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Ballet Hispánico's 2019 New York Season at The Joyce Theater Featuring Two World Premieres

March 26-31, 2019

**A Restaging of *Sombrerísimo* by Annabelle Lopez Ochoa
featuring the Company Women
World Premiere of *El Viaje* by Edwaard Liang
World Premiere of *Homebound/Alaala* by Bennyroyce Royon**

New York, NY – Ballet Hispánico, America's leading Latino dance organization, brings its bold and eclectic brand of contemporary dance to The Joyce Theater with two world premieres from March 26-31, 2019. Tickets start at \$10 and are available for purchase in person at The Joyce Theater Box Office by calling JoyceCharge at 212-242-0800 or online at Joyce.org.

Ballet Hispánico's program features passionate and culturally relative works that explore the vast connections between the Latinx and Asian diasporas. Annabelle Lopez Ochoa offers an exploration of identity in her stirring *Sombrerísimo*. In two separate world premieres by Edwaard Liang and Bennyroyce Royon, the choreographers touch on historic issues that are particularly resonant today, including migration, immigration, journeying, and assimilation.

The women of the Ballet Hispánico Company exercise their athleticism and power in Annabelle Lopez Ochoa's *Sombrerísimo*. The work is an athletic *tour de force* originally created for six men full of complex partnering, Latin sizzle, and a joyous celebration of self. Inspired by the surrealist world of Belgian painter René Magritte, famous for his paintings of men in bowler hats, *Sombrerísimo* references the iconic *sombreros* (hats) found throughout the world that help to represent culture.

In *El Viaje*, Edwaard Liang presents an emotional and thought-provoking journey of the Chinese diaspora in his new work. Featuring classical music by Ralph Vaughan Williams, Liang evokes emotion through moving sound and lush movement to exemplify how many individuals feel when one leaves one's homeland or country of birth to seek a new life, including moments of remembering, sharing, and letting go. Liang particularly focuses on the Chinese mass emigration from the nineteenth century to 1949 and the Chinese-Cuban diaspora to explore identity and the ghosts of a former life.

Filipino-American choreographer Bennyroyce Royon explores identity through the lens of Filipino culture in *Homebound/Alaala*. Royon explores the intersection of Latino and Asian



cultures through ideas including the spirit of communal unity (*bayanihan*), the resilience of women, overcoming hardship, and the quest for home.

“Immigration has enabled plethora of cultural diversity and this program is an example of our leadership role in embracing the diversity, inclusion, and intersectionality in culture. We continue our mission to expose the American experience of Latinx culture and encourage our audience to go beyond the surface of what they know.” – Artistic Director & CEO Eduardo Vilario

Ballet Hispánico’s New York Season is made possible by Jody & John Arnhold, the Howard Gilman Foundation, The Harkness Foundation for Dance, The Frances Lear Foundation, MetLife Foundation, The SHS Foundation, The Fan Fox & Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, The Scherman Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, Inc., with public support from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

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ANNABELLE LOPEZ OCHOA has been choreographing since 2003 following a twelve-year dance career in various contemporary dance companies throughout Europe. She has created works on fifty companies worldwide including Ballet Hispánico, Atlanta Ballet, Cincinnati Ballet, Compania Nacional de Danza, Dutch National Ballet, Finnish National Ballet, Royal Ballet of Flanders, Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève, Göteborg Ballet, Joffrey Ballet, BJM-Danse Montréal, New York City Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Pennsylvania Ballet, Tulsa Ballet, San Francisco Ballet and Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, to name a few. In 2012, her first full length work, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, originally created for Scottish Ballet, received the Critics’ Circle National Dance Award for “Best Classical Choreography” and was nominated for the prestigious Olivier Award for Best New Dance Production the following year.

EDWAARD LIANG, a former dancer with New York City Ballet and Nederlands Dans Theater, has built an international reputation as a choreographer. Born in Taipei, Taiwan and raised in Marin County, CA, Mr. Liang began his dance training at age five with Marin Ballet. After studying at the School of American Ballet, he joined New York City Ballet in 1993. In 2001, Mr. Liang joined the Tony Award® winning Broadway cast of *Fosse*. Since establishing himself as a choreographer, his works have been performed by dance companies around the world including Bolshoi Ballet, Joffrey Ballet, Shanghai Ballet, Singapore Dance Theatre, among many others. In 2013, Mr. Liang was named Artistic Director at BalletMet where he continues to choreograph new works for companies both domestically and abroad. In 2017, he received an Emmy® Award for his short dance film *Vaulted*. In 2018, he created a new ballet with Roberto Bolle for the opening of the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos, Switzerland.

BENNYROYCE ROYON is a Filipino-American director, choreographer, and dancer based in Brooklyn, NY. Royon received a BFA in Dance from The Juilliard School in 2006. As a performer and collaborator he has worked on Broadway (Tony Award-winning 2015 Broadway revival of *The King and I*), Off-Broadway (*Artist of Light*), at The Metropolitan Opera (*Madama Butterfly*, *Turandot*, *The First Emperor*), at the New York Philharmonic (*The Cunning Little Vixen*), and with dance companies including Armitage Gone! Dance, Sidra Bell Dance New York, Carolyn Dorfman Dance, Alaska Dance Theatre, The Nilas Martins Dance Company, Collective Body Dance Lab, Cas Public, and Bad Boys of Dance.

Royon has worked with choreographers Aszure Barton, Karole Armitage, Darrell Grand Moultrie, Christopher Gattelli, Greg Zane, Sidra Bell, and Carolyn Dorfman, among others. He has created new works for Atlanta Ballet, The Joffrey Academy of Dance, Point Park University,



Marymount Manhattan College, BC/EFA's *Gypsy of the Year 2015* Competition, and more. Royon has received two CUNY Dance Initiative residencies, Velocity Dance Center's Creative Resident Award, and The Joffrey Ballet's Winning Works Choreography Award. He is a Dance Motion USA Follow-On PDP alumnus. In 2010, he founded Bennyroyce Dance, a project-based contemporary dance company.

BALLET HISPÁNICO

The Joyce Theater, 175 Eighth Avenue (at 19th Street), NYC

March 26-31, 2019

Tue-Wed 7:30pm; Thu-Fri 8:00pm; Sat 2:00pm & 8:00pm; Sun 2:00pm and 7:30pm

Tickets start at \$10 and are available for purchase in person at The Joyce Theater Box Office, by phone at (212) 242-0800, or online at Joyce.org. Ticket prices are subject to change.

ABOUT BALLET HISPÁNICO

Ballet Hispánico, America's leading Latino dance organization in the United States, has been bringing individuals and communities together to celebrate and explore Latino cultures through dance for nearly 50 years. Whether dancing on stage, in school, or in the street, Ballet Hispánico creates a space where few institutions are breaking ground.

The organization's founder, National Medal of Arts recipient Tina Ramirez, sought to give voice to the Hispanic experience and break through stereotypes. Today, Ballet Hispánico is led by Eduardo Vilaro, an acclaimed choreographer and former member of the Company, whose vision of social equity, cultural identity and quality arts education for all drives its programs.

Ballet Hispánico, a role model in and for the Latino community, is inspiring creativity and social awareness in our neighborhoods and across the country by providing access to arts education.

Eduardo Vilaro joined Ballet Hispánico as Artistic Director in August 2009, becoming only the second person to head the company since it was founded in 1970. In 2015, Mr. Vilaro took on the additional role of Chief Executive Officer of Ballet Hispánico. He has been part of the Ballet Hispánico family since 1985 as a 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. Mr. Vilaro has infused Ballet Hispánico'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.

Mr. Vilaro's own choreography is devoted to capturing the spiritual, sensual and historical essence of 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. 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. Mr. Vilaro was also inducted into the Bronx Walk of Fame in 2016 and was awarded *HOMBRE Magazine's* 2017 Arts & Culture Trailblazer of the Year.

ABOUT THE JOYCE THEATER

The Joyce Theater Foundation ("The Joyce," Executive Director, Linda Shelton), a non-profit organization, has proudly served the dance community for over three decades. Under the direction of founders Cora Cahan and Eliot Feld, Ballet Tech Foundation acquired and The Joyce renovated the Elgin Theater in Chelsea. Opening as The Joyce Theater in 1982, it was named in honor of Joyce Mertz, beloved daughter of LuEsther T. Mertz. It was LuEsther's clear, undaunted vision and abundant generosity that made it imaginable and ultimately possible to build the theater. Ownership was secured by The Joyce in 2015. The theater is one of the only theaters built by dancers for dance and has provided an intimate and elegant home for over 400



U.S.-based and international companies. The Joyce has also expanded its reach beyond its Chelsea home through off-site presentations at venues ranging in scope from Lincoln Center's David H. Koch Theater, to Brooklyn's Invisible Dog Art Center, and to outdoor programming in spaces such as Hudson River Park. To further support the creation of new work, The Joyce maintains longstanding commissioning and residency programs. Local students and teachers (K–12th grade) benefit from its school program, and family and adult audiences get closer to dance with access to artists. The Joyce's annual season of about 48 weeks of dance now includes over 340 performances for audiences in excess of 150,000.

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