

That Girl At The Party

Ballet Hispanico 2017 Gala Rocked!

May 25, 2017 – Courtney Henley



On May 15th, **Ballet Hispánico** honored Puerto Rican legendary actress and EGOT winner **Rita Moreno** with the *Toda Una Vida* Lifetime Achievement Award, presented by actress **Gina Rodriguez**, and Ecuadorian-American Pinnacle Group Chairman and CEO **Nina Vaca** with the *Nuestra Inspiración* Award, presented by **Ralph de la Vega**, the former Vice Chairman of AT&T Inc. and CEO of Business Solutions & International, at its annual

Carnaval Gala in The Plaza Hotel's Grand Ballroom, 768 Fifth Avenue, NYC. Cocktails began at 6:30pm with dinner at 7:30pm. There were performances throughout the the 4-course dinner followed by dancing till 11pm. Proceeds, which totaled over \$1.1 million, benefit the creation of new Company works, scholarships in the Ballet Hispánico School of Dance, and community arts education programs.

For more than 45 years, Ballet Hispánico has empowered and educated the next generation through dance. Through its innovative outreach programs and acclaimed performances, the organization has introduced thousands of young people to a cultural heritage often overlooked in American society.

Ballet Hispánico was founded by a Latina leader of its own, National Medal of Arts recipient **Tina Ramirez**, who infused the organization in 1970 with her mission to provide access to arts education and give voice to the Latino artist. When **Eduardo Vilaro** became Artistic Director in 2009, he launched a bold and eclectic brand of contemporary dance that reflects America's changing cultural landscape. He has also established programs that have nurtured a new generation of Latino leaders, many of them female.



"Ballet Hispánico builds on founder Tina Ramirez's legacy of female leadership by celebrating the achievements of two remarkable Latina leaders who have made their mark in the performing arts and corporate America," said Eduardo Vilaro, Artistic Director & CEO of Ballet Hispánico. "The evening is a celebration of Ballet Hispánico's determined and increasingly necessary commitment to fostering awareness of the gifts of diversity."



It was such an honor to meet this year's honorees, the one and only, dancer/actress **Rita Moreno** and **Nina Vaca** of **The Pinnacle Group**. "I love what this organization does for the community; it's inspirational. It fits with my own mission to serve our youth," stated Moreno. "I am excited to find other ways of partnering with Ballet Hispánico to reach our community with the arts."



Vaca added, "I'm honored to be recognized by such an impactful organization. Ballet Hispánico empowers our youth to pursue their artistic dreams and reminds us all about the value of bringing communities together. Many of those touched by Ballet Hispánico go on to establish careers in the arts or found their own successful businesses. I applaud Ballet Hispánico for building and strengthening the link between art and entrepreneurship."

Carnaval, the inspiration for Ballet Hispánico's annual Gala as envisioned by Eduardo Vilaro, was a celebration of the impactful voices of the Latino world—an exciting and fitting way to showcase the resilience and unparalleled vision of one of America's cultural gems. Attended by more than 500 of New York's most influential civic leaders, philanthropists and artists, the evening was filled with live Latin music and thrilling performances by the Ballet Hispánico Company and students of the School of Dance. The event was headed by Gala Chairs **Jody Gottfried Arnhold, Richard Feldman, Kate Lear and David Pérez**.

ABOUT THE HONOREES

Octogenarian **RITA MORENO** still remains one of the busiest stars in show business. She currently stars in the critically-acclaimed Latino remake of Norman Lear's classic sitcom, *One Day at a Time*, which is now streaming on Netflix. Ms. Moreno also lends her voice to the character, "Abuelita" in the children's animated series, *Nina's World*, which airs on NBC-TV's Sprout Network.

Ms. Moreno is an EGOT winner, having won all four of the most prestigious awards in show business: the Oscar, the Tony, two Emmys, and a Grammy. Her countless credits span more than six decades, beginning with her Broadway debut at age 13. Ms. Moreno has starred on

Broadway; London's West End; appeared in more than 40 feature films (including the 1961 classic *West Side Story*), and countless television shows; has performed in numerous regional theaters including her one woman show, *Life Without Makeup* at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre; and appeared as a season regular on the TV Land series, *Happily Divorced*, playing Fran Drescher's mother.



Ms. Moreno was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2004 and the National Medal of Arts by President Obama in 2010. In December 2015, she received a Kennedy Center Honor for her lifetime contributions to American Culture. In 2013, her first book, *Rita Moreno: A Memoir* instantly became a New York Times Best Seller. In January 2014, Ms. Moreno received the Screen Actors Guild Life Achievement Award, and she served as the Grand Marshal of the National Puerto Rican Day Parade in June 2015. That same year she released her first all Spanish language album, *Una Vez Más*, produced by Emilio Estefan.

NINA VACA is known around the world as a devoted entrepreneur, philanthropist, and champion for women and minorities in business. Her story and insights have been read by millions in publications such as The Wall Street Journal, Entrepreneur, Kiplinger, Inc. Magazine, and Fast Company, and she has been a featured guest on CNBC's *Squawk Box*, *Fox News*, and the *CBS Evening News*.

Ms. Vaca has been tremendously successful with Pinnacle Group, a company she founded in 1996 and still heads today. In her 20 years leading the company, it has grown into one of the

largest companies in its field and one of the fastest-growing women-owned businesses in the country. In recognition of her success, Ernst & Young honored her with its coveted Entrepreneur of the Year Award and elected her to its Hall of Fame. She has also been one of Fast Company Magazine's 25 Top Women Builders, Goldman Sachs has called her one of the country's most intriguing entrepreneurs, NBC termed her an innovator, and she has been listed among the 100 most influential Latinos in the United States for the past decade. Ms. Vaca also brings her business expertise to the board of directors of Comerica Inc., Kohl's Corporation, and Cinemark Holdings.



In addition to her business success, Ms. Vaca has a twenty-year track record of helping entrepreneurs build businesses and communities globally. She has traveled the world as a White House-appointed Presidential Ambassador for Global Entrepreneurship to inspire the next generation of entrepreneurs including in Ghana, Vietnam, and Bahrain. Ms. Vaca also founded At the Table, an initiative to provide women the resources and exposure needed to achieve the highest levels of success in business. At the Table is housed at the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (USHCC) Foundation, which Ms. Vaca chairs. She is also Chairman Emeritus of the USHCC, serving over 4.2 million Hispanic-owned U.S. businesses.

For her legacy of leadership, community involvement, and excellence in business, Ms. Vaca was named the youngest Distinguished Alumna in her alma mater's history and has been awarded three honorary doctorates by notable universities. Earlier this year, she was named a 2017 National Women's History Project Honoree by the National Women's History Project alongside other notable women in labor and business for her part in paving the way for women business leaders. Ms. Vaca was also inducted into the Minority Business Hall of Fame & Museum in

2016. So far this year, she has received the Women of Impact Award presented by the NFL and Off the Field Players' Wives Association and was named one of the inaugural Women of Distinction by the Women's Business Enterprise National Council.



ABOUT THE PRESENTERS

GINA RODRIGUEZ was recognized in the 2016 Time Magazine's "100 Most Influential People" list for her role of being a voice for the Latino community and supporting and empowering young girls. Her profile has been rising steadily since her breakout performance as the title character in *Filly Brown* during the Sundance Film Festival, being named the "It Girl" of the festival. Ms. Rodriguez then went on to star in the CW television series, *Jane the Virgin*, for which she has been nominated for 3 Golden Globes, winning in 2015. Recently, she starred in *Deepwater Horizon* alongside Mark Wahlberg, Kurt Russell, and Dylan O'Brien. Ms. Rodriguez will be seen next in the Paramount Pictures film *Annihilation* alongside Natalie Portman, Oscar Isaac, and Jennifer Jason Leigh for director Alex Garland.

RALPH DE LA VEGA is an acclaimed leader and innovator in business and telecommunications. As Vice Chairman of AT&T Inc. and CEO of Business Solutions & International, he had overall responsibility for the company's integrated Business Solutions group which, at the time, served more than 3.5 million business customers in nearly 200 countries and territories, including nearly all of the world's Fortune 1000 companies. Under his leadership, AT&T Mobility became one of the world's leading smartphone and mobile Internet providers and expanded into new growth areas such as connected cars, home security and automation. Mr. de la Vega has received numerous awards, including induction into the Wireless Hall of Fame, the Atlanta Business Hall of Fame, and the prestigious Global Innovation Award

from the Goizueta Business School at Emory University. He is the author of the best-selling book *Obstacles Welcome: Turn Adversity to Advantage in Business and Life* (Thomas Nelson, 2009).



ABOUT BALLET HISPÁNICO

America's premier Latino dance organization for more than 45 years, Ballet Hispánico brings communities together to celebrate and explore Latino cultures and the shared human experience through dance. Founded by National Medal of Arts recipient Tina Ramirez, Ballet Hispánico has been led since 2009 by Artistic Director & CEO Eduardo Vilaro, who has infused the organization's legacy with a bold and eclectic brand of contemporary dance that reflects America's changing cultural landscape. Through performances of its internationally-acclaimed Company, innovative dance training programs, and community education activities that inspire individuals of all ages and backgrounds, Ballet Hispánico brings the joy of dance and Hispanic culture to the world.



For more information, visit www.ballethispanico.org. Follow Ballet Hispánico on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

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