

Ice Theatre Honors Dick Button



On May 9th, Ice Theatre's third annual historical event will honor one of the premiere figures of modern skating, Dick Button. The event is a fundraiser for the Ice Theatre's Rehearsal Fund and promises to be a very special gathering.

The evening is co-chaired by Doug Wilson, recent recipient of the Director's Guild of America Lifetime Achievement Award, and Debbie Gordon, longtime Board member of Ice Theatre. It will be held at the Players Club at 16 Gramercy Park in New York City. Guests will enjoy hors d'oeuvres and cocktails before viewing a special presentation created just for this event. The presentation will involve rare film footage and live testimonial to tell an intimate portrait of Dick as a skater and television personality. Dessert and coffee will complete the evening.

Mr. Button is one of those to whom one might easily apply his own standard of greatness: he has changed the face of the sport, leaving it better for his influence. Aside from his tremendous, purely American style and charisma as a skater, Dick has had a major influence on the evolution of figure skating through his television commentary. His contagious enthusiasm for the sport is largely responsible for the popularity it enjoys today and his pioneering efforts in professional competitions have proved to be skating's future.

Previous Historical Evenings have honored the great British skater Belita and the legendary Russian pair Ludmila and Oleg Protopopov.

1993-94 CALENDAR

October 1993

- 5 PPAS Arts-in-Education Program
Sky Rink, NYC
- 28 Annual Halloween Benefit
Rockefeller Plaza, NYC

November 1993

- 15 Plie Power Workshop, Warick Skating Club
Providence, Rhode Island
- 20 Robertson, Stephens, & Co. Performance
Rockefeller Plaza, NYC

December 1993

- 31 First Night Annapolis
Annapolis Navy Academy, MD

January 1994

- 20 NHL All Stars Dinner, "Heroes of Hockey"
Rockefeller Plaza, NYC
- 26 Repertory Concert #1
Rockefeller Plaza, NYC

February 1994

- 23 Repertory Concert #2
Rockefeller Plaza, NYC
- 24 Plie Power Workshops for
Dorothy Hamill's Ice Capades
Hershey, PA
- 27 Workshops in Brattleboro, VT
Akop Manoukian & Ararat Zakarian

March 1994

- 29 Martha Graham Dance Co. Benefit
Rockefeller Plaza, NYC
- 30 Repertory Concert #3
Rockefeller Plaza, NYC

April 1994

- 10 American Express Event
Rockefeller Plaza, NYC
- 16 ITNY Apprentice Group Concerts
Rockefeller Plaza, NYC

May 1994

- 9 Past Master Series Third Historical Event
Honoring Dick Button
- 22 Plie Power Workshop
Hickory Hill Skating Club
Katonah, NY

June 1994

- 3-4 Plie Power Workshops Skatium
Havertown, PA
- 9-10 Sky Rink Recital
Sky Rink, NYC
- 19 Plie Power Workshop, SCOB DanceWeekend
Boston, MA
- 20 Sky Rink Summer School Begins
Plie Power classes Tuesdays and Thursdays
thru August 27

Schedule subject to change

Message from the Artistic Director

With this Olympics it would seem that the commercialization of skating must be complete. The television appears to have swallowed us whole, spitting out only our indigestible fine bones: our training structure of the school figures and compulsory dances, our essential distinctions between amateur and professional participants. In the belly of this giant, excellence on ice is instantly metabolized to dollar worth corporations, quality to greed and aspirations into commerce. Our whole sport is washed down with a cold draught of dollars, contracts, human interest angles and spiked with strong speculation of future fortunes. Then TV burps out Tonya. And we're surprised.

Isn't it fascinating to watch the champions combat this giant, the television? Each one seems to stagger under the demands attendant on success in this new skating. As an audience we recognize the foe named "Media Pressure" and much of our sense of skating's drama now lies in our desperate hope that the skater will, in fact, vanquish the very success they seek.

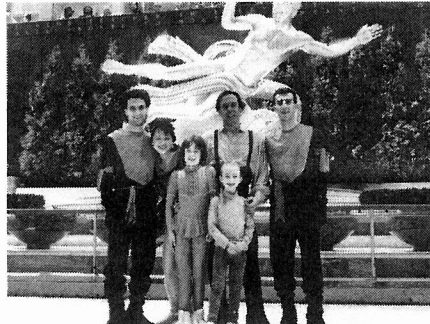
I keep thinking that all these athletes started out as children with a very pure love of skating. I teach these children and I see the elation in their eyes to skillfully overcome a slippery gravity. None of them skate at first for contracts, star cars or six figure incomes. At what point then are their dreams to be appropriated? And by whom? For what? Skating's new drama seems to come in seeing innocence meet this giant, the television, the box where aspiration is only a step to ambition. In these young skaters I think we feel ourselves, feel our purest energies of beauty and freedom struggle to assert themselves in a society we perceive as degenerated, greedy and destructive.

It seems more important than ever to create within skating structures such as Ice Theatre of New York, alternate trellises for young aspiration to cling to. Skating's real value as expression, as dance, its myriad moods of fineness and power: all these potentials we are dedicated to actualizing for themselves. A skating aside from grappling for endorsements, a non-competitive learning atmosphere and a sense of community: these are the values we hope to represent for students and performers who join us. This is where skating lives for itself and its finest evolutions, not to sell products, just to be enjoyed.

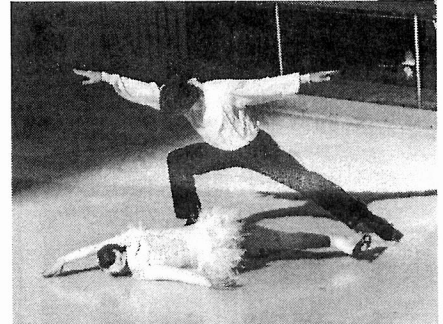
Skaters



Akop Manoukian and Ararat Zakarian
in "The Ninjas"



(l. to r.) Ararat Zakarian, Chika Maruta,
Sarah Hughes, Laura Schenkein, Toller
Cranston and Akop Manoukian



Marina Kulbitskaya and Aleksander Esman
in "The Swan"

Rockefeller Concert Series

This season's free concerts at Rockefeller Plaza featured solos and duets from an eclectic and talented group of skaters. Performers included Toller Cranston, Akop Manoukian and Ararat Zakarian, Marina Kulbitskaya and Aleksander Esman, members of the newly formed Toronto Ice Dance Theatre, Sarah Hughes, Laura Schenkein and Chika Maruta.

These concerts are given three times during the season and have developed a large enthusiastic audience in the nine years since they began.

Competition

Results

The Apprentices have had a tremendously successful competitive season. We congratulate all of them.

Alizah Allen - Silver Medal North Atlantics Junior Ladies

Lindsay Bolonkin - Gold Medal Middle Atlantics Pre-Juvenile Ladies

Kristen Dubkowski - Silver Medal North Atlantics Intermediate Ladies

Joey Rigol - Gold Medal Empire State Games Pre-Intermediate Men

Ariel Williams - Gold Medal North Atlantics Intermediate Ladies

Congratulations also to Judy Blumberg and Jim Yorke - Bronze Medalists in the Durasoft World Professional Championships in Ice Dancing.

Progressives

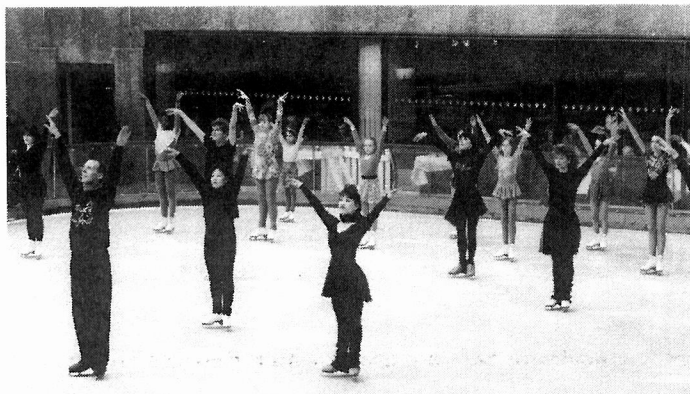
MARINA KULBITSKAYA and **ALEXSANDER ESMAN** will be featured in Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean's upcoming world tour. Marina and Sasha skated with Torvill and Dean and The Moscow All Stars, and will be missed by Ice Theatre audiences and by their students. **LAURIE WELCH** and **AMY GROSSMAN** have just completed a year's tour with Dorothy Hamill's Ice Capades, appearing in "Cinderella: Frozen in Time" across the US and Canada. The production was choreographed by **TIM MURPHY** and the Capades East Company was directed by **NATHAN BIRCH**, both artists familiar to Ice Theatre audiences and to fans of their company, The Next Ice Age. Ice Theatre Board member **JIM BAXTER** recently started his own company, **GLOBAL INVESTMENT ALLIANCE, INC.**, based here in New York City. **TOLLER CRANSTON** skated in the ITNY March Repertory Concert at Rockefeller Plaza. He was also here to promote his painting work which will be represented here in the US by former Czech pairs champion and friend of Ice Theatre **MUKI SRAMEK-HELD**. Information on Toller's fascinating graphic art can be obtained by calling the Dyansen Galleries at Trump Towers. School Daze: Many Ice Theatre members continue their education. **KEN MOIR** studies at Pace University. **BETH WORONOFF** is in architecture at Parsons. **BILL AQUILINO** studies psychology at the Center for Modern Psychoanalytic Studies and **JAMES SCHILLING** intends to enter graduate school in fine arts this fall.



Toller Cranston and Muki Sramek-Held

Education Programs

This season Ice Theatre has focused on its educational programs which serve skaters at its home rink, The Sky Rink, and reach out to enthusiasts across the U.S. and Canada.



Tot, Teen and Adult Apprentices of Ice Theatre at Rockefeller Plaza

Plie Power

The Plie Power Workshops have proven to represent the state of the art in technical and artistic training on ice. The USFSA is currently developing a similar program to replace the school figures and classes such as Plie Power have appeared at virtually all major training centers in the U.S. and Europe. As taught by Rob McBrien, the Plie Power Workshops were the subject of a feature article in *Skater's Edge*, Summer 1993 and have been given this season in Boston, Montreal, Philadelphia, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Providence, Rhode Island, Katonah, NY, Hartford, Connecticut and as a special class for Dorothy Hamills' Ice Capades East, and West Companies. This summer classes continue at Sky Rink on Tuesdays and Thursdays and in Canada will be taught by Debbie Hickey. For workshop schedule and information call: (212) 239-4320.

Skating School

Ice Theatre's Directors Moira North and Rob McBrien have been appointed Co-Directors of the Sky Rink Skating School, joining Darlene Parent, who has directed the School since 1992. The Skating School serves Sky Rink's public with group lessons offered ten times a week with classes for beginning skaters aged four to ninety four. This season the school reached a record enrollment of over 700 students and has been expanded to include advanced recreational skaters as well. Ice Theatre's participation in the Sky Rink program links our educational outreach to include the entire spectrum of abilities and it is hoped that we can bring high technical standards to athletic training for all skaters at Sky Rink.

Saturday Morning Apprentice Program

Each Saturday morning since October Ice Theatre has offered workshops for children and adults at Sky Rink. Thirty five participants, ranging in age from six to sixty, have worked with Rob McBrien, Moira North and company member Beth Woronoff on technical and artistic skating skills and had a lot of fun in the process. The class season will climax in the performance of two numbers, one for the children, one for adults, to be skated at the Rockefeller Plaza during the Flower Festival in April and repeated at Sky Rink in June. These classes have developed a real ensemble, giving all the skaters a sense of communal progress and bold creativity on ice.

February 1994

"I started skating again four years ago, after a 30 year hiatus. Rather than lament about the time I had missed at this great sport, I was enchanted by the idea that I might actually enjoy doing this again.

After a few tentative tries on the ice with a patient and capable instructor, I became hooked. I love to skate. It feels about as free as you can get without having wings.

Skating in the adult apprentice workshop of the Ice Theatre of New York has improved my skating ability as well as enhanced my all around self confidence. It's a fantasy come true. Gliding across the ice to beautiful music while my friends watch in awe and appreciation. I'm having the time of my life.

I hope to skate forever."

Marylyn Meyerson

PPAS

Ice Theatre continues to develop its relationship with the New York City Public Schools through its Arts-in-Education program. The Professional Performing Arts School, located in Manhattan, now offers students the opportunity to choose to excel in the sport through quality instruction and increased ice time. Participants are also offered classes in dance and theatre studies and obtained reduced ice costs through a work study program. This pioneering effort desperately needs funding and those interested in supporting it or finding out more should call the Ice Theatre office.

From Mary Wigman: *The Language of Dance*, 1966

"Of course, wherever technique is worshipped for its own sake, art ceases to be. Terpsichore covers her head and silently turns away from the child of her love, from then on refusing him the grace of her gift."

Olympic Overview

We are pleased to offer this Olympic '94 overview written by Katherine Healy. Ms. Healy is a principle Ballerina with Vienna Opera Ballet and a graduate of Princeton University. Her distinguished performance career began at an early age, and on ice she appeared on Pro Skate competitions and John Curry's "Ice Dancing". On the stage she has danced principle roles across the world with some of the greatest dancers and companies of our time.

It is jokingly referred to as "the whack that was heard around the world". Nancy Kerrigan's knee was clubbed by an assailant at the Detroit Nationals.

That, however, was not the development of real significance in the skating world this year. In 1976, John Curry won the gold medal in Olympic men's figure skating, and that--not the infamous whack--was the shot that was eventually heard around the world in figure skating. As the skating world emerges from the onslaught of tabloid journalism that has engulfed it in recent months, I think it is worth taking another look at what *really* happened this year in what used to be amateur competition. In Europe, where the internal convulsions of the United States tend to be regarded with a degree of bewilderment and wonder, the debate was Kerrigan vs. Baiul. Tonya Harding (and the outmoded and old-fashioned style of skating that she represents) was irrelevant in this year's competition.

The Ladies Competition at the 1994 Winter Olympics in Lillehammer, in fact, is a superb paradigm for the new countenance of the sport, both because of the extremely high level of the top contenders this year and the avid curiosity with which the spectacle--on-ice and off--was devoured and argued over by viewers around the world. Nancy Kerrigan, the unlikely heroine in the United States, is figure skating's brunette answer to Grace Kelly, a Peggy Fleming for the nineties. In her personality and her style on the ice, enveloped in understated elegance, a centrist approach to artistry and athleticism can be seen. Not too extreme to one side of the other, here is an attention to line and

a concession to extension in her trademark hand-held spiral, elements which never overshadow her conscientious inclusion of triple jumps.

Oksana Baiul, on the other hand, with her ethereal childishly sophisticated, yet slightly brittle presence, was more insistently "artistic" in her use of balletic imagery and steps transplanted to the ice, particularly in the "Black Swan" original program. Although she was certainly as capable as some Black Swans I have seen on the stage, it is important to emphasize that the borrowing of ballet steps for use on the ice should not automatically be equated with artistry. It is never wise to use ballet verbatim on the ice because this only contributes to a dilution of both forms: bourrees in fifth position executed on the ice are not bourrees in the balletic sense of the term and they are not a skating element either. It is generally more expedient to function within the confines of the sport: in other words, to speak the language of the medium by using its indigenous elements. That notwithstanding, both Kerrigan and Baiul had their devoted supporters who spent much effort arguing in the media and privately over who is the better exponent of the sport. It is an esoteric argument--an argument over who is more elegant. How impossible that argument would have seemed not so many years ago.

The men's competition had an equally riveting field. One could debate the so-called artistry of Urmanov skating to the music of Rossini and Phillippe Candoloro's "Godfather" against the atheistic anti-artistry (if we may so term it) of Elvis Stojko. And of course, depth was provided by the returning professionals. There was also a profundity in the ice dancing field contained not only in the indisputably slick and experienced polish of Torvill and Dean and the ephemeral and balletic veneer of Usova and Zhulin, but also farther down in the ranks. For example, Rahkamo and Kokko of Finland managed to tell a whole story in their long program. But it was, finally, the coldly superior classicism of Gordeeva and Grinkov in the pairs competition that made them the true ideological heirs to John Curry in the sim-

plicity of their costumes and tasteful, precise technique, line and musicality. Here again, there were interesting comparisons in the pairs category--for instance, Mishkutienok and Dimitriev who pursued a more gymnastic aesthetic.

Since when do we have such a plethora of artistic talent that we can argue over who is more artistic in each category--more than one candidate? That is the development that is truly significant in this year's competition--the blossoming of the seeds that Curry planted 18 years ago in Innsbruck--not whether Harding really did arrange to whack Kerrigan on the knee. As a metaphor, the whack functions not just as the action of a jealous competitor to injure a rival, but also--primarily--as one last pathetic attempt literally to impede skating's progress and to return it to the days of jumping with regard for no other elements of the medium. And it failed. Harding, with what we can kindly call her atheletic style and questionable physical appearance, was not even in medal contention, despite the fact that she occupied the traditional place as gold medal favorite owing to her United States National Championship status.

It is, therefore, not enough to recognize only the obvious impact that John Curry had on professional figure skating. We must also acknowledge the inroads that he made--albeit more slowly--on competitive figure skating as well. These were forerunners, of course. The Protopopovs, Peggy Fleming, even the British competitor and show skater Belita in the 1940s. However, slowly but surely, perhaps inevitably, it was Curry's obstinacy and faith that figure skating has the potential to embody a wealth of expression that gained many adherents and wide acceptance within the Establishment. It is time that his role and influence in this transformation is recognized, for it is doubtful that the competitive sport of figure skating would have survived its recent, intense media spectator scrutiny with such flying colors had it not finally blossomed into a sport of expressive artistry combined with athleticism.

-Katherine Healy

North By Northwest: Director's Report

Transitions

As Ice Theatre enters its tenth year, I am reminded that the only permanent aspect of life is change. In a year that has seen the greatest gift that life can offer (the birth of my son Christopher), I have also witnessed the death of four colleagues, Patrick Dean (my skating partner), Frank Nowosad (choreographer and co-artistic director of the Canadian Ice Dance Company), Larry Lillo (theatre director and a member of our artistic council), and John Curry (a skater of exceptional imagination and consummate skill). Each one has influenced me personally and I feel the responsibility to have Ice Theatre continue the creative paths that these artists and teachers have paved.

Ice skating in general, is in a state of transition. The 1994 Winter Olympics may very well have marked the transition of competitive figure skating to a Pro-Am structure like that of golf and tennis, with increasing emphasis on popular audience appeal and athleticism. There are some compelling pieces of evidence. One is the virtual elimination of the classical figures in training as well as in competition. The other is an apparent halt at the competitive level of ice dancing's development as a creative dance form. It was also a year that saw interest in ice skating explode but at the price of a media circus, the Tonya Harding travesty as well as the loss of grace in some of our champions was particularly painful and poignant.

Whether or not we agree with the judging, when we saw Torvill and Dean perform in Lillehammer, it was a most magical moment, defying the odds that age and time place on all of us. Their performance transcended whatever marks the judges may have given them. That is the beauty and the

truth of performing. No one can take your performance away from you. And no one can ever take away the living memory of witnessing the performance. It is what Keats called the "Truth of Beauty".

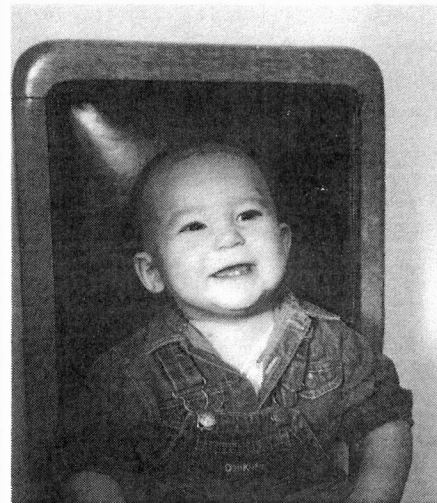
At the non competitive level, on the other hand, the movement that Ice Theatre pioneered ten years ago is flourishing. In the movement, classical figure skating principles and technique are applied individually and in the ensemble, to the creation and performance of various dance forms in the many innovative companies now forming from the fledgling Ice Theatre of Toronto to the already established Ice Capades tours.

Ice Theatre has evolved through the years and become an organization which touches skaters' lives on many levels. Through our creative and educational works we hope to inspire future generations. Ice Theatre has become more involved in educational programs with the development of the Professional Performing Arts School program (both figure skating and hockey), the affiliation with the Figure Skating in Harlem program and the participation of the young gifted performers we have featured in our concerts.

Through the development of both figure skaters and hockey players in the PPAS program, we began our first involvement with the National Hockey League. In January I enjoyed choreographing the introductory piece with youth hockey at the "All Stars Weekend" at Madison Square Garden; members of the Ice Theatre company performed at the "Heroes of Hockey" dinner at Rockefeller Plaza. Along with speed skaters, hockey skaters add to my understanding of the possibilities of movement on ice. I find the movement of all skaters very beautiful.

As new co-directors of the Sky Rink Skating School (with Darlene Parent), Rob and I are looking forward to the Summer Skating School Program. We will be doing Ice Theatre Workshops, as well as resuming company rehearsals. During this time we will be broadening the repertory of the company. Along with a new piece by Rob McBrien, we will be inviting dance choreographers such as David Dorfman, Laura Dean, Donlin Foreman, Alberto Del Saz, and Eva Carrozza to do workshops on and off the ice as well as to set new pieces on ice.

As both the sport and the art of figure skating evolves, our challenges are great, not only in the quality of skating but in the spirit in which it is performed. We must instill the values of hard work but not at the expense of honor. We should teach the joy of skating and performing for its own sake not solely for the sake of winning. Love and belief in our expression must be the ends and the means. We must desire to be the best we can be, not only to be the best in the field.



CHRISTOPHER NORTH COLTON was born on June 20, 1993 to Ice Theatre's Founding Director Moira North and her husband Jay Colton. He is growing rapidly and expected to star next season in a full length ice ballet about his first year in New York City.



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Meet our Company Manager

We're really thrilled to introduce our new company manager, JoAnn Wong, who joined us in April 1993 directly after finishing an Arts Administration Fellowship at the National Endowment for the Arts. JoAnn hails from Los Angeles and attended Golden Gate University in San Francisco where she earned her Bachelor Degree in Administrative Management. She spent a year in France studying language, culture and art history, then enrolled in the MBA Program focusing on Arts Administration. Her interests in the arts has fueled study of ethnic and modern dance, and classical flute. JoAnn is a wonderful addition to Ice Theatre and we are grateful to have her with us.

Wish List

Any Ice Theatre subscribers who are updating their home video equipment are asked to consider donating their old cameras or monitors to us. Video is essential to our rehearsal processes and, frankly, our poor old camera is held together with band-aids and prayers. Can you help?

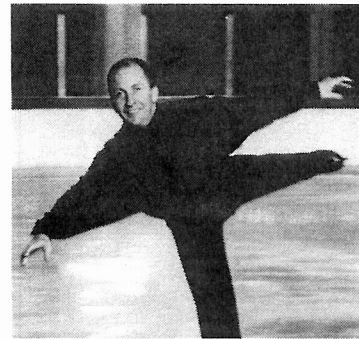
Also wanted--computer equipment, we have volunteers to assist in administration but JoAnn is glued to our one computer. If we got another computer, we could effectively put these great volunteers with their computer experience to work. It is preferable to have another Apple computer as we have the software, but any IBM compatible (monitor, hardware & printer) with related software for word processing, spreadsheets and a DBMS would be great!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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and the generosity of individual supporters.

Patrick Dean in Memorium



With deep sadness we report the passing of Patrick Dean who died on November 13, 1993. Patrick was a leading light in the Ice Theatre's Ensemble from its beginnings in 1984. He and partner Maira North were Gold Medalist in the free program at the World Professional Championships in Jaca, Spain in 1984 and 1986, and created the roles of Gloria and Eduardo in "Tangle" for Ice Theatre in 1986. A former British dance competitor with his sister Vivian, Patrick appeared with the company in original casts of "Different Trains", "Angel Part I" by Ann Carlson, and "Square Dance". He was an immensely popular and effective skating coach and his open laugh and enthusiasm for life will be missed by all who knew him.

The Cutting Edge

Editorial Board: Rob McBrien
Maira North
JoAnn Wong

Contributors: Katherine Healy

Photography: Jay Colton

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The Cutting Edge welcomes article-length submissions of interest to the skating and dance community. All submissions become the property of Ice Theatre of New York, Inc. Please address all correspondence to The Cutting Edge, Ice Theatre of New York, 450 West 33rd Street, 16th Fl., New York, NY 10001 or call (212) 239-4320.

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