

Ice  
Theatre  
of  
New York®



# BENEFIT GALA

**MAY 4, 2026**

CHELSEA PIERS | NEW YORK CITY

HONORING

**NATHAN CHEN**

OLYMPIC + WORLD CHAMPION

ARTS & BUSINESS AWARD

**BYRON ALLEN**

STARS ON ICE

*Ice  
Theatre  
of  
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**CELEBRATING THE JOY  
OF DANCING ON ICE**



Photo: Darial Sheed

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## ABOUT THE COMPANY

Ice Theatre of New York® (ITNY) creates and advances dance on ice as an ensemble performing art and to provide education and public performances to people of all ages. Founded by Moira North in 1984, ITNY created the first not-for-profit professional ice dance company in the United States and was the first to receive funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

ITNY achieves its public arts and education mission by:

- Commissioning and performing new pieces created by recognized and emerging dance and ice skating choreographers. The company has created exclusive works by choreographers as varied as well-known skating choreographers Elisa Angeli, Lorna Brown, and Joel Dear, modern dance choreographers Jacquelyn Buglisi, Kolton Krouse, Elisa Monte, David Parsons, and Jody Sperling, performance artist Ann Carlson, McKnight Choreographer Fellow Deneane Richburg, and ballet great Edward Villella. We have just begun preparations for our first commissioned work with new media artist and creative technologist LaJuné McMillian.
- Making performances accessible to diverse audiences and presenting dozens of free City Skate Concerts, featuring our current repertory throughout New York City.
- Offering arts education programs on ice dancing and figure skating for school-aged children in Brooklyn, Queens, Chelsea, Harlem, and Central Park, annually serving 1,000 NYC school students.
- Training company skaters and guest skating artists in our weekly Master Edge Classes at Chelsea Piers Sky Rink, as well as offering training programs for aspiring ice dance artists, including our Junior Ensemble.
- Collaborating with choreographers, producers, presenters, administrators, and advocates from the dance and skating worlds and beyond while exploring creatively exciting relationships with artists from theatre, music, and new media disciplines.

**62 Chelsea Piers, Suite 308, New York, NY 10011**

**(212) 929-5811 | [itny@icetheatre.org](mailto:itny@icetheatre.org)**

**[icetheatre.org](http://icetheatre.org)**    



**CELEBRATING THE JOY  
OF DANCING ON ICE**

## **WELCOME TO OUR 41ST BENEFIT GALA "IT CONTINUES TO TAKE A VILLAGE"**

I so warmly welcome you here with us tonight to celebrate **Olympic Champion Nathan Chen and Byron Allen Producer of Stars On Ice...** — What a great village of excellence within the worlds of dancing on and off the ice, choreography, ice show productions and touring!

With your continued help, Ice Theatre of New York® has and will maintain the important work that we do: commissioning choreographers and performance artists to create new works for the company, nurturing emerging artists, and introducing New York City Public School students to the joy of ice skating. Your support encourages our exploration of what is possible within the realm of artistic ice dance.

The commitment to creating and curating works that are significant, not only for their beauty and artistic value but for their meaning in our ever-shifting world, remains a focus for Ice Theatre of New York. This season, pieces such as "Lion King" and "Purple Rain" by Emmanuel Savary, which were performed to very appreciative crowds during Black History Month; "Arctic Memory" choreographed by dancer Jody Sperling, which speaks to climate change and the imperative to protect our arctic ice; and "Timelessness" by original John Curry Company member Lorna Brown, a piece which invites us into a world where movement, music, and expression exist beyond time. All of these pieces speak to our multifaceted artistic mission.

Looking ahead, I invite you to join us at our weekly Edge Classes at Sky Rink, our City Skate Concert Series at Rockefeller Center, Bryant Park, Wollman Rink, and other outdoor seasonal rinks, as well as our educational outreach program, the "New Works and Young Artists Series," offered free to public school students across the city boroughs. In this program, the students learn about dance performance on ice and, then joining the performer/teachers on the ice, they learn what might become a lifelong healthy activity... ice skating!

*Skating... combines and surpasses the joys of flying and dancing: only in a certain type of a dream do we ever else attain a higher degree of the same ravishing experience of exultantly skimming the earth.*

— Ernest Jones, Biographer of Freud

Thank you for helping create and sustain our Ice Theatre of New York dream and for joining us as we glide gracefully and boldly into our future choreographic innovations, collaborations, and outreach programming!

Warmest wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Maria North".



Photo: Laura S. Fuchs



STATE OF NEW YORK  
**EXECUTIVE CHAMBER**  
ALBANY 12224

**KATHY HOCHUL**  
GOVERNOR

May 4, 2026

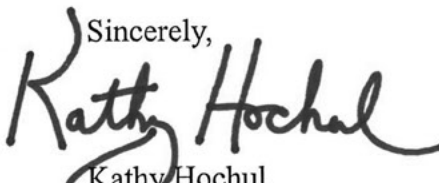
Ice Theatre of New York  
62 Chelsea Piers, Suite 308  
New York, NY 10011

Dear Friends:

It is my pleasure to send greetings to everyone gathered for Ice Theatre of New York's 2026 benefit gala.

Since its inception, the Ice Theatre of New York has enriched the city's cultural landscape. Many of the world's most talented dancers and figure skaters have proudly gathered here to inspire audiences of all ages. Through dazzling shows and concerts, as well as classes and workshops, you showcase the best of the artform while supporting future skaters as they carry on the tradition for generations to come.

Today, you gather to celebrate the Ice Theatre of New York's impact on performers and visitors alike. On behalf of all New Yorkers, I am grateful for your dedication to promoting ice dancing in our state. Best wishes for an enjoyable celebration.

Sincerely,  
  
Kathy Hochul  
Governor



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
NEW YORK, NY 10007

May 4, 2026

Dear Friends:

I am delighted to welcome everyone as Ice Theatre of New York (ITNY) hosts its annual benefit gala and performance.

You cannot tell the story of New York without acknowledging the cultural institutions that have shaped it, including ITNY, which was founded in 1984 with a mission to advance the art form of ice dancing. Our Administration firmly believes art is a public good—not a luxury reserved for the few. We are grateful to this Manhattan-based nonprofit for its efforts to inspire New Yorkers through its free educational and community outreach initiatives. Tonight’s event will celebrate ITNY’s accomplishments and benefit its seasonal productions as well as its New Works and Young Artists Series, a program for at-risk public school children. As you gather to support this wonderful nonprofit, I applaud its dedicated team and supporters for all they do to nurture the next generation of ice skaters and make a positive difference in the five boroughs. Together, we will usher in an ambitious new era for the greatest city in the world and ensure it remains a place where artists can afford to live, work, and create.

On behalf of 8.5 million New Yorkers, I extend congratulations to this year’s honoree, the award-winning American figure skater Nathan Chen. Please accept my best wishes for a festive gala and continued success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "ZK Mamdani".

Zohran Kwame Mamdani  
Mayor



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

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**Brad Hoylman-Sigal, Borough President**

May 4, 2026

Dear Friends:

I am proud to offer my sincerest congratulations for the 2026 Ice Theatre of New York Benefit Gala and Performance.

For over four decades, ITNY has cultivated and showcased groundbreaking ice dancing. You have changed the face of figure skating, pushing the boundaries of movement and increasing diversity across the discipline. I'm especially grateful for ITNY's many free performances across the city and your outreach program for at-risk public school students.

I would also like to extend my own congratulations to tonight's honoree, Nathan Chen, who has been a trailblazer on and off the ice. I have no doubt that Nathan will continue to inspire the next generation of skaters, and I'm so pleased that his work and leadership are being honored here.

On behalf of the Borough of Manhattan, I wish Ice Theatre of New York and its many supporters another year of success.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brad Hoylman-Sigal".

Brad Hoylman-Sigal  
Manhattan Borough President

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May 4, 2026

Dear Friends of the Ice Theatre of New York,

I write to congratulate ITNY on its 2026 Benefit Gala and Performance and to recognize this year’s honoree Nathan Chen, who is one of the most accomplished and inspiring athletes in the history of figure skating.

Nathan Chen’s career exemplifies the rarest combination of athletic skill and artistic brilliance. With three world championships and two olympic gold medals under his belt, he had one of the greatest runs in men’s skating history. Tonight is an exciting homecoming for the community, given Nathan’s longstanding connection to ITNY through his first coach, Stephanie Grosscup, an early ITNY performer.

Nathan has had a journey that we can all look to for inspiration, and I have no doubt that tonight’s attendees from the skating community can appreciate the sheer resilience and discipline that success like his takes in a sport that can have both great highs and lows. He is a true role model for the next generation.

I also want to congratulate Byron Allen on winning the Arts and Business Award. His work at Stars on Ice brings world-class performances to audiences across the country.

Thank you to ITNY for continuing to play a vital role in inspiring audiences of all ages. Through its dedication to community outreach, the development of young talent, and more, ITNY ensures skating remains vibrant and accessible. Supporting their mission means investing in the cultural life of our city and in our next generation.

Sincerely,

Majority Leader Shaun Abreu  
New York City Council, District 7

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THE COUNCIL  
OF  
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4<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT, MANHATTAN

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Moira North  
Founder, Artistic Director  
Ice Theatre of New York  
62 Chelsea Piers, Suite 308  
New York, NY 10011

Dear Ms. North,

It is a pleasure to congratulate Ice Theatre of New York (ITNY) on your 2026 Benefit Gala and Performance. Since 1984, Ice Theatre of New York has helped define a unique and distinctly New York art form. By advancing ice dance as an ensemble performing discipline and bringing high-quality performances into public spaces across the five boroughs, you have expanded access to the arts while elevating the visibility of skating as both athletic and creative expression. From iconic rinks in Manhattan to community spaces in Brooklyn and Queens, your work reflects a commitment to meeting New Yorkers where they are and ensuring that cultural experiences remain part of everyday life in our city.

I am especially pleased to recognize this year's honoree, Nathan Chen, whose career has redefined the standard of excellence in figure skating. As a 2022 Olympic Champion, Olympic Team Gold Medalist, and three-time World Champion, he has demonstrated a level of technical mastery and consistency that is unmatched. His background in ballet, gymnastics, and music speaks to the artistry that underpins his performances, and his continued connection to the skating community reflects a lasting commitment to the field beyond competition.

That combination of excellence, discipline, and continued engagement makes him a fitting honoree for an organization that has spent decades investing in both artistic innovation and the next generation of performers. Through initiatives like the New Works and Young Artists Series and your outreach to public schools, Ice Theatre of New York is ensuring that young people across our city have the opportunity to experience and participate in this art form.

At a time when access to the arts is more important than ever, your work demonstrates the impact of sustained investment in cultural institutions that serve the public. Congratulations on this year's gala and on your continued leadership in New York City's cultural life.

Sincerely,

Virginia Maloney  
Council Member, District 4

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OF

THE CITY OF NEW YORK

**Yusef Salaam**

COUNCIL MEMBER, 9<sup>th</sup> DISTRICT, MANHATTAN

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SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES

May 4, 2026

Moira North, Founder & Artistic Director  
Ice Theatre of New York  
62 Chelsea Piers, Suite 308  
New York, NY 10011

Dear Ice Theatre of New York family,

It is an honor and a pleasure to extend my congratulations to Ice Theatre of New York, in celebration of your 2026 Benefit Gala and Performance. For over four decades, your organization has elevated the art of skating through innovation, education, and community engagement, leaving an indelible mark on New York City’s cultural landscape.

I also join in celebrating this year’s distinguished honoree, three-time world champion and two-time 2022 Olympic Gold Medalist, Nathan Chen, whose extraordinary achievements on and off the ice continue to inspire audiences around the world. His dedication, artistry, and groundbreaking accomplishments exemplify excellence at the highest level and reflect the very spirit that Ice Theatre of New York brings to its work.

My sincere appreciation goes to the organization’s founder, Moira North, whose vision and commitment have built a lasting legacy—one that nurtures young talent, expands access to the arts, and ensures that future generations can experience the beauty and discipline of skating as a performing art.

Congratulations on this special evening, and best wishes for continued success in the years ahead.

Sincerely,

Yusef Salaam  
New York City Council  
9<sup>th</sup> Council District

**Congratulations to Nathan Chen and Byron Allen!  
Bravo to the Ice Theatre of New York, Moira and Jirina!  
We are proud to serve.**

*Ice  
Theatre  
of  
New York*

**Board of Trustees**



**Congratulations, Nathan!** You inspire me.

**Bravo, Byron!** You expertly steer SOI

**Congratulations, ITNY!** For sharing the joy of dancing on ice.



**SCOTT HAMILTON**

# Nathan Chen: A Polymath on Ice

By Philip Hersh



In 2017, not long after Nathan Chen had won his first of what would be six straight U.S. titles in figure skating, we talked briefly about his background in ballet.

Now, a lot of figure skaters mention having done ballet, but it is usually little more than something for a sentence in their bios.

But he did not see it the way most skaters do, as just another box to check, like sessions to work on strength, flexibility and endurance.

Chen was serious about the dance lessons, as many as six per week, that he took for 6 ½ years at Ballet West Academy in Salt Lake City. He started the lessons at age seven to help his skating. He kept them up for a less pragmatic reason.

“I love ballet,” he said.

And he was good, too.

Madison Young danced with Chen in Ballet West productions of *The Nutcracker*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *Swan Lake*. She is now a principal dancer of the Vienna State Ballet. This is what she said about Chen back in 2017:

“If he wanted to be a dancer, I have no doubt he would be amazing, a star,” Young said.

Figure skating long had taken precedence over his other extracurricular activities, which also included piano, violin, hockey and gymnastics. But Young’s opinion was seconded, even more emphat-

ically, by his ballet teachers.

They saw in the pre-teen Chen an artistic and athletic polymath with a high level of dedication, a maturity that allowed him to concentrate fully on a task and an ability to quickly grasp new concepts. When added to his physical coordination, that seemed to guarantee success in whatever pursuit he chose to focus on.

“Frankly, I think I chose the right one because I have very flat feet, and I’m quite short, so I think those two things restrict me a little bit from becoming a very impressive ballet dancer,” he said.

Yet he came to regret how much the need to cram his figure skating programs with point-getting elements left little time to show the details from his ballet training. It still came though on the ice as an overall picture in his signature skating programs, like “Nemesis,” “La Bohème,” “Philip Glass medley,” and “Rocket Man,” the last used for the free skate to Elton John music that brought him the 2022 Olympic singles gold medal and shout outs from Sir Elton himself.

“There’s a lot of like, ‘It feels good,’ in ballet,” Chen said. “You get to see yourself move, and see all the people around you move in really, really esthetically pleasing ways.

“It’s like I’m not doing that movement to optimize my dreams or anything to that effect, but more just like, feel myself, feel the energy, feel the flow, and

all those kinds of things. And they’re kind of intangibles, but they make skating and ballet just so complete and worthwhile and enjoyable.”

The link he embodies between two disciplines that combine artistry and athleticism is underscored by the Ice Theatre of New York’s selection of Chen as its 2026 Honoree.

“As the nation’s first dance company on ice, it feels so natural to honor Nathan Chen, both as an Olympian and as a trained ballet dancer,” ITNY founder and artistic director Moira North said. “In this Olympic year, we look forward to celebrating Nathan’s many talents and contributions to our ‘icy’ world.”

“What they’re doing for the community is fantastic,” Chen said of ITNY. “They provide an opportunity to explore skating in a very different light than what we conventionally see on TV. I think they’re impactful and necessary, and I appreciate the work they’re doing to have skating really maintain itself as an art form.”

Chen, 26, retired from competition after the 2022 Winter Games, in which he also won a gold medal in the team event. He spent the next two years finishing his undergraduate studies at Yale, winning an outstanding thesis award from the Yale Department of Statistics and Data Science. Thesis title: “Utilizing Deep Learning to Predict Somatic Variant Pathogenicity.”

TO NATHAN

CONGRATULATIONS  
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AWARD!

LOVE  
VERA

VERAWANG



(Polymath, redux: Chen also wrote an essay for the book, “Studies in Time: Essays on the Music of Philip Glass,” which accompanied a box set issue of the celebrated minimalist composer’s piano etudes. In his 2020-21 season free skate to Glass’ music, Chen clearly showed a physical as well as intellectual understanding of Glass, having studied his music at Yale and having learned how to play part of it on the piano.)

He then moved on to Goucher College in suburban Baltimore, where he enrolled in a one-year program designed to fill in science course gaps for medical school applicants. He awaits news on the fate of his applications.

Chen, inducted into the U.S. Figure Skating Hall of Fame in January, hasn’t spent much time on skates the past two years. Between his studies at Goucher and his daily work as a research assistant in Johns Hopkins’ Malone Center for Engineering in Healthcare, he has found time to get to a rink only about twice a month. He also does some Your True Step skating seminars with his close friend, U.S. Olympic ice dancer Jean-Luc Baker, and dancer/choreographer Sam Chouinard.

With his course work at Goucher finished at the end of 2025, Chen was able to go to the 2026 Winter Games as a contributor to yahoo! sports.

The last show tour Chen did was Stars on Ice in 2023. He most recently performed last fall in the Scott Hamilton & Friends show, which benefits the 1984 Olympic champion’s Scott CARES Foundation for cancer research.

“That was a very brief number,” Chen said. “Most of the stuff I do is like that, for fundraising.

“If I can’t feel as though I’m at the sort of level that I would want to present myself at, then I don’t really want to do it. In order to get there, I have to make sure that I spend enough time on the ice. Logistics have been challenging in order to maintain that. So that’s sort of like a barrier.”

The Scott Hamilton show was a perfect fit for Chen, given that he will go to medical school already having found that cancer is “of particular interest to me.”

The Hopkins lab where Chen works is headed by computer scientist Dr. Alexis Battle. Her research, according to the school’s web site, “is concentrated on the development of computational biology tools and machine-learning strategies to examine genetic differences on gene regulation and disease.”

Chen, a data science and statistics major at Yale, is using those skills and knowledge in the lab.

“The particular work I do is exploring

frailty, the disease of aging, and trying to understand trajectories of the disease, as well as any biological signals,” Chen said.

“The overall subject is combinational biology in nature, but the day to day is very much statistics and data science-focused, (including) data cleaning and running basic statistical models and things.”

Battle, a professor of biomedical engineering, computer science and genetics, sees the qualities that made him an exceptional skater contribute to his work in the lab. She also is impressed by Chen’s contributions outside of science, noting he was “shoveling compost with the best of them” at a lab volunteer day in a community garden.

“Dedication and focus translate from athletics to science and academics,” Battle said in an email. “He is very good at identifying milestones and working toward them. I can see this in his research in the lab and in his pursuit of a medical education. He is methodical, focused, and goal-oriented, and he consistently produces thoughtful analysis for the genomics data we are working with.”

To the question of what she has found most interesting about Chen, Battle wrote, “It has been very interesting to understand the risks that he and his family took to pursue his skating career. They had to make difficult decisions when he was still quite

We are so proud of everything you have accomplished on and off the ice.  
**You are a true champion.**



**FROM YOUR IMG AND WME REPRESENTATIVES**



**Congratulations Nathan and Byron!**  
**Here's to providing years of unique perspective!**

**AMY KRUT**

**U.S. FIGURE SKATING CONGRATULATES**  
**TWO-TIME OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALIST**  
**NATHAN CHEN**  
**2026 ITNY HONOREE**  
 ITNY BENEFIT GALA AND PERFORMANCE

**U.S. FIGURE SKATING**



young, and the path they chose required not only athletic skill, but also exceptional maturity and dedication on his part.

“I also find it interesting that Nathan is so dedicated to his community and to young skaters in particular. He knows first-hand the stresses and challenges that young athletes face, and he is motivated to lift them up and help them feel less alone. This is another example of his exceptional maturity.”

In his first two years at Yale, he balanced a full commitment to school with a full commitment to skating. After the Covid pandemic hit in the second semester of his sophomore year, forcing the university to institute remote learning for 18 months, Chen decided to take two academic years off rather than his originally planned one before the 2022 Olympics.

But he had friends send him the textbooks he figured to eventually be using in chemistry and advanced statistics courses for a little light reading.

“Nothing super serious,” Chen told me a couple weeks before the 2021 U.S. Championships. “Just trying to get through a chapter a day.”

He went to the 2022 Olympics in Beijing as the favorite and won the gold medal easily, getting a record score in the short program and then mastering a free skate of surpassing difficulty with five clean quadruple jumps and two inconsequential mistakes.

He even was able to muster a wry smile after one of the errors, as if to under-

line his pledge to have fun at his second Olympics, to free his head of the anxiety that had overwhelmed him during his Winter Games debut in 2018.

Chen managed to keep that vow despite the claustrophobic atmosphere and empty arenas necessitated to create a protective anti-Covid bubble in Beijing. And he kept it despite having had four long years to carry the mental baggage of what had happened at the 2018 Olympics, when he got swept up in medal expectations and finished fifth after staggering to 17th in the short program.

He won in 2022 despite the weight of expectations that grew exponentially after he won the three world championships between the two Olympics. He did it with a will that drove him to push himself and his sport past seemingly established limits, a will that allowed him to become the seventh U.S. man to win an Olympic singles figure skating gold medal.

And he did it despite obstacles few were aware of until he mentioned them in interviews right after the free skate and later elaborated on them in his biography, “One Jump at a Time,” written with Time Magazine’s Alice Park and published in late 2022.

“I never thought I would actually be able to make this happen,” Chen said. “It was a pretty daunting mountain.”

His coach, Rafael Arutunian, spoke of Chen and his mother, Hetty Wang, driving every few months from Salt Lake City to southern California for lessons with him

at the start of their working relationship. They were lessons the family could not really afford, so Arutunian would take the money Chen’s mother paid him and give it back to her son.

“One day he said to his mom, ‘If we don’t move, I will not make it,’” Arutunian said. “This was an 11-year-old boy saying that.”

They soon moved to California so he could work with Arutunian daily.

“My mom and I grew up quite poor, and Raf obviously knew about the situation,” Chen said in Beijing. “He would say, ‘I don’t really want that money. I want you to achieve the goal you want.’”

I never knew any of that back story until that moment, despite having written about his figure skating career for seven seasons, beginning with the 2016 U.S. Championships.

I saw him only at competitions, when the chances to have insightful conversations are minimal.

Even though Chen was gracious enough to do several one-on-one telephone interviews with me, they were generally brief. Even then, his reticence to share things that only he, his family and his coaching team were familiar with, matters both personal and skating-related, was very obvious.

“I’m pretty introverted, I’m pretty quiet,” Chen told me during a telephone conversation this spring. “In general, I like the shadows.”

He preferred to shine the light on

CONGRATULATIONS NATHAN!

A TRUE CHAMPION AND MASTER AT  
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IN SPORTS BROADCASTING.



 **RED BRICK SPORTS**

those who had helped and motivated him, like his family and coaches and longtime rival Yuzuru Hanyu of Japan, the two-time Olympic champion, and compatriot Michelle Kwan, the five-time world champion and two-time Olympic medalist who also is a child of Chinese immigrants.

He was a two-year-old living in Salt Lake City, hardly a figure skating hotbed, when Kwan won bronze there in 2002. He would become the first skater of Chinese ancestry to win an Olympic singles title.

“It’s important for a young athlete to be able to see themselves and know they’re not restricted by anything except for their dreams, their hopes, their work ethic and things like that,” Chen said. “I think representation is super-empowering.”

Chen was called the “quad king,” a title he inherited from Timothy Goebel, the first to be given that sobriquet. Goebel earned it as the first to land a quadruple salchow in competition as well as the first to land three quads in a program. That lineage will be emphasized when Goebel joins Chen’s first coach, Stephane Grosscup, to present the honoree award to Chen at the May 4 ITNY benefit gala.

Chen quickly passes credit for ascending that throne to those he feels deserve recognition for catalyzing what soon became a quad revolution, especially China’s three-time Olympian, Jin Boyang.

“I love to reference Boyang, because I would not have been so inspired to start working on quads had I not seen him at the (2015) Grand Prix Final (where Jin landed three clean quads, including a Lutz, and got rotational credit for a fourth),” Chen said.

“I was competing there as a junior, and seeing that in person, I was like, ‘Whoa, the sport has changed.’”

Chen became the first skater to cleanly execute the five types of quadruple jumps that had been landed until his successor as U.S. champion, Ilia Malinin, did the sixth — the quad Axel — and eventually did all six in the same program. Chen was the first to do five clean quadruple jumps in a free skate and the first to get full rotational credit for six in a free skate.

“I think I certainly contributed to this generation that has led to this quad boom,” Chen said. “I think it is also important to frame it in the context of, ‘If you want to

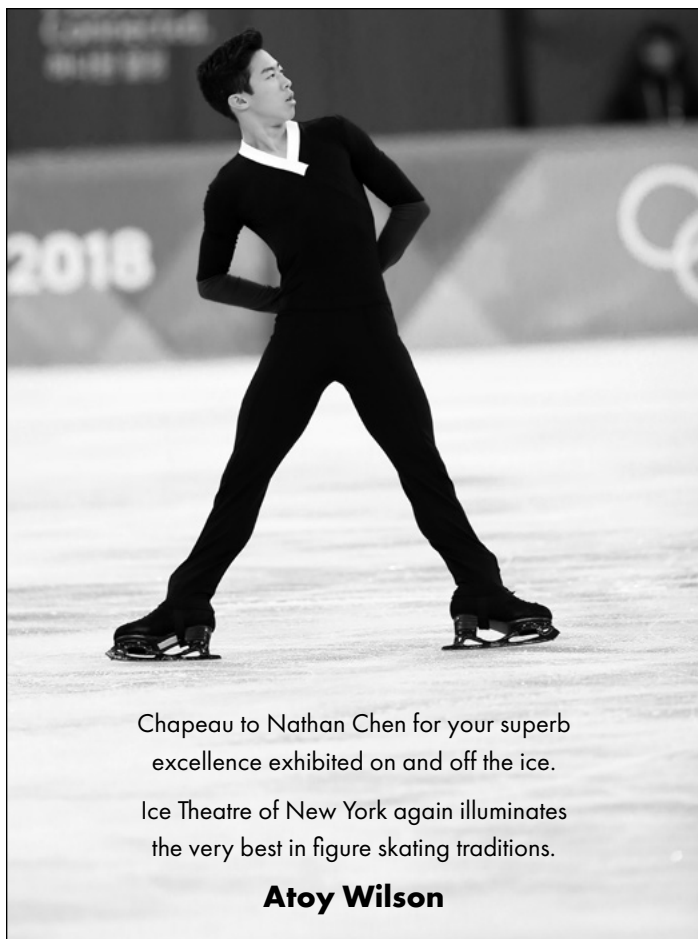
medal, if you want to get to a certain point, it’s important to try to optimize the objective value you’re going to be able to get.”

That’s Chen the statistician talking. Do more quads, get more points, win more medals.

So, ask Chen how he would like to be remembered, and he answers, “Just as someone who, like, wanted to continue to push themselves, push the sport as much as they could, like in whatever way that means to people.

“I just had a great family, a great support team, and I learned quite a lot from the sport, from the mistakes and failures and the good times. I certainly will do my best to apply these things that I’ve learned through skating into medicine so I can have an impact there and help people.”

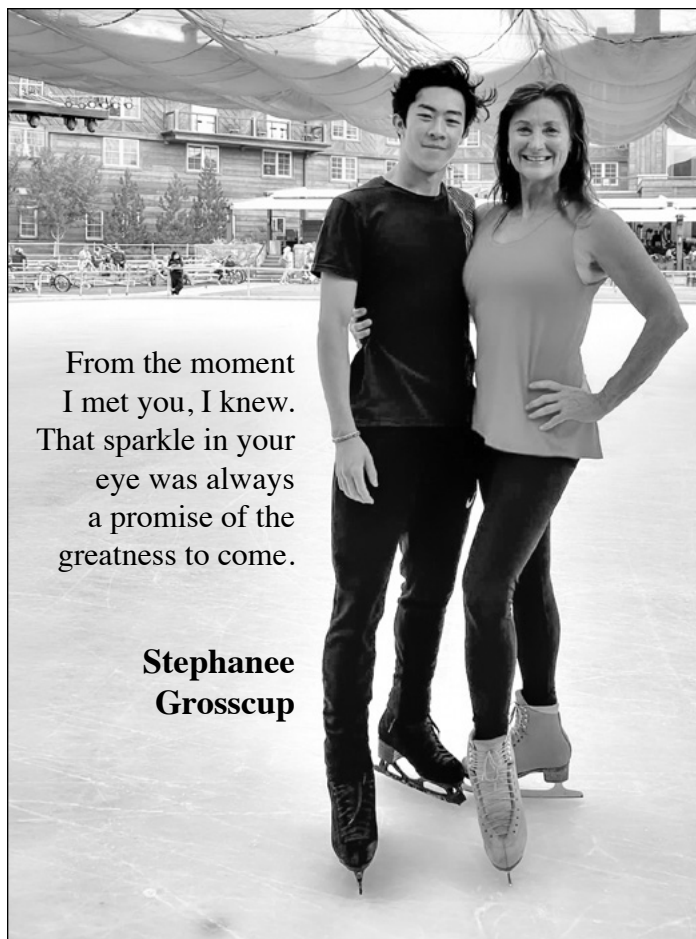
*Philip Hersh, formerly the Chicago Tribune’s Olympic specialist, has covered figure skating at 13 straight Winter Olympics, the last two as a special contributor for NBC Sports.*



Chapeau to Nathan Chen for your superb excellence exhibited on and off the ice.

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From the moment I met you, I knew. That sparkle in your eye was always a promise of the greatness to come.

**Stephane Grosscup**



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# STARS ON ICE

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what you said or did, they will remember  
how you made them feel."

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# BYRON ALLEN PUTS STARS ON THE ICE



Byron Allen has a succinct description of his decades-long work as a behind-the-scenes impresario of IMG's "Stars on Ice," the premier North American ice-skating tour.

"My job is to hire talented people, and let them do their thing, whether it's choreography, or costumes, or another skill," he says. "Then, don't screw it up."

When I reach Allen in mid-March, he

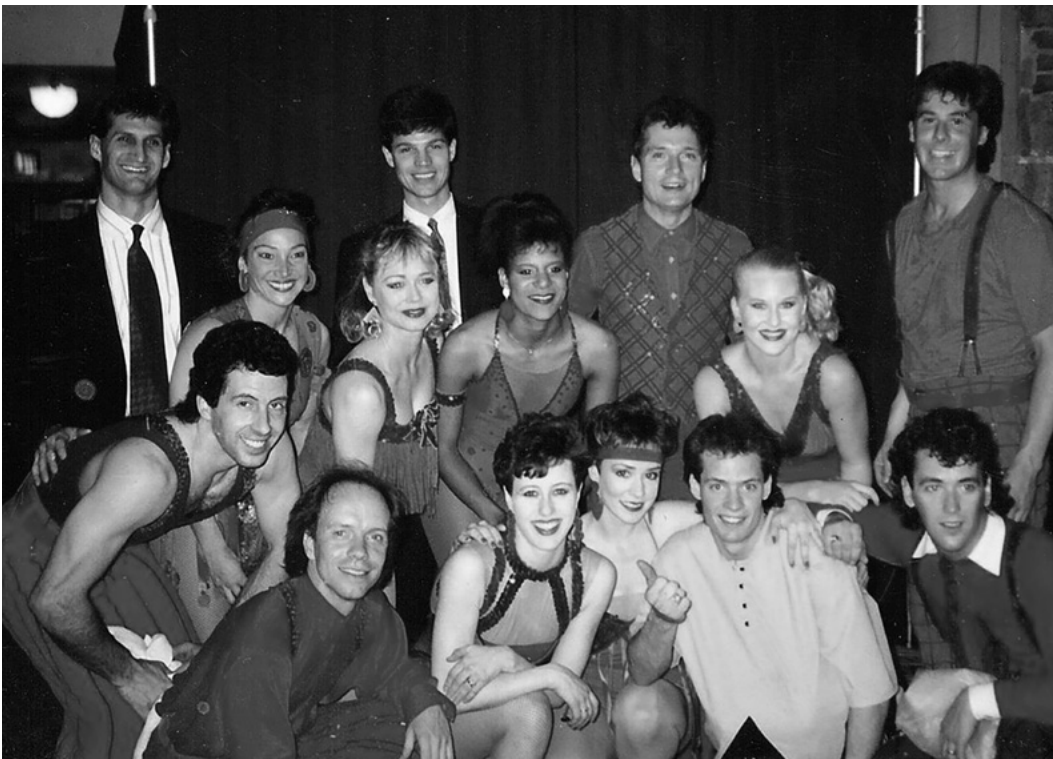
is deep into last-minute preparations for the 2026 edition of SOI, which will visit 28 U.S. cities with a cast featuring U.S. Olympians Alysa Liu, Ilia Malinin and Madison Chock and Evan Bates. While receptive to questions about his career, he doesn't see himself as worthy of Ice Theatre of New York's Arts & Business Award. He's simply a professional, doing a job he happens to love.

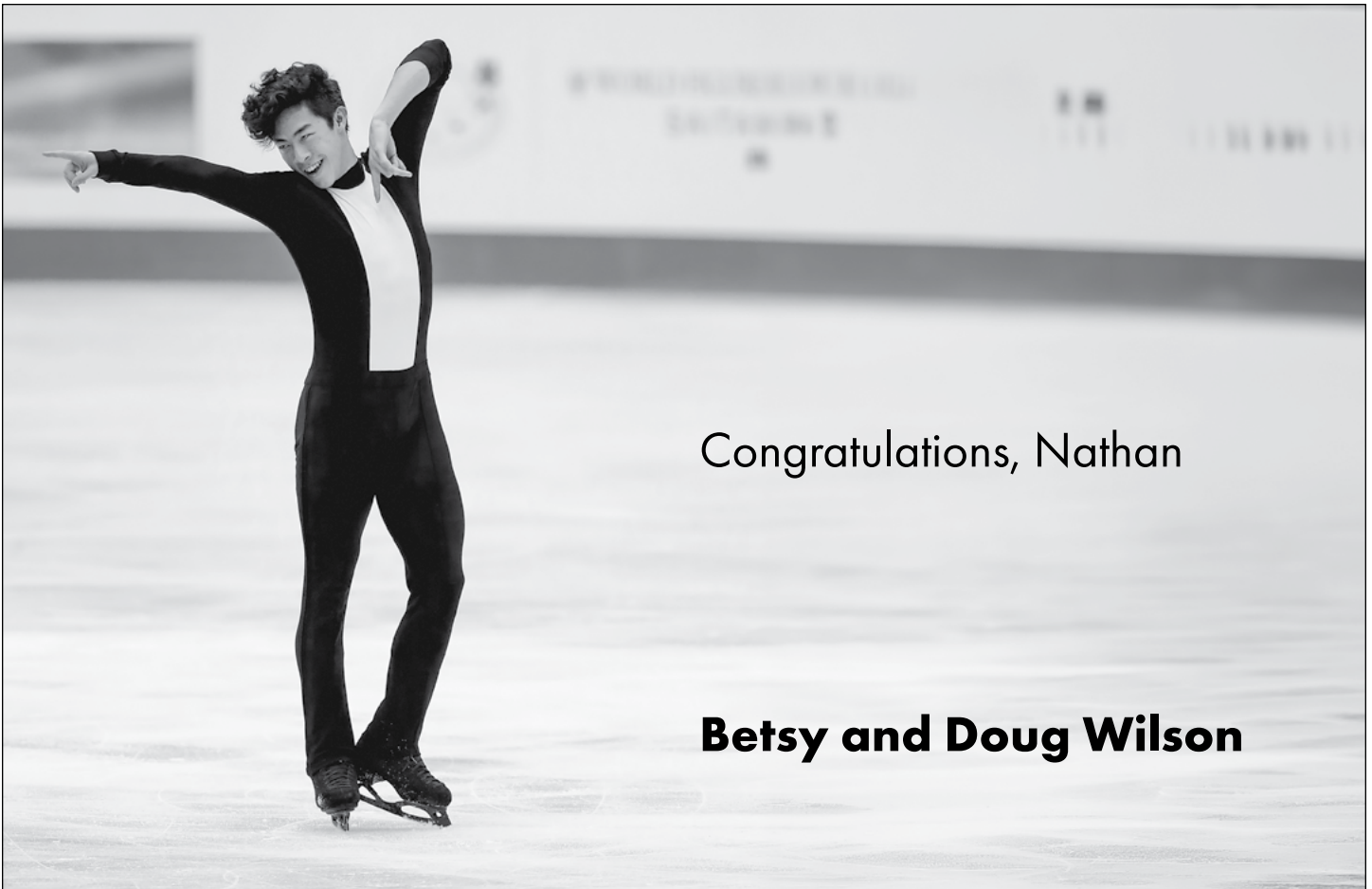
"I can't figure out why anybody wants to honor me, but I'm appreciative," Allen, a senior vice president at IMG Worldwide, says. "You know, we've had great choreographers, from Sandra (Bezic) to Chris (Dean) to Jeff (Buttle) and now, Kurt (Browning) and Alissa (Czisy). We've won Emmys for choreography and costumes (the late Jef Billings). You hire talented people, and you let them do their thing."

The New Jersey native's involvement in SOI dates back to its birth in 1986. After Scott Hamilton was unceremoniously fired by Ice Capades, he and his manager, Bob Kain, founded Scott Hamilton's America Tour, soon re-christened Stars on Ice. At the time, Allen was a recent college graduate, working in IMG's events division.

"Back then, it was a very small division, and people did lots of different things," he remembers. "I was working on tennis events, and I met Bob and Gary Swain, who was hired to run the tour. They asked me to help out with the marketing."

In May 1989, Allen was named SOI's producer, with the support of long-time IMG col-





Congratulations, Nathan

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league Jay Ogden.

“Quite honestly, it struggled at first,” he says. “We finally figured out the time frame to do it was in winter, rather than the fall.”

At its peak, the mid-1990s through the early 2000s, SOI visited close to 100 cities a year in the U.S. and Canada, bolstered by headliners including Hamilton, Browning, Kristi Yamaguchi, Katia Gordeeva and Sergei Grinkov, Paul Wylie, Tara Lipinski and many others.

“There were so many Olympic medalists, and they were the names that were so huge at that time,” Allen says. “Figure skating carries so many appealing aspects, with music, costumes, speed, intrigue: ‘Will he land that jump, or will he fall? How is she doing all that while being lifted in the air?’ When you put it all together -- when you’re able to take all the talent figure skating coaches around the world have developed -- you have a

pretty extraordinary show.”

In recent years, the tour has visited fewer cities, and it took a break from the U.S. in 2024. But in the post-Olympic glow, including Team USA’s team gold medal in Milano-Cortina, it has sold out several stops, prompting the addition of second shows in select venues.

“We’ve seen the highs, and we’ve seen the reversion to the mean,” Allen says. “Now we’re back at highs. (The current tour) has really been as successful from a ticket sales perspective as any tour in the last 25 years.”

Allen credits the charisma of Olympic and world champions like Liu, Malinin, and Chock and Bates, plus U.S. champions including Amber Glenn, Isabeau Levito and Jason Brown, with adding to SOI’s appeal.

“U.S. Figure Skating had developed these wonderful skaters, who then turned out to have fabulous personalities and are

interesting and different and relatable,” he says. “And NBC told their stories so brilliantly, not just during the two Olympic weeks in February, which was extraordinary, but over the last three or four years leading up to the Games. And we’re reaping the rewards of that.”

Sold out venues notwithstanding, Allen doesn’t think IMG’s role, and by extension his own, is solely to sell SOI tickets. Rather, it’s to build up the sport.

“This has been a long-term process for the entirety of the tour, and it’s really been my goal all along,” he says. “(Three-time U.S. champion) Michael Weiss said, ‘I knew I wanted to be a figure skater when I saw Scott Hamilton at center ice.’ That’s what I want, to have that girl or boy out there see our skaters and think, ‘I want to be him, I want to be her.’”



Congratulations to all the honorees and the many champions, visionaries, artists and supporters who honor Ice Theatre of New York by your presence and participation!

And a big thank you to tonight’s performers!

With appreciation and gratitude,

**Taffy Holliday  
and Richard Katz**

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**Congratulations to Nathan Chen for super quadruple jumps,  
fabulous spins and beautiful artistic figure skating style.**

**Congratulations to Co-Chair Stephane Grosscup and to Moira North  
for her outstanding dedication to figure skating choreography for ITNY.**

## **Kim Cathleen Millette Verde**

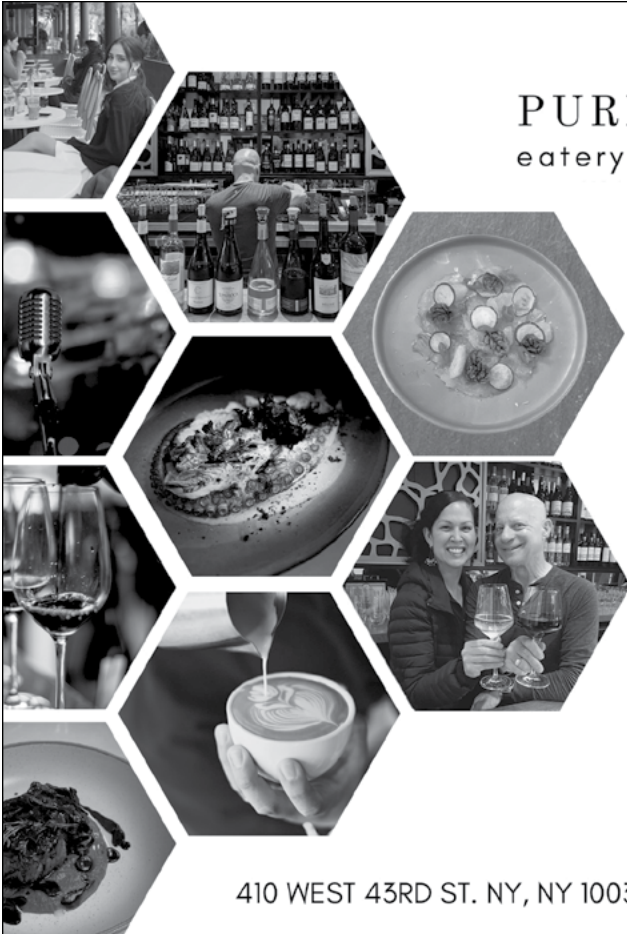
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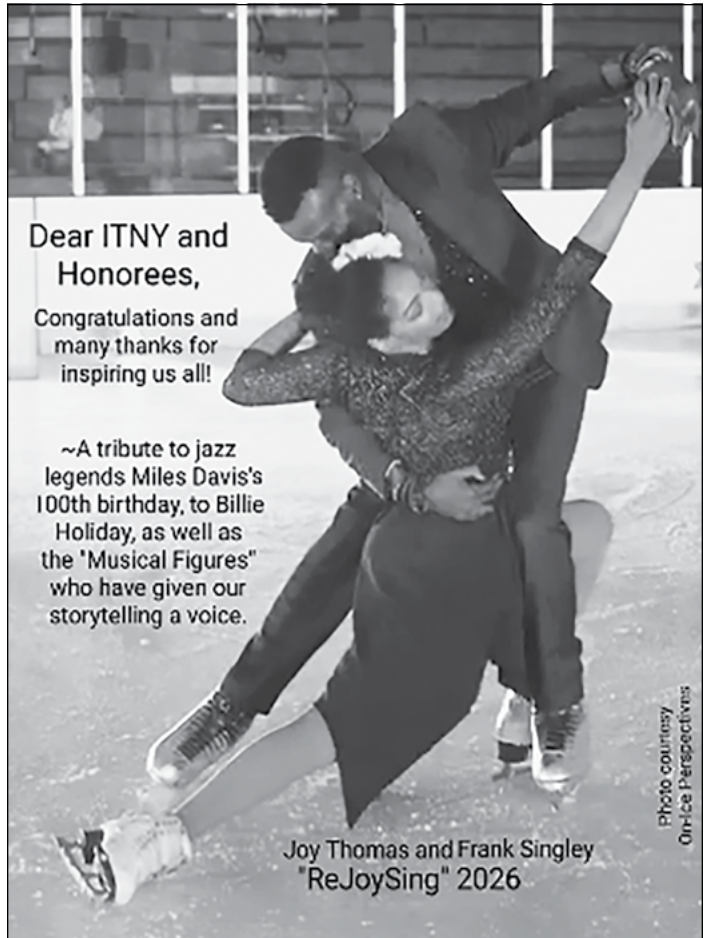


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Nathan –

Thank you for taking figure skating to a new level! Your combination of artistry and athletic ability set a new standard for all who follow. The sport was changed for the better because of you. May you excel in the same way in your next career.

**Rhea S. Schwartz**



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Congratulations to Nathan Chen  
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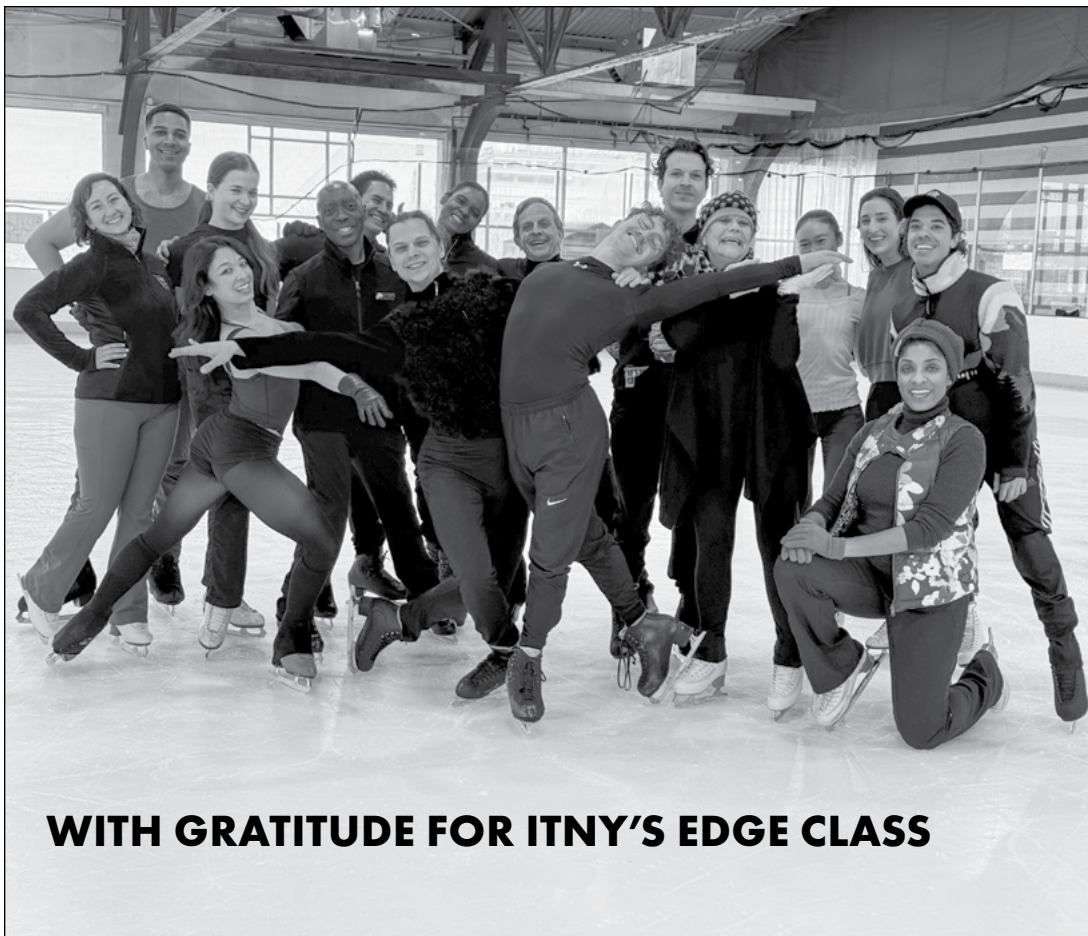
Three-time World Champion, two-time Olympic Gold Medalist, and the first Asian American man to claim U.S., World, and Olympic titles. What makes Nathan truly exceptional is not only his achievements, but the way he carries them, with humility, grace, gratitude and quiet confidence. His journey reflects years of relentless dedication, discipline, and passion for excellence. Nathan is the definition of a modern champion - driven, multidimensional, and deeply respected.

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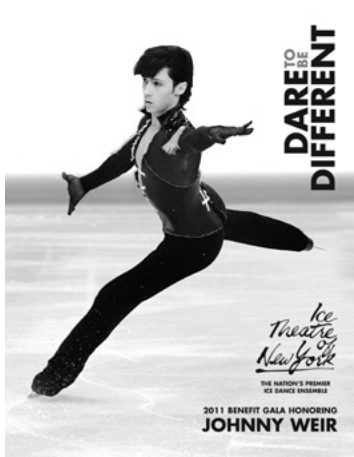


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Sarah France	Matt Thomas
Joe Johnson	Milly Wasserman
Isaac Lindy	Elisabeth Ehrhardt
Karina Manta	(Performing Intern)
Libby McGrosky	

#### Guest Performers

Emmanuel Savary  
Emilea Zingas & Vadym Kolesnik



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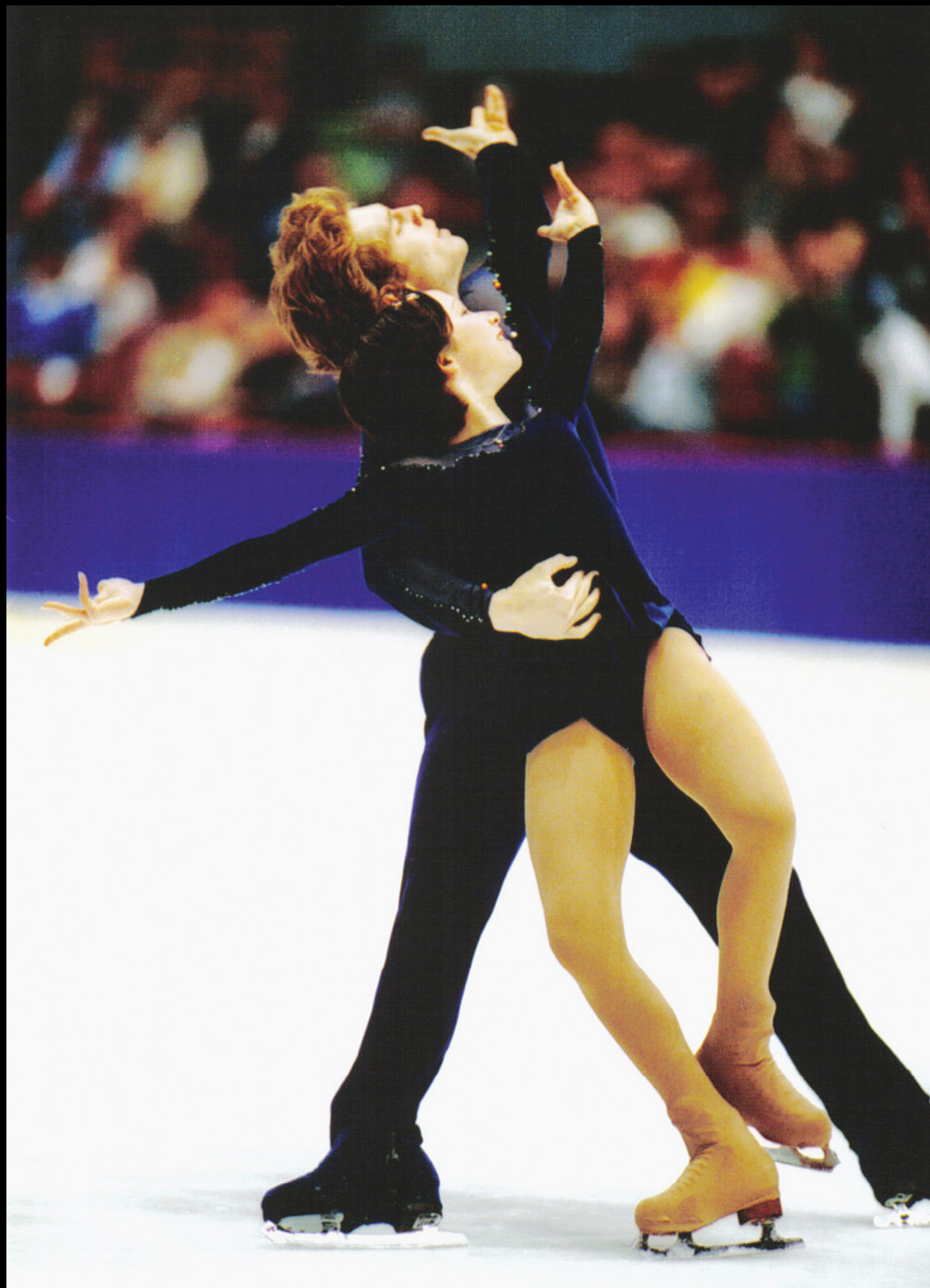
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