



# Ballet Hispanico

Artistic Director **Eduardo Vilaro**

The Company **Christopher Bloom, Martina Calcagno, Shelby Colona, Cassandra Cruz, Mario Ismael Espinoza, Melissa Fernandez, Mark Gieringer, Christopher Hernandez, Johan Rivera Mendez, Eila Valls, Kimberly Van Woesik, Lyvan Verdecia, Cole Vernon, Diana Winfree, Joshua Winzeler**

Director of Production & Performance **Joshua Preston**

Artistic Associate/Rehearsal Director **Michelle Manzanales**

Founder **Tina Ramirez**

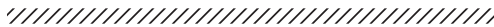
## **PROGRAM**

*Sombrerísimo*

*Bury Me Standing*

**// Intermission //**

*Flabbergast*



**Friday, February 5 @ 8 PM**

**Saturday, February 6 @ 2 PM**

**Saturday, February 6 @ 8 PM**

Zellerbach Theatre

Media Sponsor: **WHYY**

## PROGRAM NOTES

### **Sombrerísimo** (2013)

Choreography **Annabelle Lopez Ochoa**

Music by **Banda Ionica** featuring **Macaco el Mono Loco, Titi Robin,**  
and soundscape by various artists

Costume Design **Diana Ruettiger**

Lighting Design **Joshua Preston**

An absorbing exploration of identity, *Sombrerísimo* makes references to the surrealist world of the Belgian painter René Magritte, famous for his paintings of men in bowler hats.

*Sombrerísimo* was commissioned by New York City Center for the Fall for Dance Festival.

### **Bury Me Standing** (1998)

Choreography **Ramón Oller**

Music: traditional gypsy melodies

Costume Design **Aviad Herman**

Lighting Design **Joshua Preston**

The unique culture of the Gypsy or "Roma" people, who have journeyed across continents for a thousand years, inspired Spanish choreographer Ramón Oller to create *Bury Me Standing*. The compelling rhythms and melodies that accompany the ballet reflect the emotional essence of the Roma: their strong communal bonds, sensuality, feelings of oppression and longing, and their strength and exuberance.

### **Flabbergast** (2001)

Choreography **Gustavo Ramírez Sansano**

Music **Juan García Esquivel**

Lighting Design **Joshua Preston**

Gustavo Ramírez Sansano exposes with humor our stereotypes and preconceived ideas about new and foreign places in *Flabbergast*, telling the story of a newcomer coming to a place for the first time.

*Program is subject to change.*

*Video and audio recording, along with photography, is strictly prohibited.*

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

### **Ballet Hispanico**

Celebrating 45 years of repertory that reflects the ever-changing diversity of Latino cultures, Ballet Hispanico is the new expression of American contemporary dance. Led by Artistic Director Eduardo Vilario, the Company's multifaceted performances have featured renowned works by artists such as Nacho Duato, cutting-edge premieres by Cayetano Soto and Annabelle Lopez Ochoa and live music accompaniment by Latin legends such as Paquito D'Rivera. The Company has performed for an audience of nearly 3 million, throughout 11 countries on three continents.

**Eduardo Vilario** (Artistic Director) joined Ballet Hispanico as Artistic Director in August 2009, becoming only the second person to head the company since it was founded in 1970. He has been part of the Ballet Hispanico family since 1985 as a principle 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. Vilaro has infused Ballet Hispanico'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.

Vilaro's own choreography is devoted to capturing the spiritual, sensual and historical essence of the 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. He has collaborated with dance and design artists as well as musicians such as Paquito D'Rivera, Susana Baca, Luciana Souza and Tiempo Libre. 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. In 2011, Vilaro premiered *Asuka*, his first work for Ballet Hispanico, "an unexpected interpretation of [Celia] Cruz's music...high-energy and colorful" (Chicago Dance Digest).

**Tina Ramirez** (Founder) founded Ballet Hispanico in 1970 and served as Artistic Director until 2009. Under her direction, over 45 choreographers created works for the Company, many of international stature and others in the early stages of their career.

Ramírez was born in Venezuela, the daughter of a Mexican bullfighter and grandniece to a Puerto Rican educator. Her performing career included international touring with the Federico Rey Dance Company, the inaugural Festival of Two Worlds in Italy with John Butler, the Broadway productions of *Kismet* and *Lute Song* and the television adaptation of *Man of La Mancha*.

In addition to the National Medal of Arts, Ramírez has received countless awards and honors in recognition of her work, including the *Dance Magazine* Award, the Hispanic Heritage Award for Education, Capezio Dance Award, NYS Governor's Arts Award and the NYC Mayor's Award of Honor for Arts & Culture.

## **The Company**

**Christopher Bloom** is from Middletown, VA, where he started training at the Vostrikov Academy of Ballet at the age of 15. Bloom trained as a scholarship student at the ballet and contemporary dance programs in the School at Jacob's Pillow under Anna-Marie Holmes and Milton Myers. Since graduating from the Ailey/Fordham B.F.A. Dance program in 2012, he has performed and toured with the Peridance Contemporary Dance Company and Parsons Dance, performing masterworks by David Parsons, Igal Perry and Ohad Naharin across several continents. Bloom joined Ballet Hispanico in 2013 and has since originated roles in works by Edgar Zendejas, Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, Gustavo Ramírez Sansano and Eduardo Vilaro.

**Martina Calcagno** began dancing in her native Italy, where she studied ballet in Sicily and Rome. She moved to London to train at the Elmhurst School for Dance. In London, she performed with the Birmingham Royal Ballet and toured throughout the United Kingdom and China. Calcagno has danced around the world, performing with Compagnia Danzitalia, Narciso Dance Company and BHDos.

**Shelby Colona** is a 2013 graduate of the Ailey School's Certificate Program. In 2011, she graduated from the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts (HSPVA) in Houston, TX. Colona has had further training with Alonzo King LINES Ballet, Perry-Mansfield and Complexions Contemporary Ballet. She has performed works by Robert Battle, Benoit-Swan Pouffer, Peter Chu, Nicholas Villeneuve, Billy Bell and Loni Landon, and has performed with companies such as Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Lunge Dance Collective and BHDos before joining Ballet Hispanico.

**Kassandra Cruz** is a Venezuela native and a recent graduate of the Ailey/Fordham BFA program. She has received training from The Ailey School, Lines Ballet, Professional Performing Arts High School and Ballet Hispanico. Her performance experience includes dancing with the Mestizo Dance Company, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre and at various schools and venues with BHdos.

**Mario Ismael Espinoza** was born in Tijuana, Mexico. He graduated from the University of California in Irvine, where he performed with Donald McKayle's étude Ensemble. Espinoza since then has performed with Odyssey Dance Theatre in Salt Lake City, Company C Contemporary Ballet, Man Dance San Francisco, Peninsula Ballet, Liss Fain Dance and ODC Dance in San Francisco.

**Melissa Fernandez** is from Miami, Florida, and graduated from The Julliard School in 2012. Fernandez has attended programs at American Ballet Theatre, Miami City Ballet, Complexions Contemporary Ballet and Netherlands Dans Theater 2011. In 2008, Fernandez was selected as a modern dance finalist in the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts (NFAA) YoungARTS competition. She was also featured in the HBO series "Master Class."

**Mark Gieringer** began dancing when he was 16 in Bellevue, NE. He graduated cum laude from UMKC with a dual-emphasis BFA in both ballet and modern. He attended Joffrey - New York & Kansas City Ballet's Summer Intensives on full scholarship. Gieringer has performed works by K.T Nelson, Josh Beamish, Bernard Gaddis, Gary Abbott and Ray Mercer. He performed principal roles in Antony Tudor's *Dark Elegies* and *Continuo*. Other roles include: Elegy Man in George Balanchine's *Serenade*, and Puck in Benjamin Britten's operatic setting of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Gieringer has performed professionally with Seamless Dance Theater and Owen/Cox Dance Group in Kansas City.

**Christopher Hernandez** is a recent graduate of The Conservatory of Dance at SUNY Purchase, where he performed works by Kyle Abraham, Paul Taylor, Twyla Tharp and Ori Flomin. Following graduation, he was cast in the off-Broadway production of *Sleep No More*. Hernandez has also been seen on the Latin People's Choice Awards dancing for Olga Tanon and Wisin y Yandel. Hernandez most recently danced with BHdos before joining the main company.

**Johan Rivera Mendez** was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He began his dance training at School for the Performing Arts, PR, under the direction of Waldo Gonzalez. Mendez earned his BFA from New World School of the Arts in 2013. While there, he had the opportunity to perform works of Robert Battle, Darshan Singh Bhuller, Peter London, Merce Cunningham, Michael Uthoff and Kyle Abraham, as well as simultaneously working with local dance companies in Miami, Florida.

**Eila Valls** is originally from Spain and graduated from RCPD Mariemma (Madrid, Spain) in 2010. She is the winner of the Virginia Valero extraordinary award in Madrid and the first place winner of the international competition Certamen de Danza Ciutat de Barcelona, through which she was awarded a full scholarship to the Peridance Certificate Program (NYC) and Joffrey Ballet (Chicago). Since moving to New York in 2011, she's had the privilege to work with Peridance Contemporary Dance Company, where she has performed repertory from choreographers such as Igal Perry, Dwight Rhoden, Ohad Naharin and Sidra Bell. Valls has also danced under the direction of Manuel Vignoulle, Brice Mousset and Yesid Lopez, and has worked as a dancer/model for Adidas, Nike and Under Armour.

**Kimberly Van Woesik** graduated from Southern Methodist University in 2011. She has trained at Chamberlain School of Performing Arts, American Ballet Theater, Miami City Ballet, the Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance and San Francisco Conservatory of Dance. She has performed works by Ben Stevenson, Twyla Tharp, Arthur Mitchell, Alvin Ailey, Martha Graham, Alison Chase, Jessica Lang, Adam Houghland, Gerald Arpino and George Balanchine.

**Lyvan Verdecia** was born in Havana, Cuba. He graduated from the National Ballet School of Cuba in 2013 and joined the ranks of the National Ballet of Cuba through December 2014, where he developed as a dancer and choreographer. Verdecia has had the opportunity to participate in festivals and has won gold and bronze medals at international competitions. He has shared the stage with Carlos Acosta in his *Tocororo* and with Viengsay Valdes in Annabelle Lopez Ochoa's *Celeste*.

**Cole Vernon**, originally from Sonoma County, California, has had the pleasure of performing internationally as well as throughout the U.S. with companies such as DanceWorks Chicago, the Long Beach Ballet and most recently, under the directorship of Frank Chaves with River North Dance Chicago. Vernon graduated summa cum laude from the University of Arizona in 2013 with his BFA in Dance. Having worked with the incredible faculty members as well as inspiring artists from the Balanchine Trust, Larry Keigwin + Company, Anne Reinking and Gary Chryst, he enjoys the challenge and variety that dance provides.

**Joshua Winzele** was born in Miami, Florida. He began his ballet training with the Thomas Armour Youth Ballet and the Miami Conservatory. He furthered his training with the School of American Ballet, Miami City Ballet and Joffrey Ballet. Winzele graduated from New World School of the Arts receiving his B.F.A. in 2011. Winzele has performed works from Martha Graham, Darshan Bhuller, Robert Battle and Michael Uthoff.

**Gustavo Ramírez Sansano** (Choreographer) was Artistic Director of Luna Negra Dance Theater from 2009-2013, after directing proyectoTITTOYAYA in Valencia, Spain for four years. Sansano has been the recipient of numerous awards for his choreography, including first prizes at the Ricard Moragas competition in Barcelona, the Dom Perignon choreographic competition in Hamburg and at Las Artes Escénicas de la Comunidad Valenciana. He has been commissioned to create works for Compania Nacional de Danza, the Hamburg Ballet, TanzTheaterMünchen, Budapest Dance Theater, National Dance Company Wales, Norrdans, Gyori Ballet, Balletto dell'Esperia, BalletMet, IT dansa, Ballet Junior de Genève and Nederlands Dans Theater. As a dancer, Sansano performed works by Jacopo Godani, Hans Van Manen, Jiří Kylián, Ohad Naharin, Johan Inger, Paul Lightfoot and Victor Ullate, working for the Ballet Joven de Alicante, Ballet Contemporaneo de Barcelona, Ballet de la Comunidad de Madrid, Nederlands Dans Theater II and Hubbard Street Dance Chicago.

Sansano was chosen by the magazine *POR LA DANZA* for its 15th anniversary as one of the "Fifteen Choreographers to Watch." *Dance Magazine* featured Sansano in its annual "25 to Watch" list in 2012, and he was named "Chicagoan of the Year in Arts & Entertainment" by the *Chicago Tribune*.

**Annabelle Lopez Ochoa** (Choreographer) is an award-winning Belgo-Colombian choreographer based in the Netherlands. She has created works for many companies around the world such as the Scapino Ballet, Dutch National Ballet, Djazzex, Royal Ballet of Flanders, Ballet du Grand Theatre du Geneve, BalletX, Luna Negra, BJM-Danse Montreal, Whim W'him, Ballet National de Marseille, Pennsylvania Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet,

Ballet Hispanico, Ballet Austin, Atlanta Ballet, Ballet Nacional Dominicano, CND Madrid, Augsburg Ballet and the Scottish Ballet.

**Ramón Oller** (Choreographer) is the founder and artistic director of Metros Dansa Contemporania in Barcelona. He trained in Barcelona, Paris and London, and has choreographed numerous works for his own company and others, including Compania Nacional de Danza under the direction of Nacho Duato, Ballet Nacional de Espana, Ballet de Cristina Hoyos, Introdans, Festival Aix-en Provence and Festival Avignonon. Oller was the Artistic Coordinator of the Andalusian Dance Center and is now the Director of the professional conservatory of dance of Institut del Teatre de Barcelona.

**Michelle Manzanales** (Artistic Associate/Rehearsal Director) is a choreographer and dance educator originally from Houston, TX. She began working with Eduardo Vilaro in 2003 as a dancer for his company Luna Negra Dance Theater of Chicago, where she later became Rehearsal Director in 2006 and served as Interim Artistic Director 2009-2010. In 2007, Manzanales created *Sugar in the Raw (Azucar Cruda)* for LNNT, which was applauded by the *Chicago Sun-Times* as "a staggering, beautiful, accomplished new work." In 2010, her homage to Frida Kahlo, *Paloma Querida*, was hailed as a "visual masterpiece" by Lucia Mauro of the *Chicago Tribune* and was described by the *Sun-Times* as a "gorgeously designed, richly hallucinatory, multi-faceted vision of the artist." Her choreography has also been presented by Texas Contemporary Weekend, Spring to Dance (St. Louis, MO), Fort Worth Dance Festival and Festival de Danza Córdoba (Veracruz, Mexico), and honored by the American College Dance Festival on four separate occasions.

**Joshua Preston** (Director of Production & Performance, Lighting Design) hails from the verdant hills of Lexington, Kentucky where he began his training in design, management and bourbon. Preston has had the pleasure of working with Ballet Hispanico for six years and is proud to call his colleagues family. He met Eduardo Vilaro on the windy stages of Chicago and has followed his remarkable vision ever since. Preston is eternally grateful to Vilaro for shepherding him as a designer and as a person. Preston has designed lighting for dance, theatre, opera and his apartment. Preston also serves as a trophy artist/husband to his ever patient wife, Chloe.

**Diana Ruettiger** (Wardrobe Supervisor) has served as wardrobe supervisor for Luna Negra Dance Theater and Costume Designer for Dance for Life Chicago, Columbia College and The Chicago Academy for the Arts. She has worked as stitcher and crew for the Joffrey Ballet and numerous Broadway touring shows. Ruettiger owned and operated a costume shop for 25 years before moving to New York to begin her tenure as Wardrobe Supervisor with Ballet Hispanico.

**Nathan K. Claus** (Stage Manager) has served as stage manager for Jennifer Muller's *The Works* both domestically and internationally. He has worked on Broadway with the productions of *Priscilla Queen of the Desert*, *God of Carnage*, *The Norman Conquests* and *November*. Hailing from Fargo, North Dakota, Claus began studying ballet at Dancenter North in Libertyville, IL before obtaining a B.A. in Theatre from Millikin University in Decatur, IL, where he also studied dance, music and education.

Ballet Hispanico salutes Jody and John Arnhold for their visionary leadership and support. Through the generosity of the Arnhold family, Ballet Hispanico will continue to inspire communities around the world for the next 45 years and beyond.

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