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*News Briefs*

## Craddock Sweeps to Win at the American Ballet Competition

Seiskaya Ballet principal dancer Anna Craddock captured top honors at the 2012 American Ballet Competition (ABC) held in Austin, Texas. Drawing competitors from as far away as Singapore, the competition is primarily focused on classical ballet although an optional contemporary selection is permitted.

Accompanied by her coach and mentor, Valia Seiskaya, Ms. Craddock elected to dance three classical variations. They were the female variations from the ballets Diana and Acteon, La Esmeralda and the White Swan Variation from Swan Lake.

"Anna has had the opportunity to really hone her skills dancing in other competitions and with professional guest artists. This past March she was partnered by Boston Ballet's Boyco Dossev when the pair mesmerized the audience at Stony Brook University's Staller Center with a riveting rendition of the White Swan Pas de

Deux," opined Mme. Seiskaya. According to its literature, ABC, begun in 2004, makes a unique contribution to the education of young dancers. It is set in a professional environment with well qualified adjudicators with the express mission to afford valuable insights and reality checks that address each contestant's professional expectations.

"I was thrilled to win the first prize in the pre-professional division," said the lithesome sixteen year old in a recent interview. "Two years ago during the World Ballet Competition in Orlando, Florida, I sprained my ankle and was hobbled in the final round dancing my contemporary selection on flat. That was disappointing." Even under those tough circumstances, her classical scores were enough to garner 4<sup>th</sup> place in her division.

Disappointments in her career have been rare. At 13, Anna traveled to Athens, Greece and took the Hellas International Ballet Competition by storm being the first competitor under 17 to be awarded the top prize which was a scholarship to attend the prestigious Vienna State Opera Ballet School in Vienna, Austria. Wins at the inaugural Long Island Ballet Competition, multiple Metro Teen Talent Competitions in Brooklyn and several consecutive 1<sup>st</sup> place finishes in the annual BESFI Scholarship Competitions dot her resume.

The win at ABC brought with it several



offers: traineeships with the Atlanta Ballet Conservatory and the Orlando Ballet in addition to a 2013 scholarship to the Joffrey Ballet's Summer Intensive.

Anna just received another honor being named as a winner of a merit-

based scholarship to participate in the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI) in Russia this summer. Selected by the United States Department of State and in conjunction with the Russian American Foundation – six weeks this summer will be spent studying ballet at Moscow's famous Bolshoi Ballet and learning the Russian language.

What lies ahead? "I am really excited about the Nutcracker this season. I will perform the Sugar Plum Pas de Deux opposite American Ballet Theatre principal dancer Cory Stearns. What makes this so special is that Cory is a Seiskaya Ballet graduate, and this will be his first return visit as a guest artist," contributed Craddock. For those who want to see this young phenom first hand, Seiskaya Ballet's Nutcracker at the Staller Center this December 14-17 will be the place to be.

**In photos:** Anna Craddock's exceptional facilities, fluidity and flawless technique allow her to project an uncommon level of artistry.