On Saturday, Feb. 17, from the Hammerstein Ballroom in the heart of New York City, HBO's Boxing After Dark televises a bang-up DiBella Entertainment tripleheader featuring three thoroughbreds from DiBella's stable: local hopefuls Paulie Malignaggi and Sechew Powell, and the steamrolling Floridian Andre Berto.

Lou DiBella, the card's promoter, recently told the press via telephone conference call, "We have been building something special in New York in our Broadway Boxing series which HBO has sponsored. To take three of my fighters—Paulie Malignaggi, Sechew Powell and Andre Berto—and graduate them to Boxing After Dark is a privilege. This is unprecedented to have a Boxing After Dark tripleheader. These three special talents promoted by DBE will have their hands full on a card of great significance.

"Sechew, Paulie, Andre are all comfortable with this room, all three guys know this building. The crowd will also help.

"I wanted to do a New York flavor card with two significant fighters. I think it's a shot in the arm for Boxing After Dark, and HBO supported Broadway Boxing to a great extent. When these kids graduate, it is great for them to show their talents in competitive fair fights on HBO. That's what B.A.D. is all about."

The main event of the evening features Brooklyn's lightweight sensation Paulie "The Magic Man" Malignaggi (21-1, 5 KOs), in his first fight since his ballsy last outing versus the Puerto Rican bomber Miguel Cotto on June 10 at Madison Square Garden, going up against tough-as-nails Edner "Cherry Bomb" Cherry (21-4-2,10 KOs) of Wauchula , Fla.

"I am very glad to be back on the national stage on HBO," said Malignaggi, "and have the opportunity to fight in a bigtime main event. A lot of people seem to have written me off, looking for me to get beat. But I also appreciate all of the support I received. I think I also saw who the fake people are and who the real people are. On February 17th, I may be fighting ESPN's fighter of the year, but we are on HBO where the stage is much bigger."

Asked what he learned from his fight with Miguel Cotto, Malignaggi said, "You have to be mentally strong, because you are on your own. If you have skill and talent you can get there but if you're not mentally strong you will get left behind. I took the mental aspect away from the Cotto fight. We fought on the eve of Puerto Rican Day parade. I felt like I was in San Juan half the time. I am going to take my anger out on Edner Cherry, the guy after that and the guy after that. Edner Cherry was a guy almost in the same position I was in my last fight. He was on outside looking in. Edner Cherry is stepping up but unfortunately against the wrong guy."

Everyone is pretty excited about Miguel Cotto these days, everyone that is but Malignaggi: "People see Cotto as a big puncher, but I believed that I could get past his flaws. I was never told from my corner that I was still in the fight. That's why I went to a new trainer in Buddy

McGirt. The Cotto fight was up for grabs after eight or nine rounds, but I went toe to toe because my corner had me believing I needed a knockout to win, I had to go into the jaws of a lion to win."

Fighters change trainers with the frequency of new mothers changing diapers, but Malignaggi's dropping of longtime trainer Billy Giles for Buddy McGirt sounds a sour note in Paulie's opera seria.

"That (having McGirt in his corner) will be a big difference," Malignaggi said. "I want to have a good voice in the corner when the going gets tough. I was never tested in the first 20 fights. I didn't have the right guy for the job. I needed to make the change. Buddy has been a world champion in the ring, and has been in the corner of world champions as a trainer. He has knowledge on both ends of the table. He is making a big difference. Already he is making me a better fighter."

Describing Malignaggi, DiBella said, "This fighter has tremendous charisma. He is the most controversial fighter. People either love him or hate him, but I think after his last fight more people loved him. He earned great respect in an all out war. I know that 2007 can be his year to win a world title. He has a huge hurdle in front of him in Cherry. Cherry is coming to win and derail the Malignaggi train.

"Props to Paulie, he wanted us to bring him a tough guy."

In the co-main event, Brooklyn middleweight Sechew "Iron Horse" Powell (20-1, 12 KOs), coming off a valiant but losing effort against Kassim "The Dream" Ouma at the Garden Theater on Aug. 5, faces Ishe "Sugar Shay" Smith (18-1, 8 KOs), from The Contender and Las Vegas.

"I am very proud HBO is giving me another opportunity to come right back," said Powell. "I think I earned my right to be back on HBO. After this fight our relationship will only be that much stronger." Powell said that from the Ouma fight he "gained the knowledge that I can compete on that level and win. It was minor errors that caused me to lose that fight. I learned a lot from those errors and have added a lot to my game. I am going to break this guy in half. I am going to let my hands do the talking and his face is going to tell the story.

"Nothing has ever been easy for me in my career. Ishe has always fought guys who are tailor-made for him. I'm going to beat him in every part of the arena, every spectrum."

DiBella described the Powell/Smith tango as "somewhat of a grudge match, two guys that don't like each other in a grudge that goes back to their amateur days. Ishe Smith, who was on the Contender in the first go-round, writes for a boxing website and hasn't done a lot of fighting lately, will face Sechew Powell. Sechew's only loss was to former champion Kassim Ouma. It is a fight that will truly determine one guy's ascent to a title bout, so there is a whole lot at stake. It is a crucial fight for Sechew and Ishe, a crossroads fight, one of them has to shut their mouth when they lose."

In the third bout of the night to be televised by HBO's B.A.D. from the Hammerstein in New York

City, Andre Berto (16-0, 14 KOs), the heavy-handed up-and-comer from Winter Haven, Florida via Haiti, goes up against the tough wily veteran Ben Tackie, (29-6-1, 17 KOs), originally from Africa but now living and fighting out of Las Vegas.

"I felt like last year was my rookie year," the undefeated Berto said. "My team let me know that competition was going to be stiffer going forward and I am not expecting any easy fights from this point on.

"This (the fight with Ben Tackie) is definitely a step up for me. A lot of people definitely want to see how I do with tougher competition. This is the biggest test so far in my career. He is a rugged veteran who will test me. I definitely believe it is going to be an exciting fight. He is a rugged fighter, can take punches and keeps going and is in terrific condition. He is always there to fight.

"I am ready to fight Ben Tackie. I am groomed to fight these guys. I have sparred with Winky Wright and Jeff Lacy and I am groomed for this."

Tickets for the Feb. 17 HBO Broadway After Dark Saturday night special Broadway Boxing tripleheader are priced at $300, $200, $125, $75 and $40. Call DiBella Entertainment at 212.947.2577 for more information.