

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Twenty-Four Couples. Five Prime-Time Hours. One Champion...

AMERICA'S BALLROOM CHALLENGE RETURNS WITH FIVE FULL HOURS OF SUPER-HEATED COMPETITION BEGINNING WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31, AT 8 PM ON PBS

(Boston, MA, December 27, 2006) Tradition and elegance...seduction and sizzle...**Ballroom is back!** From the producer who first brought the magic of competitive ballroom dancing to television, *America's Ballroom Challenge* returns to PBS **Wednesday, January 31, 2007 at 8 pm**.

Hosted by stage and screen actress Marilu Henner (*Taxi*, *Evening Shade*, Broadway revival of *Chicago*) and former U.S Latin Dance Champion Tony Meredith, the series expands from two to five hour-long episodes of super-heated prime-time competition, shot at the world's largest ballroom dancing competition in Columbus, Ohio. Broadcast in stunning High Definition, *America's Ballroom Challenge* once again takes viewers onto the dance floor and behind the scenes as 24 world-class couples compete for the ultimate dance title, **“America’s Best.”**

In addition to the competition on the dance floor, the new season of *America's Ballroom Challenge* features an inside look at what goes on backstage at the competition and insights on everything from hairstyle design to the secrets of judging. Viewers will also see exhibitions featuring other top couples in a range of styles—from precocious children to Pro-Am champions, theatre arts champions to formation dance teams.

“After the success of last year’s two-hour premiere, we’re thrilled to be able to come back with even more of the passion, glamour, and talent of this competition,” says series creator and producer Aida Moreno. “What’s great about this year’s series is that we have the time to showcase each of the four major styles, giving each of them their own night in the spotlight. That’s something I’ve always wanted to do, but I never had the opportunity until now.”

More Than Double The Competition

Expanding from two to five full-hour episodes, this season of *America's Ballroom Challenge* dedicates one full hour to each major style of competitive ballroom dance: American Smooth, American Rhythm, International Standard, and International Latin. The first four episodes begin with the six finalist couples in each style competing as a group, performing the required dances in their category. Then, the dancers have a real opportunity to shine, performing a show dance solo with all eyes on them alone. Each program ends with the crowning of one couple, the champions in that style of dance.

In the fifth and final episode of *America's Ballroom Challenge*, the four champion couples compete across dance styles in an exhilarating “Grand Finale,” performing two pull-out-all-the-stops solos each. At the conclusion of five grueling hours of competition, an international panel of judges makes its decision. **Only one couple will be named “America’s Best.”**

For more information about the series and fun facts about ballroom dancing, viewers may visit pbs.org/ballroomchallenge.

America's Ballroom Challenge is a production of Moreno/Lyons Productions, LLC, and is presented on PBS by WGBH Boston. Funding is provided by the World Federation of Dancers.

About The Production Team

America's Ballroom Challenge is produced by Moreno/Lyons Productions, a Boston-based production company with more than two decades of experience in television production. Aida Moreno, creator and Executive Producer of the series, is best known as the creator and original Executive Producer of *Antiques Roadshow*, now the most popular program on PBS. Moreno worked on a wide variety of programs during her 24-year career at Boston's WGBH. In 1980, Moreno introduced American viewers to the world of competitive dancing with a program called *Championship Ballroom Dancing*. What was supposed to be a single 90-minute special went on to become a perennial favorite—one of the highest rated specials in the PBS schedule for 20 years. The ballroom community recognized Moreno's contribution to the sport by inducting her into the World Dance Hall of Fame in 1999.

About WGBH

WGBH Boston is America's preeminent public broadcasting producer, the source of fully one-third of PBS's prime-time lineup, along with some of public television's best-known lifestyle shows, children's programs, and many public radio favorites. WGBH has been recognized with hundreds of honors: Emmys, Peabodys, duPont-Columbia Awards—even two Oscars. In 2002, WGBH was honored with a special institutional Peabody Award for 50 years of excellence. For more information, visit www.wgbh.org.

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