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**USA INTERNATIONAL BALLET COMPETITION ANNOUNCES
ONE-SEASON CONTRACT AWARDS**

Jackson, Miss., December 10, 2009 – A flawless performance in the USA International Ballet Competition can launch a competitor’s dance career. Company directors interested in hiring dancers attend the USA IBC, and many dancers enter the competition hoping to leave with a company contract.

Six ballet companies have agreed to award a one-season employment contract to selected competitors in the 2010 USA IBC. Each company will send a representative to attend USA IBC performances, and contracts will be given to competitors at the discretion of the awarding companies.

“Leaving the USA IBC with a dance company contract is perhaps the grandest prize of all,” said Sue Lobrano, executive director of the USA IBC.

The list below represents the ballet companies that have agreed to award employment contracts at the 2010 USA IBC.

Ballet San Jose, one of the premier ballet companies in the United States and the second largest company in California. Artistic director: Dennis Nahat.

Columbia City Ballet, the largest performing arts organization in South Carolina. Artistic Director: William Starrett.

Kansas City Ballet, one of the healthiest, most artistically dynamic and financially sound performing arts institutions of its size in the country. Artistic Director: William Whitener.

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Miami City Ballet, among the largest ballet companies in the United States. Artistic Director: Edward Villella.

Nashville Ballet, the largest professional dance company in Tennessee. Artistic Director: Paul Vasterling.

Washington Ballet, one of the pre-eminent ballet organizations in the United States. Artistic Director: Septime Webre.

The USA IBC is a two-week, “olympic-style” competition where tomorrow’s stars vie for gold, silver and bronze medals; cash awards; company contracts; and scholarships. The event is designated as the official international ballet competition in the United States by a Joint Resolution of Congress. Presented under the auspices of the International Dance Committee, International Theatre Institute of UNESCO, the USA IBC is held every four years in Jackson, Miss., in the tradition of sister competitions in Varna, Bulgaria, and Moscow, Russia.

For more information visit www.usaibc.com or join our Facebook communities. Search USA International Ballet Competition to find Fans of the USA International Ballet Competition, an open group for the general public, or USA International Ballet Competition Prospective Competitors, an open group for dancers wishing to compete in the 2010 USA IBC.

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