

Saturday, May 21, 2022

## Ballet Hispanico's Noche Tropicana Gala Honored Thalía and MetLife Foundation, Raised More Than \$1.1 Million

Company: Ballet Hispanico  
Venue: Plaza Hotel  
Location: New York, NY

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Ballet Hispanico's Noche Tropicana Gala on May 16, 2022 at The Plaza Hotel raised more than \$1.1 million in support of the organization's artistic, educational, and community outreach programs in New York City, across the United States and around the world. This includes the underwriting of inspiring Company performances, transformative School of Dance scholarships, and enduring Community Arts Partnerships programs that engage audiences, students, and communities in New York City, across the United States, and around the world.

Ballet Hispanico honored singer & actress Thalía with the Ballet Hispanico Nuestra Inspiración Award for embodying Ballet Hispanico's values with her tireless advocacy on behalf of humanitarian causes and empowerment of Latinx people worldwide. The Ballet Hispanico Civic Inspiration Award was presented to the MetLife Foundation for being a stalwart supporter of Ballet Hispanico since 1984, funding new works, performances, and serving as the major tour sponsor.

"We were excited to gather in person this year for our Noche Tropicana Gala to celebrate the culmination of our 50th Anniversary celebrations and to turn our gaze toward an exciting new future," stated Eduardo Vilario, Artistic Director & CEO. "Through this event and the generous support of so many, we are able to expand our efforts to give voice to artists and to bring communities together to celebrate and explore Latinx cultures."

For fifty years Ballet Hispanico has been the leading voice intersecting artistic excellence and advocacy and is now the largest Latinx cultural organization in the United States. Ballet Hispanico's annual Gala is a celebration of the impactful voices of the Latino world—an exciting and fitting way to showcase the resilience and unparalleled vision of one of America's cultural gems. This year's Gala was the culmination of Ballet Hispanico's 50th Anniversary celebrations, propelling the organization into the next 50 years of impactful work. Attended by more than 300 of New York's most influential civic leaders, philanthropists, and artists—including Gale Brewer, Laurie Cumbo, Raul Pineda, Herb Scannell, and Sergio Trujillo—the evening was filled with live Latin music and thrilling performances by the Ballet Hispanico Company and students of the School of Dance. This year's event included live music by the three-time GRAMMY Award-winning Spanish Harlem Orchestra, an excerpt from Doña Perón performed by the Company, a performance from Ballet Hispanico repertory by the Pa'lante Scholars, and performances of both a ballet and the piece performed during the 2021 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade by the School of Dance. This year's Gala Chairs were Jody and John Arnhold, Richard Feldman, Kate Lear & Jonathan LaPook, Lyn & Norman Lear, and David Pérez & Milena Alberti-Pérez. The Gala Benefit Committee included Michelle Caruso-Cabrera & Stephen Dizard Gigi Chavez de Arnavat & Gustavo Arnavat Chubb, Brian & Shirley Colona, Matthew Ford, Perry & Marty Granoff, Carole & Dudley Johnson, Judy & Leonard Lauder, The Lear Family Foundation, James F. McCoy & Alfio J. Hernandez Meow Wolf, O'Melveny & Myers LLP, Popular Bank, Rita E. Rodriguez, Samuel H. Scripps Foundation Sullivan & Cromwell LLP, Jose & Vanesa Tolosa, Joseph Wayland & Patricia Verrilli, Charles Wortman & Laura Baldwin.

Thalía is a superstar singer, songwriter, entrepreneur, philanthropist, actress, fashion designer and digital influencer. She rose to fame after starring in various telenovelas that have been translated into several languages and have aired in more than 180 countries with a viewership of more than two billion people worldwide. She has had 29 Top 10 singles — 15 of which went to No. 1 — and has sold more than 50 million records, making her one of the bestselling Latina artists of all time. Her most recent album, Valiente, features four hit singles and was certified platinum by the RIAA.

MetLife Foundation has been a stalwart funder of Ballet Hispanico since 1984. Over the years, their grants have funded several new works, performances in New York City, and, since 1986 MetLife Foundation has been Ballet Hispanico's major tour sponsor. Over nearly 40 years,

MetLife Foundation's support of Ballet Hispánico's programs have exceeded \$2.7 million.

Eduardo Vilaro joined Ballet Hispánico as Artistic Director in August 2009, becoming only the second person to head the company since it was founded in 1970. In 2015, Mr. Vilaro took on the additional role of Chief Executive Officer of Ballet Hispánico. He has been part of the Ballet Hispánico family since 1985 as a dancer and educator, after which he began a ten-year record of achievement as founder and Artistic Director of Luna Negra Dance Theater in Chicago. Mr. Vilaro has infused Ballet Hispánico's legacy with a bold and eclectic brand of contemporary dance that reflects America's changing cultural landscape. Born in Cuba and raised in New York from the age of six, he is a frequent speaker on the merits of cultural diversity and dance education. Mr. Vilaro's own choreography is devoted to capturing the spiritual, sensual and historical essence of Latino cultures. He created over 20 ballets for Luna Negra and has received commissions from the Ravinia Festival, the Chicago Sinfonietta, the Grant Park Festival, the Lexington Ballet and the Chicago Symphony. In 2001, he was a recipient of a Ruth Page Award for choreography, and in 2003, he was honored for his choreographic work at Panama's II International Festival of Ballet. Mr. Vilaro was also inducted into the Bronx Walk of Fame in 2016 and was awarded HOMBRE Magazine's 2017 Arts & Culture Trailblazer of the Year.

## ABOUT BALLET HISPÁNICO

For fifty years Ballet Hispánico has been the leading voice intersecting artistic excellence and advocacy and is now the largest Latinx cultural organization in the United States and one of America's Cultural Treasures. Ballet Hispánico brings communities together to celebrate and explore Latino cultures through innovative dance productions, transformative dance training, and enduring community engagement experiences. National Medal of Arts recipient Tina Ramirez founded Ballet Hispánico in 1970, at the height of the post-war civil rights movements. From its inception Ballet Hispánico focused on providing a haven for Black and Brown Latinx youth and families seeking artistic place and cultural sanctuary. By providing the space for Latinx dance and dancers to flourish, Ballet Hispánico uplifted marginalized emerging and working artists, which combined with the training, authenticity of voice, and power of representation, fueled the organization's roots and trajectory. In 2009, Ballet Hispánico welcomed Eduardo Vilaro as its Artistic Director, ushering in a new era by inserting fresh energy to the company's founding values and leading Ballet Hispánico into an artistically vibrant future. Today, Ballet Hispánico's New York City headquarters house a School of Dance and state-of-the-art dance studios for its programs and the arts community. From its grassroots origins as a dance school and community-based performing arts troupe, for fifty years Ballet Hispánico has stood as a catalyst for social change. Ballet Hispánico provides the physical home and cultural heart for Latinx dance in the United States. Ballet Hispánico has developed a robust public presence across its three main programs: its Company, School of Dance, and Community Arts Partnerships. Through its exemplary artistry, distinguished training program, and deep-rooted community engagement efforts Ballet Hispánico champions and amplifies underrepresented voices in the field. For fifty years Ballet Hispánico has provided a place of honor for the omitted, overlooked, and oppressed. As it looks to the next fifty years and beyond, Ballet Hispánico seeks to empower, and give agency to, the Latinx experience and those individuals within it. For more information, visit [www.balletehspanico.org](http://www.balletehspanico.org). Follow Ballet Hispánico on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

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Schedule  
May 21, 2022: 8:00pm

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