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BALLET HISPANICO
To Perform at the 24th Annual
International Ballet Festival of Havana
Havana, Cuba
November 1-2, 2014

New York, NY – October 30, 2014 – Ballet Hispanico, recognized as America’s leading Latino dance organization since 1970, will perform in Cuba’s International Ballet Festival of Havana on November 1-2, 2014 at 5pm. Highlights of the program include *Asuka*, a celebration of the music of Celia Cruz by Ballet Hispanico’s Cuban-American Artistic Director Eduardo Vilaro, along with *Sortijas* (Cayetano Soto), *Sombrerísimo* (Annabelle Lopez Ochoa), and *El Beso* (Gustavo Ramírez Sansano). This engagement marks Ballet Hispanico’s first-ever performance in Cuba.

“This is my second time returning to my homeland since I left at age six,” said Eduardo Vilaro, artistic director of Ballet Hispanico. “I return as a cultural ambassador, bringing our amazing troupe of dancers for Ballet Hispanico’s first performance there. We are thrilled to share our art with the entire world, bringing new perspectives to our cultural dialogue.”

“For Ballet Hispanico to be performing at this prestigious Latino dance festival is an honor and fits beautifully with our mission. It is a testament to the continued growth of the organization,” said Kate Lear, chair of Ballet Hispanico’s Board of Directors. “We are thrilled to share our stories and the artistry of our dancers with national and international audiences. Art has no boundaries; it travels past social and political borders.”

Since its inception, Ballet Hispanico’s contemporary repertory has reflected the ever-changing diversity of Latino culture, showcased masterfully by some of “the most technically accomplished and musical dancers you’ll find in the contemporary sphere” (*The Washington Post*).

The program at the International Ballet Festival of Havana will include:

***Asuka* by Eduardo Vilaro**

Asuka is a celebration of the music of Celia Cruz through the lens of the Latino experience. Cruz, renowned as the “Queen of Salsa,” captured the heart of Latinos the world over and became a symbol of perseverance for many. Through rich imagery and humor, Eduardo Vilaro explores the struggles of departure from one’s homeland and the exuberance of success experienced by a community.

***Sortijas* by Cayetano Soto to the music of Lhasa de Sela**

Cayetano Soto, one of the most dynamic and groundbreaking Spanish choreographers of his generation, is known for his musicality, attention to detailed technique, and expressive choreography. In *Sortijas*, a darkly lush duet full of emotional complexity, he ponders the unavoidable pull of fate in our lives. Costume design is by Munich-based fashion designers Talbot Runhof.

***Sombrerísimo* by Annabelle Lopez Ochoa**

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. This athletic work for six male dancers was commissioned by New York City Center for the 10th anniversary of the *Fall for Dance Festival*.

***El Beso* by Gustavo Ramírez Sansano**

Spaniard Gustavo Ramírez Sansano presents his first work for Ballet Hispanico, a spirited look at the nuances of a kiss set to Spanish Zarzuela music and featuring original costumes by Venezuelan fashion designer Angel Sanchez.

ABOUT BALLETHISPANICO

Celebrating 44 years of dance and culture, Ballet Hispanico is recognized as the nation's premier Latino dance organization. Led by Artistic Director Eduardo Vilaro, the Company boasts a rich and diverse repertory of over 100 works by the foremost choreographers and emerging artists of our time. The works expand on founder Tina Ramirez's legacy of exploring the diversity of Latino culture through a fusion of classical, Latin, and contemporary dance powered by theatricality and passion. The Company has performed for an **audience of over 3 million**, throughout **11 countries**, and on **3 continents**. For more information, visit www.ballethispanico.org. Follow Ballet Hispanico on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

EDUARDO VILARO, a first generation Cuban-American, began as artistic director of Ballet Hispanico in August of 2009, becoming only the second person to head the company since it was founded in 1970. Mr. Vilaro has been part of the Ballet Hispanico family since 1985. As a dancer with the Ballet Hispanico Company, he performed throughout the U.S., Latin America and Europe and assisted founder Tina Ramirez with the development of dance education residencies. Mr. Vilaro is also an accomplished choreographer, having created works for the Ravinia Festival, the Chicago Sinfonietta, the Lexington Ballet, the Civic Ballet of Chicago, and over 20 ballets for Luna Negra Dance Theater, the company he founded in Chicago. He received a B.F.A. in Dance from Adelphi University and an M.A. in Interdisciplinary Art from Columbia College Chicago, where he served as Artist-in-Residence at The Dance Center. Mr. Vilaro was a guest speaker at the Salzburg Global Forum for Young Cultural Leaders and the National Association for Latino Arts and Culture, and continues to speak to the growing need for cultural diversity and dance education.

The International Ballet Festival of Havana that arrives to its edition number 24 is one of the oldest of all celebrated to a world scale. Founded in 1960, by virtue of a close collaboration among the Ballet Nacional de Cuba, the National Institute of the Tourism Industry and the Revolutionary Government's cultural organisms, the Festival turned quickly into one of the most important events in national Cuban culture and in the international world of dance. With non competitive character, it has allowed our public to enjoy the performances and the creative work

of noted figures of the world dance and at the same time has shown the visiting personalities the development reached by the Cuban ballet.

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