

May, 13-27, 2021

## Ballet Hispánico Livestream of En Familia And Virtual Movement Workshops In partnership with DOROT

Company: Ballet Hispánico  
Venue: Ballet Hispánico  
Location: New York, NY

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Ballet Hispánico

Ballet Hispánico, the nation's renowned Latinx dance organization recognized as one of America's Cultural Treasures, partners with DOROT, a New York City-based nonprofit organization creating social connections for older adults, to present a virtual performance and artistic talkback with Rodney Hamilton, Michelle Manzanales, and Melissa Verdecia on Thursday, May 13, 2021 and two virtual movement workshops on Thursdays May 20 and 27, 2021.

### Virtual Performance + Artist Talkback

Thursday, May 13, 12:30 PM – 1:30 PM ET

A live stream of Ballet Hispánico's En Familia, a virtual performance narrated by Artistic Director and CEO Eduardo Vilaro showcasing excerpts from the company's repertoire – *Con Brazos Abiertos* and *Club Havana*. The performance will be followed up by a Q&A featuring some Ballet Hispánico artists and educators. To register and receive the link, visit: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJAtc-mrqlrGdxFiLbsIKYtIghCX3fGhiKg>

### Club Havana (2000)

Latin dancing at its best. The intoxicating rhythms of the conga, rumba, mambo, and cha cha are brought to life by choreographer Pedro Ruiz, himself a native of Cuba, as he imagined his very own "Club Havana."

### Con Brazos Abiertos (2017)

Michelle Manzanales explores with humility, nostalgia and humor the iconic Mexican symbols that she was reluctant to embrace as a Mexican-American child growing up in Texas. Intertwining folkloric details with a distinctly contemporary voice in dance, set to music that ranges from Julio Iglesias to rock en Español, *Con Brazos Abiertos* is a fun and frank look at a life caught between two cultures.

### Movement Workshops

Thursdays, May 20 and 27, 12:30 PM – 1:30 PM ET

Join us for two fun and interactive movement workshops that will focus on the cultural context and techniques of traditional, social, and/or contemporary dance forms that are derived from the multicultural Latinx experiences. The May 20 workshop will specifically explore the Salsa, and the May 27 workshop will explore the Mambo. We welcome all levels and abilities. Led by Rodney Hamilton, a Ballet Hispánico Teaching Artist. To register and receive the link, visit: [https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUoce6grzgsG91ejLUPfNcJ6\\_TdrkU5yid8](https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUoce6grzgsG91ejLUPfNcJ6_TdrkU5yid8).

### About the Speakers

Rodney Hamilton began his training in his native St. Louis at several schools including Carr Lane V.P.A., the Center of Contemporary Arts, and Alexandra School of Ballet. He also studied with Ms. Katherine Dunham and joined the chorus at the MUNY where he performed for seven

years. After arriving in New York City, he graduated with a BFA in Dance from the Juilliard School and joined Ballet Hispánico where he was a principal dancer and assistant rehearsal director for 10 years. During this time, he performed works by José Limon, Paul Taylor, Hans van Manen, Robert Battle, Ohad Naharin, David Parsons, William Whitener, Ann Reinking, Ramón Oller, Sergio Trujillo, Trinetta Singleton, Agnes DeMille, Talley Beatty, Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, Vicente Nebrada, and numerous other well-known choreographers. Mr. Hamilton was part of the national touring cast of Hello Dolly with Carol Channing and worked with the Broadway cast of Tarzan during its workshop process. In 2012, Mr. Hamilton became the Resident Choreographer for the Saint Petersburg City Theater in Florida where he choreographed Hello Dolly, Footloose, and Memphis. Mr. Hamilton holds an MFA in Dance from NYU Tisch School of the Arts. He has taught ballet, modern, and Dunham technique all over the world. Mr. Hamilton is Ballet Hispánico's faculty member at the School of Dance and BHDos Rehearsal Director.

Michelle Manzanales is a choreographer and dance educator originally from Houston, TX. Before being named director of the School of Dance in December of 2016, Manzanales was in the midst of her seventh season as the Ballet Hispánico Company rehearsal director and artistic associate. Her choreography, *Con Brazos Abiertos*, premiered during Ballet Hispánico's 2017 spring season at The Joyce Theater. This "sawy but deeply sincere meditation on her Mexican-American background" (-Marina Harss, *The New York Times*) has since toured extensively to critical acclaim, including its inclusion in New York City Center's 2018 Fall for Dance Festival. "This dance isn't just about one girl's experience; it applies to everyone, of any gender, and of any culture," said *CriticalDance*. Other acclaimed works by Manzanales include her 2010 homage to Frida Kahlo, *Paloma Querida*, which was hailed a "visual masterpiece" by Lucia Mauro of the *Chicago Tribune* and was described by the *Chicago Sun-Times* as a "gorgeously designed, richly hallucinatory, multi-faceted vision of the artist." Her 2007 choreography for Luna Negra Dance Theater, entitled *Sugar in the Raw* (*Azucar Cruda*), was applauded by the *Chicago Sun-Times* as "a staggering, beautiful, accomplished new work."

Melissa Verdecia is from Miami, FL and received her early training from Caridad Espinosa, Mencia-Pikieris School of Dance, and New World School of the Arts, where she graduated summa cum laude in 2008. In 2012, Verdecia went on to earn her BFA in dance from The Juilliard School, where she performed works by Sidra Bell, Alex Ekman, Nacho Duato and Jerome Robbins, among others. Verdecia was selected as a modern dance finalist in The National YoungArts Foundation competition in 2008, and was featured in the HBO series *MasterClass*. In 2016, Verdecia had the joy of being presented beside her Ballet Hispánico colleagues in Lincoln Center at the *Movies: Great American Dance Series*, where she performed lead roles in works by Gustavo Ramírez Sansano and Pedro Ruiz. This is Verdecia's 9th season with Ballet Hispánico.

#### About DOROT

DOROT is a nonprofit organization that alleviates social isolation among older adults and provides services to help them live independently as valued members of the community. DOROT serves the Jewish and wider community, bringing the generations together in a mutually beneficial partnership of elders, volunteers and professionals.

#### About Community Arts Partnerships

Community Arts Partnerships (CAP) engage and enrich communities by providing educational programs that celebrate the authenticity of Latinx heritage, culture, and traditions. Ballet Hispánico has developed new, engaging virtual programs to share the vibrancy of dance and Latinx culture with communities spanning all locations, age-groups, and abilities. This is an opportunity to keep our communities connected and create platforms nationwide for Black and Brown artists to be celebrated. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are at the core of our mission, and these programs create access points to these principles through transformative artistic experiences. During this time of social distancing, we have expanded our creativity to connect with the community on a new level. Social distancing does not have to mean emotional distancing. We have more information on our virtual programming or visit our website [ballethispanico.org](http://ballethispanico.org).

#### About Ballet Hispánico

Ballet Hispánico is the nation's renowned Latino dance organization and one of America's Cultural Treasures. Ballet Hispánico brings communities together to celebrate and explore Latino cultures through innovative dance performances, transformative dance training, and enduring community engagement experiences. Founded in 1970 by National Medal of Arts recipient, Tina Ramírez, the organization emerged during the post-civil rights movement on New York's Upper West Side, providing a safe haven for primarily Black and Brown Latinx youth seeking artistic sanctuary during New York City's plight in the 1970s. The need for place, both culturally and artistically, led families to find Ballet Hispánico. The focus on dance as a means to develop working artists, combined with the training, authenticity of voice, and power of representation, fueled the organization's roots and trajectory. With its strong emphasis on dance, achievement, and public presence, the organization has flourished in its three main programs: its Company, School of Dance, and Community Arts Partnerships. The organization serves as a platform for historically omitted and overlooked artists providing them with increased capacity, voice, and affirmation. Over the past five decades, by leading with Latinx culture at the forefront of performance, education, and advocacy, Ballet Hispánico's mission is a catalyst of change and possibility for communities throughout our nation.

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Schedule  
May 13, 2021: 12:30pm  
May 20, 2021: 12:30pm  
May 27, 2021: 12:30pm

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