

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**BALLET HISPÁNICO
THE QUINCEAÑERA GALA**

Thursday, April 25, 2024

Honors

**Oscar Munoz with the *Nuestra Inspiración* Award,
Presented by Marcos Torres**

**Eduardo Vilaro for 15 Years as Artistic Director of Ballet Hispánico
With Remarks by Darren Walker**

Ballet Hispánico announces *The Quinceañera Gala*, honoring **Oscar Munoz**, Former CEO & Chairman, United Airlines, with the *Nuestra Inspiración* Award—presented by **Marcos Torres**, Senior Managing Director at RBC Capital Markets and Ballet Hispánico Board Member, and **Eduardo Vilaro**'s 15th season as Artistic Director of Ballet Hispánico, with remarks by **Darren Walker**, President of the Ford Foundation.

Ballet Hispánico 2024 Gala Performance (6:30pm) and Dinner

The Ballet Hispánico Gala Dinner is a beloved New York event attended by some 500 leaders in the arts and business communities and is truly a spectacular evening filled with performances by the students from its School of Dance and, of course, live music by three-time Grammy Award Winner, Spanish Harlem Orchestra, that entices guests to take to the dance floor. The critical funds raised at the Gala provide dance training scholarships that change the lives of young people, inspiring performances by the professional Company, and immersive dance programs in communities across the United States and worldwide. Tickets for the April 25 Gala Performance may be paired with a reservation for the *Quinceañera Gala* at The Plaza Hotel in tribute to Eduardo Vilaro's 15th anniversary as Artistic Director of Ballet Hispánico. The evening begins at 5:30pm with a red carpet and cocktail hour, followed by a reception and the opening night performance of the Company's annual season at New York City Center. The festivities continue with a presentation of awards during a seated dinner at The Plaza Hotel.

“Leading this company continues to be the honor of my life. Fifteen years is quite a milestone; I’m humbled,” said Eduardo Vilaro, Artistic Director & CEO. “I look forward to celebrating at City Center with several exciting pieces, including the World Premiere of my new work *Buscando a Juan*, inspired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s exhibition *Juan de Pareja, Afro-Hispanic Painter*.”

Gala Performance Program: *Recuerdo de Campo Amor* by Talley Beatty; *Con Brazos Abiertos* (excerpts) by Michelle Manzanales; *Doña Perón* (excerpt) by Annabelle Lopez Ochoa; *Pas de O' Farrill*, duet by Pedro Ruiz; *Buscando a Juan* by Eduardo Vilaro.

Gala Chairs:

Jody* & John Arnhold
Richard Feldman
Kate Lear* & Jonathan LaPook
David Pérez* & Milena Alberti-Pérez
Joseph Wayland* & Patricia Verrilli

Gala Committee:

Melissa Alvarez-Downing* & Stuart Downing
Avance Investment Management
Bloomberg Philanthropies
Michelle Caruso-Cabrera* & Stephen Dizard
Judy & Jamie Dimon
Auri Fenouil* & Sebastian Garcia
Ford Foundation
Matthew Ford*
Howard Gilman Foundation
Hiroko Ito*
Robert Kartheiser* & Caroline Walther-Meade
Sara* & Chris Lange
The Frances Lear Foundation
Richard & Juana Maloof*
Meow Wolf
Brett* & Lauren Perlmutter
Popular Bank
Pryor Cashman, LLP
Francisco Ramírez-Valle*
Rita Rodriguez*
Samuel H. Scripps Foundation
Ronald Shechtman* & Lynne Meadow
Scott Tegethoff*
Jose* & Vanesa Tolosa
Marcos Torres*
Sergio Trujillo* and Jack Noseworthy
Danays Vichot*
Charles Wortman* & Laura Baldwin

Committee in formation

*Board Member**

The attire for the event is *Quinceañera* black-tie chic. To purchase tickets, a table, a journal advertisement, or for more information, please contact Ellie Craven at ecraven@ballethispanico.org, or visit <https://www.ballethispanico.org/support/events/2024-gala>.

Ballet Hispánico is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council; by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature; and by the National Endowment for the Arts. MetLife Foundation is an Official Tour Sponsor of Ballet Hispánico.

In honor of Eduardo Vilaro's Quinceañera season as Artistic Director of Ballet Hispánico, the program (Fri evening, Sat evening, Sun matinee) will feature the World Premiere of ***Buscando a Juan***. Vilaro's new work, inspired by The Met's exhibition of *Juan de Pareja, Afro-Hispanic Painter*, is a layered and immersive piece inspired by the life of Juan de Pareja, the Afro-Hispanic painter who was enslaved in Spanish painter Diego Velázquez's studio for over two decades before becoming an artist in his own right. The work is a thought-provoking homage to the nuanced dance of shared vulnerability and intimate collaboration among artists that redefines the boundaries of individual creativity, beckoning us to question the very essence of artistic identity. In ***House of Mademoiselle***, internationally acclaimed choreographer **Annabelle Lopez Ochoa** takes us on a wild romp through a campy world that explores iconic female representations found in Latin American culture. From femme fatales to the delicate language of fans, boas and Latin dance, the work highlights how the culture is enamored and obsessed with the iconic high-octane female stars of past and present; and **Gustavo Ramírez Sansano's *18+1***, a fun romp through some of Pérez Prado's iconic big band hits with Ramírez's signature athletic movement vocabulary.

Oscar Munoz served as CEO and Chairman of United Airlines and now presides on the board of directors of Salesforce, CBRE, TelevisaUnivision, and Archer Aviation, a leading Urban Air Mobility company and developer of all-electric vertical take-off and landing ("eVTOL") aircraft. He serves on the Pentagon's Defense Business Board, is a trustee of the University of Southern California and the Brookings Institution and is an independent trustee for Fidelity. He has served in various financial leadership positions across diverse industries, including U.S. West, AT&T, Coca-Cola, and PepsiCo.

In his recent memoir, *Turnaround Time*, published by Harper's Business, Oscar recounts the remarkable corporate revival that took place for the iconic airline under his leadership, delivering industry-leading operational reliability, and sustained financial success, with stock value increasing 54 percent during that period. Earning recognition as a *Wall Street Journal* Best-seller, in the book Oscar credits this rapid success to a focus on putting employees first, and he pays tribute to their sustained faith in him during a heart attack and heart transplant he suffered only a month into his tenure.

He is co-Chair of the 2023 Blue Ribbon Commission for the National Association of Corporate Directors, the authority on best boardroom practices. Since 2022, the Oscar and Cathy Munoz Pave it Forward Foundation has proudly partnered with the American Heart Association to create the AHA's Social Impact Fund, providing financial grants and low-interest loans for evidence-based, community-driven work to address heart health inequality.

Previously, Mr. Munoz served as President and Chief Operating Officer of the North American rail-based transportation supplier CSX Corp. A decade of excellent financial

performance, including a boost in operating income of nearly 600 percent, earned CSX recognition on the list of Most Honored Companies by Institutional Investor magazine. Mr. Munoz earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Southern California's Marshall School of Business and an MBA from Pepperdine's Graziadio Business School.

Hispanic Business magazine twice named Mr. Munoz one of its '100 Most Influential Hispanics', honoring his journey as an immigrant who, to this date, remains the only person of Hispanic heritage to run a U.S. airline.

Eduardo Vilaro is the Artistic Director & CEO of Ballet Hispánico (BH). He was named BH's Artistic Director in 2009, becoming only the second person to head the company since its founding in 1970, and in 2015 was also named Chief Executive Officer. Mr. Vilaro has infused Ballet Hispánico's legacy with a bold brand of contemporary dance that reflects America's changing cultural landscape.

Mr. Vilaro's philosophy of dance stems from a basic belief in the power of the arts to change lives, reflect and impact culture, and strengthen community. He considers dance to be a liberating, non-verbal language through which students, dancers, and audiences of all walks of life and diverse backgrounds, can initiate ongoing conversations about the arts, expression, identity, and the meaning of community.

Born in Cuba and raised in New York from the age of six, Mr. Vilaro's own choreography is devoted to capturing the Latin American experience in its totality and diversity, and through its intersectionality with other diasporas. His works are catalysts for new dialogues about what it means to be an American. He has created more than 40 ballets with commissions that include the Ravinia Festival, the Chicago Sinfonietta, the Grant Park Festival, the Lexington Ballet and the Chicago Symphony.

A Ballet Hispánico dancer and educator from 1988 to 1996, he left New York, earned a master's in interdisciplinary arts at Columbia College Chicago and then embarked on his own act of advocacy with a ten-year record of achievement as Founder and Artistic Director of Luna Negra Dance Theater in Chicago.

The recipient of numerous awards and accolades, Mr. Vilaro received the Ruth Page Award for choreography in 2001; was inducted into the Bronx Walk of Fame in 2016; and was awarded *HOMBRE Magazine's* 2017 Arts & Culture Trailblazer of the Year. In 2019, he received the *West Side Spirit's* WESTY Award, was honored by WNET for his contributions to the arts and was the recipient of the James W. Dodge Foreign Language Advocate Award. In August 2020, *City & State Magazine* included Mr. Vilaro in the inaugural Power of Diversity: Latin 100 list. In January 2021, Mr. Vilaro was recognized with a Compassionate Leaders Award, given to leaders who are courageous, contemplative, collaborative, and care about the world they will leave behind. In May 2022, he was honored to serve as a Grand Marshall of 2022 Dance Parade. Mr. Vilaro is a well-respected speaker on such topics as diversity, equity, and inclusion in the arts, as well as on the merits of the intersectionality of cultures and the importance of nurturing and building Latinx leaders.

Ballet Hispánico is the largest Latine/x/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.

NEW YORK CITY CENTER (Michael S. Rosenberg, President & CEO) has played a defining role in the cultural life of the city since 1943. The distinctive Neo-Moorish building was founded by Mayor Fiorello La Guardia as Manhattan's first performing arts center with the mission of making the best in theater, dance, and music accessible to all audiences. This commitment continues today through celebrated dance and musical theater series like the Fall for Dance Festival and the Tony-honored Encores! series; the annual season by Principal Dance Company Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater; and new dance series Artists at the Center. City Center welcomes audiences to experience internationally acclaimed artists including Kyle Abraham, Matthew Bourne, Ayodele Casel, Manhattan Theatre Club, Nederlands Dans Theater, and Twyla Tharp, on the same stage where legends made their mark. Dedicated to a culture built on the values of curiosity, collaboration, accessibility, and inclusivity, City Center's dynamic programming, art exhibitions, and studio events are complemented by education and community engagement programs that bring the performing arts to thousands of New York City students, teachers, and families every year. NYCityCenter.org

About MetLife Foundation

At MetLife Foundation, we are committed to driving inclusive economic mobility for underserved and underrepresented communities around the world. We collaborate with nonprofit organizations and provide grants aligned to three strategic focus areas – economic inclusion, financial health and resilient communities – while engaging MetLife employee volunteers to help drive impact. MetLife Foundation was established in 1976 to continue MetLife's long tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. Since its inception, MetLife Foundation has contributed over \$1 billion to strengthen communities where MetLife has a presence. To learn more about MetLife Foundation, visit www.MetLife.org.

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