

# Press Release

English National Ballet announces the finalists for The Emerging Dancer Award, sponsored by Talbot Hughes McKillop

**The Emerging Dancer Competition 2012**  
**Queen Elizabeth Hall**  
**7.30pm, 5 March 2012**  
**Box Office – 0844 875 0073**  
**Tickets are on sale now**

English National Ballet is delighted to announce the six finalists for The Emerging Dancer Award 2012, generously supported in its third year by Talbot Hughes McKillop (THM), the restructuring experts.

At a time when the Arts Council is reducing its funding, Talbot Hughes McKillop's sponsorship of the award is a practical demonstration of its belief that business has a clear responsibility to engage constructively in providing support to the arts.

The Emerging Dancer Competition is an annual award for English National Ballet to recognise and nurture the phenomenal talent of its up-and-coming dancers. The competition encourages excellence and potential within the Company. Throughout the summer English National Ballet's artistic, music, administrative staff and Principal dancers have been voting for their Emerging Dancer and the Company is delighted to announce the following chosen finalists: **Yonah Acosta, Barry Drummond, Nancy Osbaldeston, Ksenia Ovsyanick, Junor Souza and Jia Zhang.**

English National Ballet's Emerging Dancer Competition will be on 5 March 2012 at Southbank Centre's Queen Elizabeth Hall. The competition is open to the public, with tickets on sale now. During the evening, each of the nominees will perform two solos to a panel of judges from the dance world, including English National Ballet's Artistic Director Wayne Eagling. Following these performances the judging panel will announce the winner of both The Emerging Dancer Award and The People's Choice Award. The People's Choice Award is voted for by our audiences; voting opened at the beginning of our autumn tour and closes at the end of the Christmas season.

Last year's Emerging Dancer Award was won by young dancer **Shiori Kase**. Shiori wowed the judges with her performances as Giselle and the Black Swan, dancing with grace and poise. The judges included Wayne Eagling, Jude Kelly and international ballet star Carlos Acosta.

Shiori has danced several key roles since winning the award, including solos in *Suite en Blanc* at the London Coliseum, the opening pas de deux in *Strictly Gershwin* at the Royal Albert Hall and Principal Roles in our autumn tour of *Strictly Gershwin*. Shiori will also be dancing the starring role of Clara in this year's *The Nutcracker* at the London Coliseum with Senior Principal Zdenek Konvalina.

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**Paul Horn, Managing Partner of Talbot Hughes McKillop commented**

*“Talbot Hughes McKillop have been associated with English National Ballet for many years and are again proud to be sponsors of the Emerging Dancer Award 2012. Talbot Hughes McKillop and English National Ballet share a mutual commitment to delivering outstanding quality at the highest levels of performance and professionalism. Now in its third year, the competition has successfully enhanced the profile of the nominees in 2010 and 2011 and has already enabled a considerable step up for those artists and a significant benefit to English National Ballet.”*

**The Finalists**

**Yonah Acosta** joined English National Ballet from Ballet Nacional de Cuba in January this year. Yonah is the nephew of international ballet star Carlos Acosta, and has danced with his uncle several times, notably playing a young Carlos when he was 13 in *Tocororo - A Cuban Tale*. Since joining English National Ballet he wowed audiences as the Young Man in *Le Jeune Homme et la Mort* at the opening night of the *Roland Petit* season at the London Coliseum. Yonah will perform the Prince in *The Nutcracker* this Christmas.

Scottish dancer **Barry Drummond** is one of the Company's youngest dancers, having joined us straight from ballet school in Summer 2010. Barry has danced in our recent productions since joining English National Ballet, including *Romeo & Juliet*, *Cinderella*, *Strictly Gershwin* and *The Nutcracker*. More recently Barry danced as one of the lead Bandits in Roland Petit's *Carmen* at the London Coliseum. Barry will dance in *The Nutcracker* again at the London Coliseum.

**Nancy Osbaldeston** trained at English National Ballet School and in her home town of Manchester at the Cardwell Theatre School. Nancy joined the Company in 2008. Her favourite role to date has been as the Step Sister in Michael Corder's *Cinderella*. She performed this on UK tour, in Barcelona and at the London Coliseum as part of English National Ballet 60th Birthday season. Nancy also danced a soloist role in Roland Petit's *Carmen* at the Coliseum.

**Ksenia Ovsyanick** has been nominated for the Emerging Dancer Award for three years in a row! In March this year Ksenia was featured in the BBC4 Documentary *Agony & Ecstasy: a Year at English National Ballet*. She was shown creating the complex dance of the Mirlitons in Wayne Eagling's new production of *The Nutcracker* which she performed in at the London Coliseum in December 2010. Ksenia also danced soloist roles in *Suite en Blanc* and *Resolution* at the London Coliseum in March 2011.

**Junor Souza** is a Brazilian dancer, and joined English National Ballet in 2008. He was promoted to Junior Soloist in Summer this year. This is the second time Junor has been nominated for the Award. This Christmas Junor will dance the role of the Prince in *The Nutcracker* for the second year in a row. Other notable roles for Junor are Romeo in Nureyev's *Romeo & Juliet* and Albrecht in *Giselle*. Junor is currently performing Principal roles in *Strictly Gershwin*, including *Rhapsody in Blue* and in the ballroom number *Ain't Necessarily So*.

**Jia Zhang** has been with English National Ballet since 2008. This Summer she wowed audiences with her performance as Death in Roland Petit's *Le Jeune Homme et la Mort*, with Russian ballet superstar Ivan Vassiliev who was guesting with the Company. She also performed this role with fellow nominee Yonah Acosta.

During her time with English National Ballet Jia has danced as Odette/Odile in *Swan Lake*, and soloist roles in *Suite en Blanc*.

-Ends –

For further information and interview requests please contact Rachel Branton Press Manager at English National Ballet on [rachel.branton@ballet.org.uk](mailto:rachel.branton@ballet.org.uk), or DL 020 7590 2933, Mobile 07930 590350

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### **Notes to Editors**

Talbot Hughes McKillop (THM) provides experienced leadership to corporates, creditors and shareholders in distressed and other event-driven special situations. The firm provides hands-on, practical support, typically using small, partner led teams to deal with both the financial and operational aspects of a restructuring situation. The role may involve partners from THM taking executive roles (for example as Chief Restructuring Officer) and/or other Board of Director appointments. Founded in 2001, THM has handled some of the highest profile pan-European restructuring projects.

THM believes that the arts have a critical role to play in enriching the life of communities throughout the country, as well as in fostering emerging young talent. Business has a clear responsibility to engage constructively with arts organizations in providing finance and other forms of help and support. This is even more critical at a time when the state has had to reduce its financial support for the arts, creating a funding gap that needs to be bridged. For more details, please see the THM website [www.thmpartners.com](http://www.thmpartners.com).