

# Ballet Hispánico

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: EDUARDO VILARO



## Workshops and Performance for Young People **Batucada Fantástica**

Program Information, Context, Activities, and Resources

# Exploring Dance

## Batucada Fantástica

### Rhythm

A lot of dances that are created have music or sounds that accompany them. This is a very important part of Hispanic dance styles—and dance in general. Complex rhythms may be generated by the dancers through footwork, hand-clapping, and movements of the body. Percussion instruments help to set a tone of a dance, and specific rhythms impact the qualities of the movements done by the dancers. Latin American dances and music often have at the heart percussive instruments. In *Batucada Fantástica*, there are several percussive instruments used in the music that influence the type of movements that the dancers do. If you are interested in introducing your students to the world of Latin music, the percussion section is a good place to start.

### Suggested Activities

#### Sound Rhythms

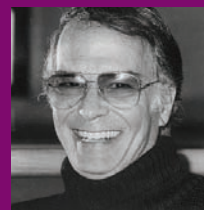
##### Activity A

- Like the clapping rhythms teachers use to get students' attention, create 3 or 4 clapping rhythms that the students can repeat easily. Next ask 3 or 4 students to come up with their own rhythms that can be repeated by the class.
- Have students share ideas for different ways to create a sound using parts of their bodies (feet, snapping fingers, mouths). Then, have every student share their sound to be repeated by the group.
- Starting with a simple and sustained clapping, like a metronome, have each student, one at a time, add their rhythm. Keep going for a little while, until every student is included.
- Group students using similar body parts. Then, like an orchestra conductor, signal for each group to start and stop as the metronome rhythm is sustained. After a few rounds you can invite students to become the conductor of the 'orchestra'.



#### **Batucada Fantástica (1983) Vicente Nebrada**

*Batucada Fantástica* pays homage to Brazilian Carnival with electric performances by soloists, culminating in a riot of ensemble dancing by the company. The accompanying percussion instruments include some which are unique to Brazil and known as batuque. The choreographer transforms “everyday” movements -- be they from popular or folk dances, from rituals, or from simple actions such as walking and waving goodbye -- into heightened gestural “shorthand” that convey feelings, character and action.



#### **Vicente Nebrada (1930-2002)**

Vicente Nebrada was a founding member of the Harkness Ballet where he began his choreographic career in 1964. In 1975 he became the Founding

Artistic Director and Resident Choreographer of the International Ballet of Caracas, creating numerous ballets and solidifying his reputation as an internationally acclaimed choreographer. In 1984 he was appointed Artistic Director of the National Ballet of Caracas, which he directed until 2002. His artistic support as resident choreographer helped establish Ballet Florida in Palm Beach in the mid 1990s. His works continue to be performed around the world and have been danced by more than 30 companies such as, American Ballet Theatre, National Ballet of Canada, Joffrey Ballet of Chicago, and Ballet Hispanico.

# Exploring Dance

## Batucada Fantástica

### Rhythm

### Suggested Activities

#### Body Rhythms

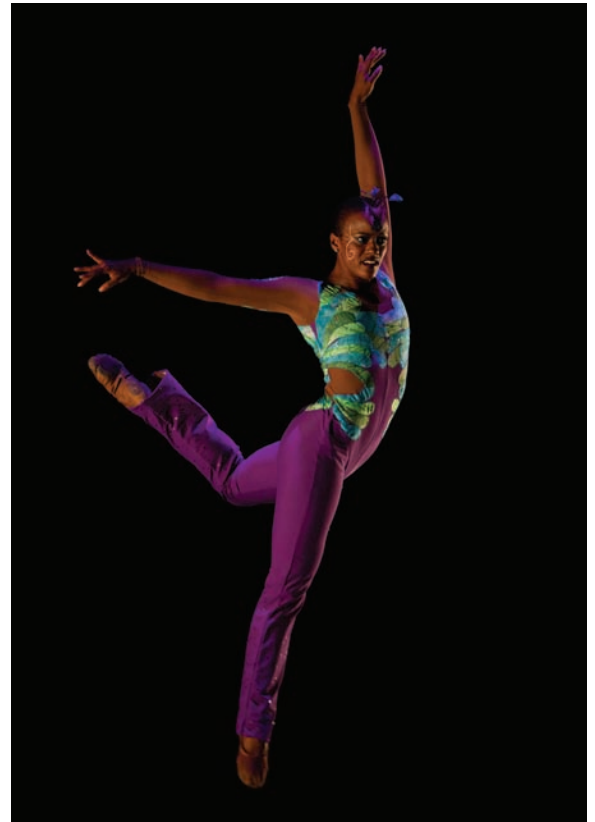
##### Activity B

- Ask students to think of some activity or chore from everyday life and create a simple mime motion or gesture that conveys one movement associated with that activity.
- Have them repeat that single gesture several times so that it creates a rhythmic momentum. Once this rhythmic repetition has been established, the rest of the class can “accompany” it by clapping the beat.
- Have several students join the first student in a line and perform precisely the same rhythmic movement. Ask student to share what they notice about the group repeating a rhythmic pattern. (i.e. how “meaning,” can be made through “choreographed” rhythm in space.

#### Poly-rhythms

##### Activity C

- Have half the group create a rhythm based on eight beats (accenting and/or leaving out certain beats). They should perform this rhythm for the rest of the group.
- Have the other half of the group establish a different 8-beat rhythm i.e., with different accents or omissions - and perform it.
- Now have both groups “perform” their own beats together. The basic 8-beat will be the same for both, but their accented rhythms will be different.
- For a more advanced exercise in counter-rhythms, have one team establish a slow clapped 1 - 2 beat, with a heavy accent on the “1”. Separately, have a second team establish a 1 - 2 - 3 beat in the same tempo, that is, with the heavy “1” beat falling at the same time as in the first group.
- Now have both groups try to clap their rhythms at once, keeping strictly to their own team’s beat. This “2 against 3” is a typical African and Latin American rhythm.



For greater effect, these rhythm activities can be explored using homemade “instruments” constructed from bottle caps, cans, rattles, boxes, etc. -- whatever is at hand -- thus creating your own batuque [ba-TOO-kee] as in Brazilian samba!

See Page 12 for suggestions on how to create percussion instruments.

# Exploring Dance

## Batucada Fantástica

### Rhythm



#### Bongo Drums

A pair of joined small hand drums that is thought to have originated in Cuba around 1900. It is used to create sharp quick rhythms.



#### Castanets

A percussion instrument mostly used in Moorish, Ottoman, ancient Roman, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American music. The instrument consists of a pair of concave shells joined on one edge by string. These are held in the hand and used to produce clicks for rhythmic accents or a ripping or rattling sound consisting of a rapid series of clicks. They are traditionally made of hardwood.



#### Cencerro

A large hand-held cowbell that is played with a stick, producing two notes according to where it is struck.



#### Conga Drum

A large drum capable of many different musical sounds through different techniques such as striking or rubbing. The drum comes in a wide range of sizes from small called *quinto* (KEEN-toe) to large called *tumbadora* (toom-bah-DOOR-ah). Descendent of the conical Makuta drums of the Congolese Africans.



#### Claves

A percussive instrument known as the “foundation of rhythm” for Afro-Latin music. They are two identical wooden strikers used to play a rhythm called Clave.



#### Timbales (with cha cha bell)

A percussion set composed of two metal drums and two bells and often a cymbal. The set is played with sticks and can produce a wide range of beats and combinations. The bell is used to keep the beat in the cha cha rhythm.



#### Guiro

A percussion instrument that is played by scraping a stick along the instruments carved ridges. Depending on the instruments country of origin, it is often made out of a dried gourd or metal and is usually played by a vocalist.



#### Maracas

Hand-held rattles or shakers, made from gourds, coconuts, wood or rawhide, and filled with beans. Found throughout the Americas, as well as Africa.



## Make your own percussion instruments

Courtesy of musician and teaching artist Hector Morales

Clave: broom handle, cut about 7” each in length

Conga: water jug (large)

Guiro: plastic air vent and pick comb

Maracas: small plastic water bottle filled with rice

Cha cha bell: empty metal can, beat on open edge with non-sharp pencil (eraser end)

# Further Resources

## Choreographers/Musicians

### Talley Beatty

Long, Richard A. *The Black Tradition in American Dance*. Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1989

Perpener, John O. *African-American Concert Dance: The Harlem Renaissance and Beyond*. University of Illinois Press, 2001

Talley Beatty in: [www.pbs.org/wnet/freetodance/-documentary](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/freetodance/-documentary) that chronicles the role that African-American choreographers and dancers have played in the development of modern dance as an American art form

Douglas Rosenberg, dir., *Talley Beatty: Conversations with Contemporary Masters of American Modern Dance* (American Dance Festival, 1993)

**Annabelle Lopez Ochoa** - [www.redcircles.nl](http://www.redcircles.nl)

**Andrea Miller** - <http://www.gallimdance.com/andrea-miller>

**Vincent Nebrada** - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vincente\\_Nebrada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vincente_Nebrada)

**William Whitener** - <http://www.kcballet.org/aboutus/company/artisticdirector>

### Tito Puente

*Tito Puente - King of Latin Music* (Book) by Jim Payne and Tito Puente (2006)

*Tito Puente: When The Drums Are Dreaming* by Josephine Powell (2007)

## Books for Young Readers

### 4-8 Years Old

*Alvin Ailey* Andrea Pinkney (Author), Brian Pinkney (Illustrator)

*Brazil (A to Z)* Justine Fontes; Ron Fontes

*Carnaval*, George Ancona

*Celebrate Cinco de Mayo with the Mexican Hat Dance (Stories to Celebrate)*

Alma F. Ada & F. Isabel Campoy

*Dance! With Bill T. Jones*; Susan Kuklin

*Dancing in the Wings*; Debbie Allen (Author), Kadir Nelson (Illustrator)

*A Dictionary of Dance*; Liz Murphy

*José! Born to Dance: The Story of José Limón*; Susanna Reich and

Raul Colon (Illustrator)

*Kitchen Dance*; Maurie J. Manning

*Mexico ABCs: A Book About the People and Places of Mexico (Country Abcs)*

Heiman (Author), Sarah (Author), Ouren (Illustrator), Todd (Illustrator)

*Mis Bailes/My Dances (We Are Latinos)*; George Ancona; Children's Press

*My Friend Maya Loves to Dance*; Cheryl Willis Hudson

### 9-12 Years Old

*Brazil* (True Books); Tara Walters

*Capoeira: Game! Dance! Martial Art!*; George Ancona

*Dance* (DK Eyewitness Books); Andre Grau (Author)

*Festivals of the World: Brazil*; McKay, Susan

*The History of Latin Music*; Dorothy Hoobler

*Mexico* (True Books); Elaine Landau

*Mexico: 40 Activities to Experience Mexico Past & Present*; Kaleidoscope Kids

*Modern Dance* (High Interest Books); Cheryl Tobey

*Latin and Ballroom* (Dance) Susie Hodge; *young adult*

*Watch Me Dance*: Family Celebration Board Books; Andrea Davis Pinkney; *pre-school*

## Film

*Mad Hot Ballroom*, Documentary about New York City students learning ballroom dance



# Ballet Hispanico

## Education & Outreach

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Page 3: Jessica Alejandra Wyatt in Batucada Fantastica © Rosalie O'Connor

Page 4: Angelica Burgos in Batucada Fantastica © Rosalie O'Connor

Page 5: Education & Outreach © Rachel Watts

**Ballet Hispanico** explores, preserves, and celebrates Latino cultures through dance. The mission unfolds in the work of the professional Company, the School of Dance, and the Education & Outreach programs. Together, these divisions celebrate the dynamic aesthetics of the Hispanic diaspora, building new avenues of cultural dialogue and sharing the joy of dance with all communities.

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