

# METRO NEWS

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## Bolshoi raises barre for city kids

BY ALISON FOX  
DAILY NEWS WRITER

NEW YORK CITY kids are saying "da" to ballet classes.

A summer master class, taught through the Moscow-based Bolshoi Ballet Academy, hopes to turn New Yorkers into dancing diplomats during a five-week course.

Alden James, president of the National Arts Club in Gramercy Park, sees this program as a United Nations-type endeavor.

"The arts are the best bridge between countries," James said. "When we unite, we enter a much more peaceful world."

The classes, which begin today at the Leonid Farber School of Ballet in Brooklyn, promise to introduce a very different style of teaching.

"Russian classical ballet has a long history," said Bolshoi Ballet Academy director Marina Leonova, whose comments were translated by Zhana Borisevic of the Russian American Arts Foundation during a speech at the Gramercy Park club last week. "I want American kids to be introduced to our art and culture."

Ballet school director Farber noted that the student experience varies greatly from one side of the Atlantic to the other.

"The methods of teaching in America are very different than Russia," Farber said through translator Marina Kovalyov, the president of the Russian American Arts Foundation. "[We are providing] the opportunity to learn crucial methods related to Russian ballet."

One of the oldest dance schools in the world, the Bolshoi Ballet Academy was established in 1793.

Similar summer classes were held in Colorado five years ago. The intensive dance program promises to be the first of many collaborations between Moscow and New York.

Even in this world of dance, international politics can take center stage. "Our teachers and our students will be the best ambassadors," James said.



Proud city Sanitation Department members listen during the annual awards ceremony in Queens last week. Photo by Anthony DelMundo

## Brawn of a new day

### Mayor honors New York's Strongest & welcomes dept.'s newest members

BY FRANK LOMBARDI  
DAILY NEWS CITY HALL BUREAU

NEW YORK wouldn't be as great to live in or visit without them, said Mayor Bloomberg.

No, he wasn't talking about the Wall Street and real estate types who fill the city's tax coffers to overflowing. The mayor meant the men, and about 200 women, who make up the 7,899-member workforce of the city's Sanitation Department — the Strongest.

The department's brass and the mayor turned out last week for an annual awards ceremony, which this year celebrated the appointment of 533 new sanitation workers, the promotion of 370 other workers and the honoring of scores more with services and merit awards.

Bloomberg told the packed gathering in the Colden Auditorium of Queens College that New Yorkers are enjoying "a quality

of life that is better than it's ever been." He also remarked on the record number of tourists and visitors.

"People like coming here," he said. "People today like living here. And you are a much bigger part of creating that view than I think anybody gives you credit for."

Among those honored were 65 workers who volunteered last year to form a Delaware County Flood Relief Contingent. They spent two weeks helping the hard-hit Catskills town of Walton clean up from the big flood in late June 2006.

The members of the contingent were jointly awarded the department's unit citation. On hand to thank them personally was Walton, Mayor Edward Snow.

The 533 new sanitation workers sworn in at the ceremony are graduates of five different training classes held since last August. They now have to under-



Mayor Bloomberg thanks Strongest for fostering "a quality of life that is better than it's ever been." Photo by Anthony DelMundo

go a year's probation.

"As you know, many years ago I sat out there as you do as a new sanitation worker," Sanitation Commissioner John Doherty recalled during his remarks. "And I didn't know if I wanted this job or not. It was the last job I wanted to get, but for various reasons I took it."

Doherty, who rose through the ranks to serve as commissioner under then-Mayor Rudy Giuliani from 1994-98 and then under Bloomberg, said he has never regretted his choice.

"You have the same opportunity," he encouraged the new sanitation workers. "It is a great department. You'll learn to enjoy it more and more as the years go by. You'll find out we really are a big family, and you'll have many opportunities to improve your career and your life in the department."

Doherty's remarks hit home with new sanitation worker Edward Pino, 29, of the Bronx, who said after the ceremony. "To be a sanitation worker is the best thing to happen to me in my life so far. Right now, my goal is not really to settle down to be a sanitation worker. I want to be, sometimes, like maybe chief. That's my goal right now."

Sanitation workers are hired from a Civil Service list after passing written and physical tests and a medical and background check. The starting pay is \$26,000, which gradually rises to \$37,396 in 5 1/2 years.

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