Jessica Odasz, received the Outstanding Teacher award, and Odasz Dance Theatre's Assistant Artistic Director, Andrea Astuto, won the Outstanding Choreographer Award. All 16 competitors from Odasz Dance Theatre were selected to compete in the NYC world finals. There were over 12,000 YAGP competitors worldwide this season and only 1,200 dancers qualified for finals, including the 16 dancers, ages 10-18, from Odasz Dance Theatre.

In the Pre-competitive category (ages 9-11), Odasz Dance Theatre's Emma Fernandes (10) won 1st place in the contemporary category out of 55 entries, and Olivia Bevilacqua (11) won 2nd place in the contemporary category and also won 2nd place in the classical ballet category out of 80 entries. Emma Fernandes also placed in the top 12 in the classical ballet category. Both Emma Fernandes and Olivia Bevilacqua qualified to compete as soloists for the world finals in New York City. Emma Fernandes will be performing "Between Here and Earth," choreographed by Andrea Astuto, and Olivia Bevilacqua will be performing two contemporary solos, "Awakening Bud" choreographed by Jessica Odasz, and "Slither" choreographed by Andrea Astuto.

Odasz Dance Theatre brought 6 ensembles to the Chicago semi-finals and all 6 collectively won 1st place out of close to 50 ensemble entries. All 6 ensembles also qualified for the YAGP finals in New York City including 2 classical ensembles, "Ocean and Pearls" coached by Erika Lindblom and Jessica Odasz, and "Merlitons from The Nutcracker" choreographed and coached by Jessica Odasz, as well as 4 contemporary ensembles, "Will Blossom Under Sunlight," "Clarity," "We, Always We," and "The Abandoned" all choreographed and coached by Andrea Astuto.

In the Junior age division (ages 12-14), Riley Bevilacqua (13) won 2nd place in the contemporary category among 90 or so entries and placed in the top 12 for the classical ballet category of over 100 entries. In the Senior age division (ages 15-19), Laura Rich (17) and Denise Moser (15) placed in the top 12 out of roughly 90 entries in the senior contemporary division. Denise Moser was also awarded scholarships to Indiana Ballet Conservatory and Ballet San Jose upon being scouted during the competition and at the master classes held at Joffrey Ballet.

Odasz Dance Theatre is the official training school for Western New York Ballet, Rochester's only youth ballet and contemporary company. Odasz Dance Theatre dancers come from many surrounding communities including Spencerport, the city of Rochester, Irondequoit, Webster, Hilton and Brighton. The school is located at 25 Arcampus Drive off of Island Cottage Drive in Greece. Visit www.odaszdance.com or call 585-880-0450 for more information about dance programs and classes.

The mission of Odasz Dance Theatre and Western New York Ballet is to benefit youth through providing access to enriching educational programs in ballet & artistic dance coupled with professional-quality performance opportunities.

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