

NOT FOR RELEASE

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**Dance St. Louis Collaborates with the St. Louis Rams,
 St. Louis Blues and St. Louis Cardinals to Launch
The Most Beautiful Sport in the World Campaign**

New PSA campaign rebrands dance as a sport and uses images and endorsements of top St. Louis pro athletes – Chris Draft, Jamal Mayers and Rick Ankiel – to attract new audiences and supporters to the arts

St. Louis, MO (June 16, 2008) – Dance and sports have always had much more in common than often perceived, especially when it comes to strength, coordination, physical endurance and discipline. While professional athletes take dance classes to heighten their coordination and flexibility, professional dancers often perform and train year-round for at least eight hours a day, burning more calories and acquiring a fitness level above many professional athletes. Still, the public often separates the two, overlooking the athletic components of dance and the artistic qualities of sports.

For the first time in St. Louis history, **Dance St. Louis** – the leading non-profit organization that has been bringing the world's best dance to St. Louis audiences for over 42 years – has joined forces with the **St. Louis Cardinals**, **St. Louis Rams** and **St. Louis Blues** to launch a PSA campaign that unites dance and sports as part of its 2008/2009 season announcement.

Starting **Monday, June 23**, St. Louisans will wake up to the launch of ***The Most Beautiful Sport in the World***, featuring engaging television and radio PSAs as well as creative and eye-catching billboards

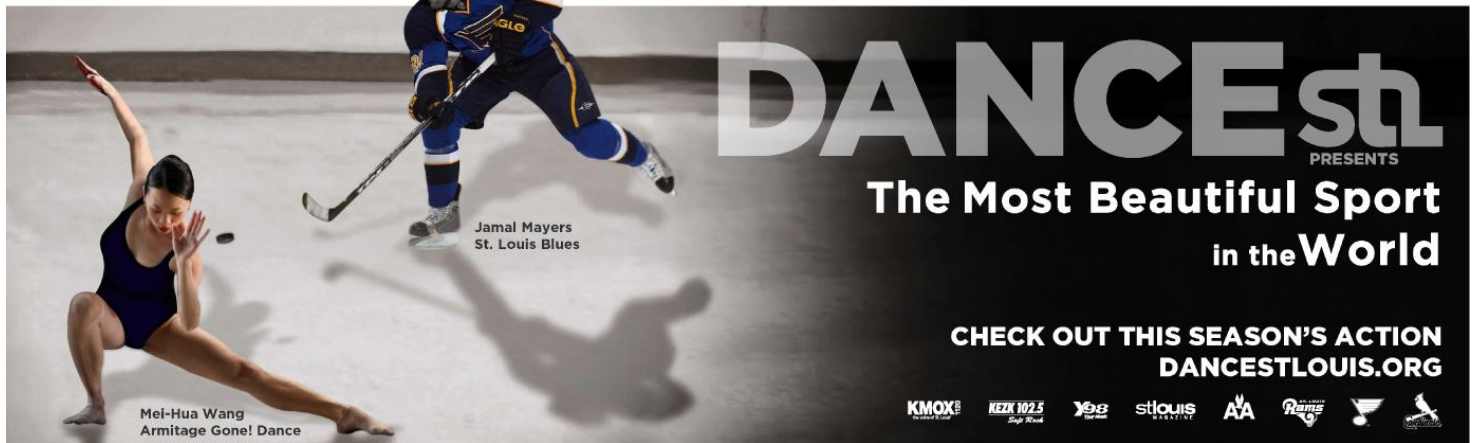


and print ads of St. Louis professional athletes juxtaposed alongside professional dancers from some of the country's top dance companies in various action shots. The copy of the print ads and message of the PSAs are quotes from St. Louis Rams linebacker **Chris Draft**, St. Louis Blues forward **Jamal Mayers**, and St. Louis Cardinals outfielder **Rick Ankiel**, each describing the indistinguishable qualities of their sport and dance. The campaign aims to arouse St. Louis' interest in the arts, specifically dance and Dance St. Louis' 2008/2009 "Made in America" season, in an entirely new and progressive way.

"There is no denying St. Louis is a true sports market," commented Dance St. Louis Executive and Artistic Director **Michael Uthoff**. "But the city is also recognized nationally, and even internationally, for its strong support and display of the arts. The Most Beautiful Sport in the World PSA campaign is a clever and innovative vehicle that not only brings together these two strong areas, but also introduces dance to an entirely new audience while spicing it up to those who've always supported it. On top of this, we're simply thrilled that for the first time in St. Louis history, all three professional sports organizations have come together to endorse the arts in St. Louis."

The Most Beautiful Sport in the World campaign kicked into full gear in Spring 2008 when St. Louis' major sports organizations signed on to the project. Chris Draft, Jamal Mayers and Rick Ankiel each committed to lending their name, time, energy and endorsement of the campaign.

"Not only is it exciting to be a part of a first-ever PSA campaign in the St. Louis market, but it's also a first-ever for me in my career to publicly endorse and get involved with a non-profit arts organization like Dance St. Louis," said St. Louis Rams linebacker Chris Draft. "As an 11-year NFL player, who has been heavily involved in community service in cities across the country such as Atlanta, Charlotte, N.C. and San Francisco, I've seen the direct benefit of pro athletes using their name, image, and participation for various causes and I think it's fantastic to extend that into the arts."



At a time when many arts and cultural organizations are struggling financially, Dance St. Louis hopes *The Most Beautiful Sport in the World* campaign will counter the national downward trend by attracting a newer and wider audience base. Although boosting ticket sales is the ultimate goal, sending a new message about dance is also a priority.

“If we have turned on even just a small percentage of St. Louisans who would have never thought of buying a ticket to a ballet or a modern dance performance, then we feel our mission is accomplished,” said **Julie Kruempel**, director of marketing for Dance St. Louis. “Sure, it’s certainly about driving ticket sales, but it’s also about continuously engaging people in the arts. That’s been our responsibility in St. Louis for the past 42 years and will continue to be so for the next 42 years.”

In addition to launching the campaign in June 2008 to pique consumer interest over the summer months before the first season performance, Dance St. Louis has lined up an exciting 2008/2009 season. Entitled “Made in America,” Dance St. Louis will present some of the country’s most popular and cutting-edge companies, such as *Dracula* starring BalletMet Columbus, Paul Taylor Dance Company, Pilobolus, Kansas City Ballet Dances Twyla Tharp, Armitage Gone! Dance, *Riverdance*, STOMP, *Radio City Christmas Spectacular* starring the Rockettes, and *SPRING TO DANCE FESTIVAL 2009*. Performances are held at the Touhill Performing Arts Center and the Fox Theatre. Tickets for the 2008/2009 “Made in America” season are available at the Dance St. Louis box office in Grand Center at 3547 Olive St., the Centene Center for Arts and Education. They are also available by calling 314-534-6622 and via the Dance St. Louis website at dancestlouis.org.

In addition to the three teams, partnering with Dance St. Louis to support *The Most Beautiful Sport in the World* campaign are KMOX-AM, KEZK-FM, Y98-FM, *St. Louis Magazine*, and American Airlines.



The Most Beautiful Sport in the World campaign will run throughout Dance St. Louis' 2008/09 season, but will appear most heavily on billboards and on television and radio during Summer 2008. For more information on *The Most Beautiful Sport in the World* campaign, including bios on Chris Draft, Jamal Mayers, and Rick Ankiel, a fun fact sheet on the correlation between dance and sports, copies of the campaign creative and a chance to see the campaign's video PSAs, please visit dancestlouis.org.

About The Most Beautiful Sport in the World Campaign

From the St. Louis Cardinals 10 World Series Championships to the St. Louis Rams Super Bowl Championship to the St. Louis Blues unyielding 24-year playoff presence, St. Louis is one of America's top sports towns. Home to more than 81 theatre and dance companies plus the second oldest orchestra in the nation, and the birthplace of numerous jazz and blues legends, St. Louis has also been recognized nationally for its contribution and strength in the arts.

For the first time in St. Louis history, Dance St. Louis – the leading non-profit organization that has been bringing the world's best dance to St. Louis audiences for over 42 years – has joined forces with the St. Louis Cardinals, St. Louis Rams and St. Louis Blues to launch an image campaign that joins together dance and sports as part of its 2008/2009 season announcement. Recognizing two of the most outstanding attributes of St. Louis, *The Most Beautiful Sport in the World* campaign serves as the intersection of St. Louis' athletics and art, bringing fresh and vibrant imagery and insight to two worlds that have more in common than often perceived. Chris Draft (linebacker, St. Louis Rams), Jamal Mayers (forward, St. Louis Blues), and Rick Ankiel (outfielder, St. Louis Cardinals) are the faces of the campaign for its inaugural year, which kicks off June 2008. For more information on *The Most Beautiful Sport in the World* campaign and Dance St. Louis, please visit dancestlouis.org.

About Dance St. Louis

Dance St. Louis has brought great dance of the world to St. Louis audiences since 1966. As a not-for-profit dance presenting organization, Dance St. Louis' mission is to provide the St. Louis region with the world's best dance and to develop an appreciation of dance as an art form. Dance St. Louis fulfills this mission through dance presentation, creation and education outreach. Dance St. Louis is a funded member of the Arts and Education Council of Greater St. Louis, and receives support from the Regional Arts Commission, Missouri Arts Council, Mid-America Arts Alliance, National Endowment for the Arts, and other sources. American Airlines is the official airline.

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