

Friday, January 22, 2021

## Ballet Hispánico Partners with Situation Project to Provide Arts and Dance Access to New York City Students in Washington Height

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

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Ballet Hispánico

Ballet Hispánico Partners with Situation Project to Provide Arts and Dance Access to New York City Students in Washington Heights and the Bronx – #AdoptAHotspot Campaign Helps Close Digital Divide and Tackle the Connectivity Issue Affecting Underserved Communities. In an effort to bring attention to the digital divide among New York City students, Ballet Hispánico, the nation's renowned Latinx dance organization recognized as one of America's Cultural Treasures, announced today it is partnering with Situation Project, the non-profit arm of the Situation Interactive agency, to provide 900 middle school students with internet access to experience an interactive virtual dance event on January 22. The partnership and event are aimed at creating awareness and addressing the connectivity issue students face through access and exposure to arts-deprived New York City public-school students.

Ballet Hispánico and Situation Project's common goal to connect underserved communities with the arts will be exhibited through this virtual experience. Participating middle schools from Washington Heights and the Bronx include students from three middle schools, The Laboratory School of Finance & Technology, The Paula Hedbavny School, and Academy of Applied Mathematics & Technology. Students will embark on a guided virtual journey through Latinx dance and culture. This interactive, fun-filled exploration features excerpts of the Ballet Hispánico repertoire narrated by the Company's artistic leadership.

"As part of Ballet Hispánico's mission, our programming ignites cultural pride, elevates diverse artists, and stresses the importance of making dance accessible to all," said Eduardo Vilaro, CEO and Artistic Director of Ballet Hispánico. "Now more than ever, our presence and work with black and brown communities is essential. Ballet Hispánico founder Tina Ramirez would say, 'When you change a student, you change a family, you change a community,' and I would add to that, you change a country."

Students joining the virtual Performances for Young People will be exposed to world-class choreographers and cultural contexts through the lens of Ballet Hispánico's repertoire. Additionally, students will have the opportunity to interact with teaching artists and educators through a live dance session and Q&A.

"By nature of the zip code most of our students were born in, they don't have access to some of the most amazing experiences NYC-their hometown-has to offer," said Damian Bazadona, founder of Situation Project. "This has been amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic with 30% of students struggling to even access their virtual classrooms due to a lack of reliable internet. What we've done - which is a true collaboration between our agency, these schools, and the arts and culture community-is simply to identify the inequities these students are facing and use the existing resources we have to help address the issues. My hope is that this is a model that can inspire communities across the country to act and support the students (or anyone in need) in their own backyard."

Situation Project recently launched a campaign to close the digital divide by providing 175 prepaid hotspots through June 2021 to partner schools so students can remain connected. Through virtual experiences like the Ballet Hispánico event on January 22, the #AdoptAHotspot campaign will not only bring access to arts for students but benefit their full education.

### 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.

#### About Situation Project

Situation Project is on a mission to stimulate and expand the imaginations of students in local communities by increasing their access to arts & culture experiences. In 2011, founder, Damian Bazadona, discovered that there was a lot of untapped inventory at cultural institutions across New York City (roughly 2 million seats stay empty on Broadway alone). With reduced arts funding for public schools and an inequity in the opportunities provided to these students, Situation Project was created to connect both worlds by empowering organizations to take advantage of their unused inventory while providing access to a wide range of opportunities for students from partner schools in the Bronx and Washington Heights. Situation Project raises awareness about the many benefits of an arts-rich education. The 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization works with New York City public schools, leading arts & culture institutions, and corporate partners to provide immersive and educational programming with the goal of closing the opportunity gap. We believe experiences matter and we select partners who share our mission. Partners have included Disney Theatricals, SiriusXM, Cirque Du Soleil, Google, and more. Situation Project also provides these organizations with information on how to increase awareness for the arts in their communities and provide access and opportunity for all students.

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Schedule  
January 22, 2021: 12:00pm

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