



Through the Eyes of Latina Choreographers

October 29, 2018 – Grace Einfeld



NORTHROP WELCOMES LATIN DANCE COMPANY TO ITS 2018-2019 DANCE SEASON

Drenched in red light, the company members of Ballet Hispánico gracefully made their way onto the Northrop Auditorium Stage on Thursday, October 4th. The audience fell completely silent, captivated by the elegant and powerful movement. Each dancer was just as strong and agile as the next, with passion and dedication radiating from every inch of their body as they explored the stage. Their eloquent and emotional expression directly reflected Artistic Director and CEO

Eduardo Vilaro’s “vision of social equity, cultural identity, and quality arts education for all.” During a quick pause in the first act, the Rehearsal Director, Johan Rivera Méndez, explained how each piece came to be. “Brazos Abiertos,” the first piece of the night, was choreographed by Michelle Manzanales. Her piece was inspired by her own experiences, such as being tangled up within two cultures: her native Mexican culture and her new American culture. Her integration of solos and duets within her large group sections explored individual stories of struggle, along with impactful additions of humanistic movements. The second of the three pieces, titled “Sombrerísimo,” intertwined the search for identity with the all-male cast. Through a combination of traditional motions and more contemporary elements, the dancers suggested that there truly is a divide between the two worlds. Finally, “3. Catorce Dieciséis”(the number of pi, 3.1416 in Spanish) explored how life’s circular motion moves us all in various ways. Although Méndez described this piece as “an abstract concept,” it beautifully and clearly incorporated elements of everyday life.

What was most remarkable about this show was the sheer amount of students who attended the show. According to Northrop Artistic Director, Christine Tschida, approximately 500 Spanish

Department students were in the audience among everyday spectators. Upon leaving the theatre, those very spectators seemed at ease, as though their busy academic lives didn't exist.

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