

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Ballet Hispánico Hosts NYC Arts in Education Roundtable:
A Dialogue with Paul Thompson, Executive Director of the
NYC DOE's Office of Arts and Special Projects
December 5, 2022**

Ballet Hispánico will host an **NYC Arts in Education Roundtable** with **Paul Thompson**, Executive Director of the NYC DOE's Office of Arts and Special Projects (OASP), on December 5, 2022 at 10 a.m. at 167 W. 89th Street, NYC. The conversation, moderated by Roundtable Board Co-Chair **Gary Padmore**, will touch on the history of OASP and how it influences Paul's vision for its future. The discussion will also cover the larger role that OASP can play in harnessing the holistic value of the arts to provide creative and healing opportunities for students and schools. The event is free for Roundtable Members. For more information and to register, visit nycaieroundtable.org/events/meet-paul-thompson.

Tamia Santana, Chief Engagement and Inclusion Officer, Ballet Hispánico and **Kimberly Olsen**, Executive Director, NYCAIER will give opening remarks, followed by light refreshments and a movement activation from Ballet Hispánico. The event will continue with the discussion and will conclude with a Q&A with attendees and closing remarks.

The New York City Arts in Education Roundtable is a grassroots service organization working to advance the state of arts education across the five boroughs. As the main convening body for NYC's arts in education community, they are a collective of arts education practitioners committed to sharing resources, providing professional development, and communicating with the public to promote arts and culture in schools and communities.

In the Fall of 2022 **Paul J. Thompson** was selected as the new Executive Director of the Office of Arts and Special Projects which oversees arts instruction for the New York City Department of Education's 1.1 million school children. Prior to his appointment as Executive Director, Mr. Thompson spent seventeen years serving as the principal of the Urban Assembly School of Music and Art (UAMA), a non-screen title-one public arts high school that he founded in 2005 located in DUMBO, Brooklyn. In this role, he designed and implemented all aspects of the school including curriculum and instruction, arts programming, and youth development. Most recently, his work in conjunction with the Bard Early College established the Bard Early College Academy @ UAMA, where UAMA students can earn college credits while taking classes with Bard Early College professors on-site at UAMA.

Thompson was a 2016-17 Chancellor's Fellow and participated in the New York City Department of Education's Advanced Leadership Institute. He previously completed the New York City Leadership Academy's Aspiring Principals Program Cohort II and was a founding teacher at both the Bard High School Early College, and the High School for Contemporary Arts. Thompson started his career in education teaching music to incarcerated youth for the non-profit, War Child.

In 2008, Thompson sat on a National Endowment of the Arts Review Committee for Learning in The Arts for Children & Youth in Music and Opera. He has been a member of Bard College's Board of Governors since 2007, serving as Chair of the Diversity Committee from 2007-09. Thompson's work has been featured in Bard's

alumni magazine, *The Bardian*, *Jazz Magazine – Japan*, *Spin Magazine*, *Jazz Life*, *The New York Times*, and in *Time Out Magazine New York*, which named Thompson as 25 New Yorkers to Watch in 2005.

Prior to his work in education, Thompson had a career as a musician and composer, and he continues to write and perform music. He has worked across genres ranging from hip-hop to classical to jazz, and toured both internationally and across the U.S. He has collaborated with artists including Grammy-winner Meshell Ndegeocello, pop sensation The Black-Eyed Peas, and the American Symphony Orchestra conducted by Leon Botstein, which performed Thompson's work for orchestra, *Purple, Black and Green*. Thompson studied with trumpeter and composer Wadada Leo Smith.

Within the world of theater, Thompson has worked with UNIVERSES and the LABYRINTH Theater Company. Most recently, he was a featured performer in Meshell Ndegeocello's ongoing performance suite featuring the writings of James Baldwin: *Can I Get a Witness? The Gospel of James Baldwin* (Harlem Stage, 2016), *No More Water / The Fire Next Time* (Park Avenue Armory, 2018), *God Made My Face: A Collective Portrait of James Baldwin* (David Zwirner Gallery curated by Hilton Als, 2019), and *Chapter & Verse: The Gospel of James Baldwin* (Fisher Center at Bard, 2020).

Gary Padmore currently serves as the Vice President of Education and Community Engagement at the New York Philharmonic, bringing with him decades of experience in education and community work. Prior to the Philharmonic, he was the Director of Education & Community at Orchestra of St. Luke's where he created a concert series celebrating works by composers of color, doubled enrollment in its youth orchestra program, and increased school and community partnerships. Gary also led education programs at Midori & Friends and Brooklyn Philharmonic, served as an adjunct lecturer at Queens College, and was a teaching artist at several local organizations. As a steward of symphonic music and arts education, Gary sits on the boards of the NYC Arts in Education Roundtable and The Dream Unfinished: an activist orchestra. A trumpet player and native New Yorker, Gary has degrees from Queens College and Mannes School of Music. He was named one of Musical America's Top 30 Professionals of the Year in 2019.

The DOE Office of Arts and Special Projects is the content, pedagogical, and program leads for arts education for all 1,700 NYC public schools (PreK-12, all five boroughs). Rooted in the Blueprints for Teaching and Learning in the Arts, the office leads arts teacher professional development, instructional resource creation, school supports, and city-wide student programming to support equity and universal access to a robust and sequential arts education for every student. The office works in partnership with NYC's rich arts and cultural community to support partnerships, including millions of dollars of grants each year to support arts services in schools.

Ballet Hispánico is the largest Latinx/Latine/Hispanic cultural organization in the United States and one of America's Cultural Treasures. Ballet Hispánico's three main programs, the Company, School of Dance, and Community Arts Partnerships bring communities together to celebrate the multifaceted Hispanic diasporas. Ballet Hispánico's New York City headquarters provide the physical home and cultural heart for Latinx dance in the United States. It is a space that initiates new inclusive cultural conversations and explores the intersectionality of Latine cultures. The Ballet Hispánico mission opens a platform for new social dialogue, and nurtures and sees a community in its fullness. Through its exemplary artistry, distinguished training program, and deep-rooted community engagement, Ballet Hispánico champions and amplifies Latine voices in the field. For over fifty years Ballet Hispánico has provided a place of honor for the omitted, overlooked, and othered. As it looks to the future, Ballet Hispánico is pushing the culture forward on issues of dance and Latine creative expression.