

Press release

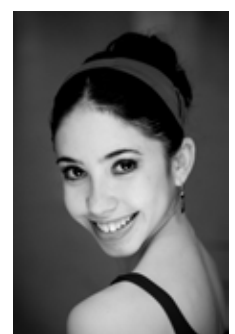
ENGLISH
NATIONAL
BALLET

26 August 2009

English National Ballet announces The Emerging Dancer Award nominees sponsored by Talbot Hughes McKillop

English National Ballet is delighted to announce today the six selected finalists for **The Emerging Dancer Award 2010**, generously supported in its inaugural year by Talbot Hughes McKillop (THM), the restructuring experts.

Throughout this 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 **Esteban Berlanga**, **Anäis Chalendard**, **Crystal Costa**, **Ksenia Ovsyanick**, **Junor de Oliveira Souza** and **Venus Villa**.



Left to right. Artistic Director - Wayne Eagling, Crystal Costa, Esteban Berlanga, Ksenia Ovsyanick, Julian Gething - Partner at THM, Anäis Chalendard, Junor de Oliveira Souza and Venus Villa.

The Emerging Dancer Award will be an annual competition for English National Ballet to recognise and nurture the phenomenal talent of our up-and-coming dancers. The Award encourages excellence and potential within the Company, with the winner being awarded a £5,000 cash prize.

All six nominees will be performing in *Giselle* across the UK this autumn. *Giselle* opens at the Manchester Palance Theatre on 23 September. **Esteban Berlanga** will make his debut as Count Albrecht on 26 September. **Anäis Chalendard** will dance as a lead Wilis, **Crystal Costa** and **Venus Villa** will both dance in the Peasant pas de deux, **Ksenia Ovsyanick** in the corps and **Junor de Oliveira Souza** stars in Wayne Eagling's World Premiere of *Men Y Men* which is being presented as a curtain-raiser to *Giselle*.

Throughout the Autumn Tour of *Giselle* and the Christmas Season at the London Coliseum which includes *The Nutcracker*, *The Snow Queen* and *Giselle*, English National Ballet's audiences will be invited to vote for their favourite of the six nominees. The dancer with the most public votes will win **The People's Choice Award**. There will be voting opportunities in all our venues, as well as via our website www.ballet.org.uk. Voting will open 23 September and by voting audiences members will be entered in to a prize drawer to win tickets for any UK performance by English National Ballet or an invitation to attend the Awards Evening.

English National Ballet's Emerging Dancer Award Winners sponsored by Talbot Hughes McKillop will be announced on the 25 February 2010 at an awards evening in front of an invited audience at the Company's studios in Kensington. Each of the six nominees will perform a solo 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.

"We are delighted to be associated with the English National Ballet and to be invited to support this exciting award for the best Emerging Dancer. We look forward to seeing the performance of those nominated throughout the forthcoming seasons and wish all of the nominees the best of luck" said Paul Horn, Managing Partner of Talbot Hughes McKillop

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For information and images please contact Rachel Branton, Press Manager at English National Ballet on 020 7581 1245 / 07930 590350 or email rachel.branton@ballet.org.uk.

About Talbot Hughes McKillop

Talbot Hughes McKillop (THM) provides hands-on, senior level leadership to restructuring situations. THM focus on working for companies in stressed and distressed situations to identify and deliver robust solutions that preserve stakeholder value. The THM approach is to deploy small dedicated teams in complex restructurings, bringing independence, trust and objectivity to negotiations with the stakeholders. The THM role may be either advisory or involve THM individuals assuming a management or Board position as appropriate.

For more details, please see the THM website www.thmpartners.com.

About English National Ballet

English National Ballet is current holder of the Critics' Circle Outstanding Company award, reinforcing its reputation as one of the world's great ballet companies, performing in cities across the UK and the world. The Company has 67 dancers and a live symphony orchestra. English National Ballet makes ballet relevant for today's audiences.

About the nominees

Esteban Berlanga was born in Albacete, Spain and trained at the Conservatorio Profesional de Musica y Danza de Albacete and Real Conservatorio Profesional de Danza de Madrid. He joined English National Ballet in 2006 after performing with Europa Danse. In 2008 he was made a First Artist and then a Soloist at the beginning of the current season.

He has already danced many leading roles with the Company including Des Grieux during the Company's premiere season of *Manon* and Prince Siegfried in *Swan Lake* which he considers his career highlight. Esteban recently created *Faun(e)* for David Dawson's interpretation of *L'après midi d'un faune* for the Company's *Ballets Russes* season.

Anäis Chalendard was born in Le Coteau, France and trained at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Danse de Marseille. Previously a member of Deutsch Oper, Straatsoper Berlin and Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe, Anais joined English National Ballet in 2008. After one season with the Company Anais was promoted to First Soloist following performances as *Manon* during the Spring tour. Anais would love to dance *Odette/Odile* in *Swan Lake* and is greatly looking forward to the Autumn tour of *Giselle*, one of her favourite ballets.

Crystal Costa was born in Vancouver, Canada and trained at The National Ballet School of Canada before joining Hong Kong Ballet. During her time at Hong Kong Ballet she rose to the rank of Principal before joining English National Ballet as a Soloist in 2007.

Promoted to First Soloist in 2008, Crystal has danced Principal roles since her first season with the Company in *The Snow Queen* as peasant girl Gerda and both the Sugar Plum Fairy and Clara in the *The Nutcracker*. Crystal is currently rehearsing her favourite role, *Giselle* which she will perform for the first time with English National Ballet during the Autumn tour.

Ksenia Ovsyanick was born in Tihvin, Russia and joined English National Ballet last season in 2008 after training at Belarus State Ballet College and English National Ballet School. Currently an Artist of the Company Ksenia has shown exciting promise as a future star after performances as an *Odalisque* in *Schéhérazade* during the Company's *Ballets Russes* season at Sadler's Wells.

Previously a Prix de Lausanne Finalist, Ksenia's dream role is *Giselle* which she is currently learning.

Junor de Oliveira Souza was born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and trained at Escola de Danca and English National Ballet School before joining the Company last season in 2008.

Also an Artist of the Company, Junor has already appeared as the Prince in *The Nutcracker* and with Carlos Acosta in Manchester's International Festival.

He is currently guesting as Albrecht in *Giselle* in South Africa and would love to dance the role of Romeo.

Venus Villa was born in Havana, Cuba and trained at the Alicia Alonso School and Teatro alla Scala Ballet School before joining The Royal Ballet and later Vienna Staatsoper.

Joining English National Ballet in 2006, Venus was promoted to First Artist in 2008 after performances as Clara in *The Nutcracker*, the title role in *Alice in Wonderland* and one of her favourite roles, *Swanhilda* in *Coppélia*.

Having performed in the Star of the Century Gala des Etoilles, Venus has shown much promise as a future star of the Company.