



New York International Ballet Competition and The Joffrey Ballet



Gerald Arpino
Photo © The Joffrey Ballet

In the spring of 2004, New York International Ballet Competition (NYIBC) and The Joffrey Ballet memorialized an agreement under which The Joffrey Ballet would offer a one-year contract to an NYIBC participant. The award is offered at the discretion of The Joffrey Ballet's Artistic Director, Ashley Wheater.

The award was named the Arpino Award in honor of Mr. Gerald Arpino, acclaimed choreographer, dancer and Co-Founder of The Joffrey Ballet.

Ms. Ilona Copen, Founding Executive Director of NYIBC, and The Joffrey Ballet first explored the possibility of establishing an award to honor Mr. Arpino in 2003. Ms. Harriet Ross (then Artistic Manager of Joffrey) and Mark Goldweber (then Director of The Arpino Apprentices) expressed an interest in such a relationship with NYIBC.

That same year, as if to confirm the idea of this award, Victoria Jaiani, a beautiful young dancer from the Republic of Georgia and student of The Joffrey Ballet School in New York City, participated in NYIBC. Ms. Jaiani won a bronze medal and was hired by Joffrey, where she continues to advance her career as an international star.



Victoria Jaiani / Photo © Marbeth



Christine Rocas / Photo © Joseph Schembri

Mr. Arpino, Adam Sklute, Associate Artistic Director at that time, and the Ballet Masters of the company were very enthusiastic about the award. Ms. Ross and Ms. Copen agreed on the terms of the Arpino Award and determined that it would be first offered at the following NYIBC in 2005.

That year, Ms. Christine Rocas from the Philippines received the award. Prior to joining The Joffrey Ballet, Ms. Rocas danced with Ballet Manila and won several other prestigious awards around the world.

Ashley Wheater, Artistic Director of The Joffrey Ballet, gave the Arpino Award in 2009 to bronze medalist Ricardo Santos from Brazil (first male dancer to receive the award). Mr. Wheater looks forward to continue presenting the Arpino Award.



Ricardo Santos / Photo © Whitney Browne

Other prestigious NYIBC Alumni that dance with Joffrey are: Temur Suluashvilli (Republic of Georgia), Abigail Simon (USA), Emily Patterson (USA), Amber Neumann (USA) and John Mark Giragosian (USA).



Pictured: Amber Neumann, John Mark Giragosian, Abigail Simon and Roddy Doble (ABT) / Photo © Whitney Browne