

STATE DEPT. FUNDS 10 U.S. HIGH SCHOOLERS TO STUDY W/ BOLSHOI

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The New York-based Russian American Foundation has announced that 10 American high school ballet dancers have been selected for the prestigious National Security Language Initiative for Youth Program -- funded by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs -- to spend six weeks this summer studying Russian language, culture and ballet at the renowned Bolshoi Ballet Academy in Moscow. NSLI-Y -- which provides merit-based scholarships to qualified U.S. high school students to learn less commonly taught languages and cultures in foreign countries -- has earmarked scholarships for a dance-related program for the first time with this summer's program with the Russian American Foundation and Bolshoi Ballet Academy.

The announcement was made by Marina Kovalyov and Rina Kirshner, President and Vice-president, respectively, of Russian American Foundation.

The 10 young dancers -- from Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, California, Iowa, Idaho, New York and Texas -- will spend six weeks from July 17 to August 28 in Moscow, where they will train with the Bolshoi Ballet Academy and also study Russian language, history, arts and culture.

Prior to their departure for Moscow, the students will spend three weeks in intensive ballet training in New York City with the Bolshoi Ballet Academy, now in its third year in an exclusive U.S. summer residency, sponsored by the Russian American Foundation (RAF).

RAF -- founded in 1997 to encourage interest in and understanding of Russian heritage among all communities in the U.S., as well as to promote reciprocal interest in American heritage among global communities of the former Soviet Union -- began its Bolshoi Ballet Academy summer training program in 2008.

The program -- which attracts talented young dancers from across the U.S. as well as foreign countries including Japan, Switzerland, Brazil, Kazakhstan, France and many others -- takes place in venues in Manhattan and Connecticut, where students in age groups nine to 14 and 15 and older spend six weeks from late June to early August training in classical Russian ballet technique with instructors and dancers from the Bolshoi Ballet Academy.

With its 235-year history, the Bolshoi Ballet Academy is one of the oldest and most established schools for classical ballet training in the world, having produced numerous world-class dancers, teachers, and choreographers. The Bolshoi Ballet Academy is steeped in a rich cultural tradition with a strong curriculum and a pedagogy that focuses on strength, musicality, clarity, and personal expression. Some of the most accomplished dancers of the 20th century who trained at the Academy include Maya Plisetskaya, Vladimir Vasiliev, Ekaterina Maximova, while stars of the current generation who are Academy alums include Nina Ananiashvili, Vladimir Malakhov, Natalia Osipova, Alexei Ratmanski, Polina Semionova, and Nikolai Tsiskaridze.

The NSLI-Y Program is administered by American Councils for International Education.

For additional information about the Bolshoi Ballet Academy and Russian American Foundation, visit www.russianamericanfoundation.org or call 212 687 6118.

[< back](#)

[previous listing](#) • [next listing](#)