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**VITACCA PRODUCTIONS & COMPANY ANNOUNCES
VITACCA DANCE PROJECT WINNERS OF THE
2014 YOUTH AMERICA GRAND PRIX SEMI-FINALS IN DALLAS**

**Evan Leigh Thornton, 1st Place Contemporary Category
Evan Leigh Thornton, 3rd Place Classical Category**

HOUSTON, TEXAS – February 20, 2014: Vitacca Productions & Company's Artistic Director Kelly Ann Vitacca announces Vitacca Dance Project's 2014 Youth America Grand Prix (YAGP) Semi-Finals winners from the Dallas competition, Juliette Wooden and Evan Leigh Thornton. YAGP is known as one of the largest and most respected dance events in the world. It acts as a platform for national/international scholarships and professional company recruitment. The competition has recently gained a new following from the documentary, "First Position," which features Vitacca P&C Artistic Advisor and Ballet Master Phillip Broomhead. YAGP holds semi-finals across the country as well as in Brazil, Mexico, Belgium and Japan. Vitacca and Broomhead both coached Wooden and Thornton for this year's semi-finals as well as Kendall Palmer and Madison Araiza. For more information on Vitacca P&C visit vitacca.org.

Thornton, who won YAGPs Semi-Finals Dallas First Place Contemporary Category, performed *Red Genia* choreographed by Vitacca. She also took Third Place Classical Category with her *Aurora Variation* from *The Sleeping Beauty*. A Houston native, Thornton attends the prestigious High School for the Performing and Visual Arts (HSPVA) and resides in the Galleria area.

"Evan Leigh's training at [Vitacca Dance Project] this past year and a half played a critical role in her positive experience at YAGP. Her coaches, Kelly Ann Vitacca and Phillip Broomhead, spent many studio hours with Evan Leigh in classes, focusing on her technique training, and many more hours on her variations," comments Shauna Thornton, mother of Evan Leigh Thornton. "They worked with clear vision of the potential in both the dancer and the dance. This process helped imbue Evan Leigh with a sense of confidence I have not witnessed often."

Thornton is currently preparing for the YAGP Finals in New York City in April. "To prepare for the finals I am continuing my regular training schedule as well as adding many variation coaching sessions so that I am able to perform to the best of my ability," comments Thornton.

YAGP Dallas Semi-Finals Winners from Vitacca Dance Project:

Evan Leigh Thornton, 1st Place Contemporary Category

Red Genia - Choreographer: Kelly Ann Vitacca/Coaches: Kelly Ann Vitacca, Phillip Broomhead

Evan Leigh Thornton, 3rd Place Classical Category

Aurora Variation, *The Sleeping Beauty*

Choreographer: Marius Petipa/Coaches: Phillip Broomhead, Kelly Ann Vitacca

Juliette Wooden, Top 24 Classical Category

Kitri Variation, *Don Quixote*

Choreographer: Marius Petipa/Coaches: Phillip Broomhead, Kelly Ann Vitacca

Wooden and Thornton are on scholarship from Vitacca P&C's Geraldine M. Vitacca Emerging Artists Sponsorship, which is designed for aspiring dancers pursuing professional dance careers. Vitacca P&C is currently in a fundraising campaign through February via Indiegogo to grow this scholarship program. Visit vitacca.org for more information.

About Vitacca Productions & Company

Vitacca Productions & Company is a dance development organization that provides advanced dance coaching, outreach programs, professional performances and production/creative management services which bridge the gap between dance artists, career opportunities and the community.

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