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**Kansas City Ballet School
Honored at
Youth America Grand Prix
Regional Semi-finals
Eight Pieces Invited to Finals
*Awards Include Outstanding School and
Ryan Jolicoeur-Nye as Outstanding Choreographer***

KANSAS CITY, MO (March 28, 2017) — Kansas City Ballet Artistic Director Devon Carney announced today the top awards for the Kansas City Ballet School at the recent Youth America Grand Prix Regional Semi-finals held in Indianapolis, Indiana. Top honors include eight pieces selected to advance to the national finals in New York City April 7-14 as well as the award for Outstanding School and Ryan Jolicoeur-Nye as Outstanding Choreographer. More than 800 ballet students from 55 schools, including 31 from Kansas City Ballet School, participated in the regional semi-finals.

Youth America Grand Prix (YAGP) is the world's largest global network of dance. YAGP reaches over 7,000 dance students annually by holding

workshops, scholarship auditions, master classes and audition classes in approximately 17 U.S cities and 6 international locations. Each season culminates in the week-long New York Finals, where more than 1,200 of the world's most promising young pre-professional dancers receive in-depth mentoring and greater scholarship, professional, and performance opportunities.

“This is a very significant accomplishment for our school as this is only the second year we have been participating. This success is the testament of several deeply talented and dedicated faculty working under our dynamic school director, Grace Holmes, who during her three-year tenure has been instrumental in so many advancements within the school,” said Carney. “These honors are an excellent example of how we are moving the Kansas City Ballet School forward and building a reputation within the national dance community.”

Additional honors include:

- 2nd place Ensemble: *Concerto 21* (Ryan Jolicoeur-Nye)
- 1st Place Pas de Deux: Bluebird Pas de Deux from *Sleeping Beauty* Poppy Trettel (age 11) & Grady George (age 12)
- 1st place Pre-Competitive Contemporary: Aurora Wessel (age 10)
- 2nd Place Pre-Competitive Contemporary: Poppy Trettel (age 11)
- 2nd Place Pre-Competitive Classical: Poppy Trettel (age 11)
- 2nd Place Junior Men Classical: Grady George (age 12)
- Top 12 Classical: Leah Reiter (14), Aurora Wessel (10), Camryn Potts (16), Penny Guezeraga (10)
- Top 12 Contemporary: Chrisanne Ayers (17), Melody Sasser (13), Leah Reiter (14), Grady George (12), Penny Guezeraga (10), Camryn Potts (16)
- Top 25 Classical: Sheridan Reider (15), Natalie Nickels (18), Hope Wampler (15), Allison Madden (14), Melody Sasser (13)

The following pieces have been invited to the New York City Finals:

- *Concerto 21* (Ensemble by Ryan Jolicoeur-Nye)
- *Danza Espanola* (Ensemble by Grace Holmes)
- Aurora Wessel Classical and Contemporary solos
- Poppy Trettel Classical and Contemporary Solos
- *Coppelia* Pas de Deux – Melody Sasser and Timothy TV Cao
- *Diana & Acteon* Pas de Deux – Leah Reiter and Lukas Pringle
- Bluebird Pas de Deux from *Sleeping Beauty* – Poppy Trettel and Grady George
- *Les Syphide* Pas de Deux – Aurora Wessel and Grady George

School Director Grace Holmes states, “I am beyond thrilled that our students and our performances received such recognition. We are pleased to be offering this opportunity for students to pursue their passion. Our students were amazing ambassadors of Kansas City Ballet School. Not only did they dance beautifully, but they were professional in their master classes and helpful in every way. Thank you to our main coaches: Racheal Nye, David Justin, Dima Trubchanov, Ryan Jolicoeur-Nye and to everyone who helped with this project. I am extremely proud of our students and faculty for these achievements.”

Kansas City Ballet School is recognized as one of the top ballet training institutions in the United States. Under the direction of Holmes, the School offers a complete, professional curriculum and both after-school and daytime programs for academy students. With locations in downtown Kansas City and Johnson County, the School maintains a faculty of more than 45 instructors and 20 accompanists. Kansas City Ballet School is the only ballet school in the Midwest with programming this extensive.

For additional information please contact the School at 816.931.2299 or email school@kcballet.org.

About Kansas City Ballet

To make Kansas City a destination for dance

Founded in 1957, Kansas City Ballet is a 30-member professional ballet company under the leadership of Artistic Director Devon Carney and Executive Director Jeffrey J. Bentley. The company’s mission is to establish Kansas City Ballet as an indispensable asset in its community through exceptional performances, excellence in dance training and quality community education programs for all ages.

Kansas City Ballet is home to Kansas City Ballet School with an enrollment of 1800+ children and adults offering professional training for the career-minded student as well as for those simply seeking a healthy lifestyle.

Through our professional company, our second company (comprised of KCB II and Trainees) and our many community educational and outreach programs, such as Reach Out and Dance (ROAD) we seek to nurture and develop our artists, audiences and students in the values inherent in the creativity, diversity and joy of dance.

Our home, the Todd Bolender Center for Dance & Creativity, in conjunction with our Resident Company status at the world-class Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, truly has positioned Kansas City as a destination for dance.

Visit www.kcballet.org/media/releases for more info.

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