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**HOUSTON BALLET II DANCER
SEBASTIAN CONCHA
WINS PRIZE AT PRESTIGIOUS PRIX DE LAUSANNE DANCE COMPETITION**

**Seventeen Year-Old Chilean Dancer
is One of Seven Prize Winners**

Houston, Texas – Houston Ballet II Dancer Sebastian Concha was awarded a prize at the 37th Prix de Lausanne Dance Competition, the prestigious international contest held annually in Lausanne, Switzerland between January 27th and February 1st 2009. Mr. Concha will receive one year's free tuition to a Prix de Lausanne partner school as well as 16,000 Swiss francs for living expenses during his year of study. Mr. Concha was the only student from an American ballet school to be awarded a prize.

“We are very proud of Sebastian and the way that he has grown and developed during his three years at Houston Ballet's Ben Stevenson Academy,” commented Houston Ballet Managing Director C.C. Conner. “His winning a prize at a highly competitive international contest like the Prix de Lausanne is a source of pride not just for our school, but for Houston Ballet's entire company. It also speaks to the high level of training provided by the academy and its dedicated teachers, coaches and staff.”

The Prix de Lausanne International Dance Competition is open to young dancers ages 15 - 18 who are not yet professionals. The competition is adjudicated by a jury of dance luminaries. Young dancers from around the world send a video of application to Lausanne, and the competition's artistic committee selects a maximum of eighty competitors to take part. During the week of the competition, participants are judged both during a dance class and individually on stage. Twenty competitors progress to the final round, a live performance attended by key figures from the ballet world. Seven young dancers received prizes.

Seventeen year-old Mr. Concha was coached by -- and accompanied to the competition in Switzerland by -- Houston Ballet II Ballet Master Claudio Munoz and Houston Ballet's Ben Stevenson Academy Associate Director Shelly Power.

"Dancers face competition on a daily basis, but perhaps not as intense as at the Prix de Lausanne," commented Ms. Power. "But Sebastian now knows a little more about his threshold for maintaining his cool in stressful situations. He did so with grace, focus and conviction.

"The feedback from the jury will also be forever valuable in his career and life. I think that Sebastian learned many lessons, including that people make quick assessments when they first meet you, and that hard work pays off when it is supported with a true sense of passion and love for what you are doing. Houston Ballet is proud to have supported Sebastian in his career aspirations -- and as a young person embarking on a long, healthy and successful life."

A native of Santiago, Chile, Mr. Concha enrolled in Houston Ballet's Ben Stevenson Academy in 2006. After initially studying in the academy's summer intensive program, he participated in the level 8 program, the most advanced level of the school, for a year, and was selected to join Houston Ballet II, Houston Ballet's training company for pre-professional dancers. During his time as a member of Houston Ballet II, Mr. Concha has toured with the ensemble to Wisconsin, Louisiana, and Budapest, Hungary, as well as dancing in the 2008 Latin Grammy Awards at Houston's Toyota Center. He will perform as part of Houston Ballet's Ben Stevenson Academy Spring Showcase at Wortham Theater Center April 24-25, 2009.

For more information on the Prix de Lausanne, log on to the Prix de Lausanne's web site:
www.prixdelausanne.org.

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