

<http://hombre1.com/hombre-exclusive-ceo-artistic-director-eduardo-vilaro-is-turning-ballet-hispanico-into-a-household-name/>



## **HOMBRE Exclusive: CEO & Artistic Director EDUARDO VILARO Soaring With BALLE T HISPANICO To New Heights**

Wednesday, April 19, 2017



This week **Ballet Hispanico** returns to the **New York's Joyce Theater** with a program of all-female choreographers from **April 18-23, 2017**. **Eduardo Vilaro** began his tenure as Artistic Director in 2009, becoming only the second person at the helm since the company was founded in 1970. In an exclusive interview Vilaro shares his plans to expand Ballet Hispanico's vision and transform it into a household name.

The current Ballet Hispanico engagement features the world premiere of **Michelle Manzanales's Con Brazos Abiertos**, an exploration of iconic Mexican symbols that Manzanales was reluctant to embrace as a Mexican-American child growing up in Texas. **Línea Recta** by Belgian-Colombian **Annabelle Lopez Ochoa** is a work pairing the hallmark passion of flamenco dance with highly inventive and intricate partnering. And **3. Catorce Dieciséis** by **Tania Pérez-Salas** – one of the leading voices of Mexican contemporary dance – draws inspiration from the number Pi to reflect on the circularity of the human condition.



In 2015 Eduardo Vilaro expanded his role to also become Chief Executive Officer of Ballet Hispanico. He has been part of the company since 1985 as a principal dancer and educator, after which he began a ten-year record of achievement as Founder and Artistic Director of Luna Negra Dance Theater in Chicago. Vilaro has infused Ballet Hispanico's legacy with a bold and eclectic brand of contemporary dance that reflects America's changing cultural landscape. Born in Cuba and raised in New York from the age of six, he is a frequent speaker on the merits of cultural diversity and dance education.

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.



**HOMBRE:** Why the idea of featuring only female choreographers this season?

Eduardo Vilaro: Ballet Hispanico has the tradition of featuring and supporting Latin American artists. We're always looking for a way to promote the culture. The problem is that the art of dance was created by men, and even today we don't have many women – much less Latin women – who are in a position of leadership. This is a way to continue that cultural legacy, and feature Latin women.

**H:** How has it been to transition from Artistic Director to also CEO of the company?

EV: It's been tough, but not very different than what I used to do. I built a dance company in Chicago from scratch and I had to learn the business angle. So I had that experience. It was time. If I want for the company to grow and to have more students and want to see people achieve more, I have to set the example.



**H: What are your plans in this new facet?**

EV: So much! Now that I'm handling both areas I can see the vision and integrate it a little bit better. First it's to make the name of Ballet Hispanico become known worldwide. And for it to be known in our Latin communities even more. For it to become a household name. We have many educational programs. It's also important that people know that a dance company founded by a Latina continues to thrive after almost fifty years.

**H: You recently had an educational program in Washington Heights where you involved the community, how did that come about?**

EV: That was a new opportunity with the United Palace theater. Since that's our community it's important to be involved. Sometimes as artists we feel that the public comes to us, but we're in a time when we have to go to the community ourselves. We plan to make it an annual program and offer classes to the youth there.

**H: To what do you attribute the long standing success of the company?**

EV: I have never been asked that question. First of all I believe it's the pride of being Latinos that attracts so much support. It's also because we have an exceptional team. Not only in production, but also with a board of directors filled with professional Latinos that understand the importance of this mission.



**H: What advice can you offer aspiring artists to be successful?**

EV: To have success I always said you have to be without shame. Sometimes you have to place yourself in situations that may scare you, but you have to lose fear and take a leap. As Latinos we know how to do that. And you have to face everything with elegance and pride. That's what I tell everyone.

**H: Did you want to be involved in the dance world since childhood?**

EV: Yes, it was always my passion. Perhaps because it connected me to what we left in Cuba. The music, the parties, dancing with the family. That touched my heart and said to me that I'm part of something bigger. That's where it all began.

**H: To what do you attribute your personal success?**

EV: First of all to my mother. It's a very Latin to say, but it's true. I saw my mom struggle as an immigrant. That changes you. That has given me great faith and courage. The other thing is education. My parents instilled in me that education is everything. Thank God I went to a great school, I went to the university, and that paved the way. It's thanks to God, and people who have supported you.

**H: What can audiences expect from the upcoming Ballet Hispanico production?**

EV: They can expect incredible dancers who have trained to the maximum level. They can also expect the beauty of our culture enveloped in the vision of these women. 'Linea Recta' ties to the past and what is our connection to Spanish dance, Flamenco. With Michele you see the conflict

of being part of Mexico and part of the USA, with beautiful icons that we know, music that we know, that talks to us. And finally Tanya's piece is very elegant, it's like watching a painting. All that blended-in with the pride of these artists will be incredible.



**H: Finally, how do you see the future of the company?**

EV: We have so many goals. Right now our plans are to have what we call 'Ballet Hispanico Communities' in different parts of the United States. We now have a relationship with Cal State University in Los Angeles to involve their students in innovative programs. And since Los Angeles has such a great Latin and Chicano community it's going to be important for Ballet Hispanico there. We're also working in Houston and Miami. It's going to be a very strong program.

For more information visit [www.ballethispanico.org](http://www.ballethispanico.org)