Thursday, June 10, 2021

Ballet Hispánico Instituto Coreográfico Virtual Showing Hosted by Artistic Director & CEO Eduardo Vilaro with Special Guests

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

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Ballet Hispánico, the nation's leading Latino dance organization since 1970 and recognized as one of America's Cultural Treasures, presents a virtual showing of the 2021 Instituto Coreográfico on June 10, 2021 at 6pm at ballethispanico.org, and on YouTube and Facebook. The evening will feature a work-in-process by choreographer Marielis Garcia filmed by Spencer James Weidie and set on Ballet Hispánico Company dancers, followed by a live discussion hosted by Artistic Director & CEO Eduardo Vilaro with special guests Marielis Garcia, Company Dancers Amanda del Valle and Lenai Alexis Wilkerson, and mentor Kimberly Bartosik.

Instituto Coreográfico invites audience members, dance leaders, presenters, and choreographers to respond, reflect, and enter into dialogue about dance and culture with an emerging choreographer through showings and panel discussions. With this invaluable platform, Ballet Hispánico continues to give a voice to young artists and opens access to the dance-making process for all audiences. For more information, visit http://bit.ly/instituto-2021.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 spring Instituto Coreográfico will have a combination of virtual and in-person components. Ballet Hispánico is committed to keeping all artists safe during the pandemic and adhering to current health and safety protocols with dancers to enable the choreographer to work in studio.

A dancer, choreographer, and educator, Marielis Garcia holds a BFA in Dance and an MFA in Digital and Interdisciplinary Art Practice. Marielis is currently an Artist-in-Residence at the University of Maryland, and is developing work for Alvin Ailey/Fordham School as part of the New Directions Choreography Lab.

"In concert dance, there are very few, if any, female Dominican-American choreographers in the conversation/canon. I hope to change that," said Garcia. "I use the corporeality of the body to direct and choreograph environments that give rise to curiosity, foster creativity, and kindle transparency and exchange. My work is a manifestation of my colliding roles as maker, performer, and audience; making me invariably dependent on the people, the bodies, and the emotions of those who dance or watch one of my works."

Native Hawaiian Spencer James Weidie is a dancer, choreographer, and photographer who has studied at the Conservatory of Dance at Purchase College, SUNY (BFA Honors), London Contemporary Dance School, Springboard Danse Montreal, and with the Merce Cunningham Trust. Spencer is a current company member of Brian Brooks Dance, The Metropolitan Opera Ballet, and was a featured guest artist with Gallim Dance at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Now in its ninth year, the Instituto has helped to provide an important platform for eleven choreographers. The program provides young Latinx artists a supportive environment in which to explore process, cultural identity, and movement invention through the creation of dance.

When Ballet Hispánico was founded 50 years ago, Latinx artists were invisible to the dance field. Since its founding, Ballet Hispánico has played an instrumental role in changing the narrative; now, generations of Latinx artists have produced art that reinterprets their heritage, bringing fresh perspectives on the Latinx experience. In 2010, Artistic Director & CEO Eduardo Vilaro launched Instituto Coreográfico, a choreographic institute for Latinx artists to create culturally specific work in a nurturing learning laboratory of dance. The choreographer in residence is paired with an emerging filmmaker to document their process, create promotional materials, and add a layer of artistic collaboration.

"As a dancer back in the '80s, I could count on one hand the number of Latinx choreographers who would come through the door," said Eduardo Vilaro, Artistic Director & CEO. "Instituto Coreográfico is a way of nourishing, mentoring, and developing leaders and artists of color, particularly Latinas and Latinos."

Major funding for Instituto Coreográfico was provided by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, with additional funding from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Mertz Gilmore Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

About the Recipients

Native New Yorker and Dominican American dancer, choreographer, and educator, Marielis Garcia, holds a BFA in Dance and an MFA in Digital and Interdisciplinary Art Practice. Marielis is currently an Artist-in-Residence at the University of Maryland, and is developing work for Alvin Ailey/Fordham School as part of the New Directions Choreography Lab. She was a UNCSA Choreographic Fellow in 2017 and has taught classes for Rutgers University and University of North Carolina Greensboro. Marielis produces collaborative works through MG

DanceArts, which has been presented at Aaron Davis Hall and Judson Memorial Church, among others. Possibilities of Dialogue, her ongoing collaboration with David Norsworthy, was awarded Kaatsbaan and Dance Initiative residencies and debuted at Toronto's North Yak Arts Center in 2019. Marielis has danced with Brian Brooks, Stefanie Batten Bland, Peter Kyle, and Helen Simoneau and frequently collaborates with visual artist Madeline Hollander.

Spencer James Weidie (@spencerjamesweidie) grew up in Kailua, HI. Spencer graduated from the Conservatory of Dance at Purchase College, SUNY (BFA Honors) in Dance with a concentration in Composition. They also studied at London Contemporary Dance School, Springboard Danse Montreal, and with the Merce Cunningham Trust. Spencer is a current company member of Brian Brooks Dance, The Metropolitan Opera Ballet, and was a featured guest artist with Gallim Dance at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. They were a principal dancer with MADBOOTS DANCE from 2017- 2020.In the summer of 2018, Spencer began to develop his photographic skills. They have worked as a photographer for many freelance artists in NYC and with Austin McCormick's "Company XIV." Spencer transitioned into more filmmaking with Brian Brooks/Moving Company at Jacob's Pillow's "Pillow Lab." Spencer shot a short dance film that was made in collaboration with Antonio Brown Dance and Eric Payne of ETC Agency.

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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