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Eduardo Vilaro Named Artistic Director and Chief Executive Officer of Ballet Hispanico

Appointment Strategically Positions Organization for Next Phase of Growth

New York, NY (December 9, 2015) – The Board of Directors of **Ballet Hispanico**, the nation’s preeminent Latino dance institution, announced today that **Eduardo Vilaro** will assume the newly created position of Artistic Director and Chief Executive Officer of Ballet Hispanico, effective immediately. Mr. Vilaro has been the Artistic Director of Ballet Hispanico since 2009. With this appointment, the position of Executive Director, currently held by Lee Koonce, has been eliminated.

“This reorganization is a bold re-envisioning of Ballet Hispanico’s leadership structure. We are setting a new, more nimble course that will allow us to excel in today’s changing arts and culture climate,” said Board Chair Kate Lear. “It is also an enormous vote of confidence in Eduardo and his powerful vision of artistic integrity, educational excellence and cultural connection. I want to thank Lee Koonce for his loyalty and dedication to Ballet Hispanico and wish him all good things in his bright future.”

The role of Artistic Director and CEO of Ballet Hispanico places Mr. Vilaro as one of the foremost Latino cultural voices in the United States. In this position, Mr. Vilaro will draw upon his ten-year track record as artistic and executive leader of Chicago’s Luna Negra Dance Theater, which he founded in 1999 and built from the ground up. Reporting to him will be members of the senior management team: Chief Development Officer Lorraine LaHuta, Director of Marketing & Communications Jackeline Montalvo, Director of Production & Performance Joshua Preston and a soon-to-be-announced Director of Finance and Administration. Also reporting to him will be AnaMaria Correa, who has been promoted to Senior Director of Community Engagement from Director, School of Dance and Education and Outreach. In this new role, Ms. Correa will provide management and oversight for all educational programming at Ballet Hispanico, which is particularly successful in reaching diverse student and community populations.

"I am honored to lead an organization that made my career and has been my home for over 15 years," said Eduardo Vilaro, Artistic Director and Chief Executive Officer of Ballet Hispanico. "Most exciting is the opportunity to work with a distinguished staff whose strength and expertise has enabled Ballet Hispanico to blossom over the past six years."

The reorganization at Ballet Hispanico continues a trend of exciting developments that began last month with the opening of the newly renovated Arnhold Center and Ford Foundation Lobby. Home to Ballet Hispanico's school and company, the Arnhold Center is also an interdisciplinary cultural and community resource with curated programming that focuses on issues of race, culture, and the need for access and equity in the arts. In addition, Ballet Hispanico recently received a major capacity-building grant from the Doris Duke Charitable Trust designed to advance Ballet Hispanico as an institution, and secure its artistic and financial health.

This fall, Ballet Hispanico was featured nationwide in *Lincoln Center at the Movies: Great American Dance*, a film series presenting performances by four of America's leading companies: Ballet Hispanico, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, New York City Ballet and San Francisco Ballet. Ballet Hispanico's film presentation on November 12, 2015 was screened in over 600 U.S. cinemas. Additionally, Ballet Hispanico presented an expanded New York Fall Season at the Apollo Theater on November 20-21, 2015, including its first original full-length work and a specially priced *Saturday En Familia* matinee for audiences of all ages.

ABOUT BALLET HISPANICO

Celebrating 45 years of sharing and reflecting the ever-changing diversity of Latino cultures, **Ballet Hispanico** is the new expression of American contemporary dance. Led by Artistic Director Eduardo Vilaro, the Company has produced world-class, multifaceted performances that have featured master works by Nacho Duato, cutting-edge premieres by Cayetano Soto and Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, and live music collaborations with renowned artists such as Paquito D'Rivera and Ruben Blades—to name a notable few. Ballet Hispanico has performed for **audiences totaling over 3 million**, throughout **11 countries**, and on **3 continents**. Through the work of its professional company, school of dance, and community arts education programs, Ballet Hispanico celebrates the dynamic aesthetics of the Hispanic diaspora, building new avenues of cultural dialogue and sharing the joy of dance with all communities. For more information, visit www.balleshispanico.org. Follow Ballet Hispanico on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) 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. He has been part of the Ballet Hispanico family since 1985 as a principal dancer and educator, and has infused Ballet Hispanico's legacy with a bold and eclectic brand of contemporary dance that reflects America's changing cultural landscape.

Mr. Vilaro's passion for dance and Latino cultures began in the Southwest Bronx, where a role in a school musical ignited his journey. After training throughout New York City in dance institutions such as the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center and the Martha Graham School, Mr. Vilaro received a BFA in dance at Adelphi University under the direction of Norman Walker. In 1999, he received an M.A. in Interdisciplinary Arts from Columbia College Chicago and was a recipient of their Albert P. Weissman Award.

Upon his graduation from Columbia College, Mr. Vilaro founded Luna Negra Dance Theater in Chicago, a company which served as a springboard for Latino dance throughout the Midwest. Under his ten-year artistic direction, Luna Negra amassed a distinguished repertory of works by Latino choreographers such as Ron De Jesús, Vicente Nebrada, and Gustavo Ramírez Sansano.

Mr. 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 major 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, Mr. Vilaro premiered *Asuka*, his first work for Ballet Hispanico.

Mr. Vilaro was an associate professor at the Dance Center of Columbia College, has served on the board of directors of Dance/USA and now sits on the Advisory Committee of Dance/NYC. He has also served on panels for the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts. He 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.

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