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## **Michelle Manzanales, Johan Rivera and Joshua Winzeler appointed to new leadership roles at Ballet Hispánico**

**New York, NY – Ballet Hispánico**, the nation's preeminent Latino dance company, has named Michelle Manzanales as the Director of the Ballet Hispánico School of Dance. In addition, Johan Rivera has been named as the Rehearsal Director and Artistic Associate of Ballet Hispánico's main company and Joshua Winzeler has been named as Rehearsal Director for Ballet Hispánico's second company, *BHdos*. Ms. Manzanales' new position was effective as of December 1, 2016 and Mr. Rivera and Mr. Winzeler will assume their new roles immediately.

"Michelle Manzanales has worked side by side with me for more than 15 years, developing dancers, choreography, curriculum, residencies and education workshops nationally and internationally," said Eduardo Vilaro, Artistic Director & C.E.O. of Ballet Hispánico. "For the past six years, she has served as the Ballet Hispánico Artistic Associate and Rehearsal Director, helping to elevate the company's ballets and dancers to new heights. She is an esteemed dance educator and has been supporting the School of Dance for the past three years, adding her artistic expertise to the School's faculty and its programming. She is a celebrated choreographer and adjudicator for dance panels and competitions throughout the nation. We are thrilled she will be giving our students the same dance wisdom that she shares with our professional dancers."

"Johan Rivera and Joshua Winzeler were pivotal artists for the new vision of the Ballet Hispánico company and have been outstanding members of our company for many years," Mr. Vilaro added. "They bring their experiences and collaborations with me to their new positions."

**Michelle Manzanales** is a choreographer and dance educator originally from Houston, TX who has created works for numerous professional companies, universities, and schools including Cerqua Rivera Dance Theatre (Chicago, IL), Houston Metropolitan Dance Company under the direction of Dorrell Martin, the University of Houston, and Rice University among others. In 2007, Manzanales created *Sugar in the Raw (Azúcar Cruda)* for Luna Negra Dance Theater, which was applauded by the Chicago Sun-Times as "a staggering, beautiful, accomplished new work." In 2010, her homage to Frida Kahlo, *Paloma Querida*, was hailed as a "visual masterpiece" by Lucia Mauro of the Chicago Tribune. *Con Brazos Abiertos*, Manzanales' first work for Ballet Hispánico, had a World Premiere at The Joyce in New York City in April, 2017. With humility, nostalgia and humor, Manzanales' ballet explored the iconic Mexican symbols that she was reluctant to embrace as a Mexican-American child growing up in Texas.



*Con Brazos Abiertos* came to fruition through Ballet Hispánico's Instituto Coreográfico, an innovative choreography lab for Latino dance makers launched in 2010 by Artistic Director & CEO Eduardo Vilaro.

**Johan Rivera Méndez** was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He began his dance training at the School for the Performing Arts, PR under the direction of Waldo Gonzalez. Rivera Méndez graduated with his BFA from the New World School of the Arts in 2013. While there, he had the opportunity to perform the works of Robert Battle, Darshan Singh Bhuller, Peter London, Merce Cunningham, Michael Uthoff, and Kyle Abraham as well as simultaneously working with local dance companies in Miami, Florida. During his tenure with the Ballet Hispánico company, Johan had the pleasure of performing the ballets of choreographers such as Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, Gustavo Ramirez Sansano, Pedro Ruiz, and Eduardo Vilaro. In addition, he was a vital member of Ballet Hispánico's Education & Outreach teaching team while on tour and at home in NYC. Johan had the honor of mentoring and directing second company *BHdos* for the fall of 2016 before taking over as Rehearsal Director for Ballet Hispánico's main company. Rivera Méndez holds an MA in Executive Leadership from Liberty University.

**Joshua Winzeler** was raised in Miami, FL. His training includes Miami City Ballet, the School of American Ballet, and Joffrey Ballet. He received his BFA from New World School of the Arts in 2011, where he performed works by Robert Battle, Martha Graham, Darshan Bhuller and Michael Uthoff. Upon graduation, Winzeler joined Ballet Hispánico where he has worked and collaborated with choreographers such as Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, Nacho Duato, Cayetano Soto, Gustavo Ramirez Sansano, and Eduardo Vilaro.

#### **ABOUT *BHdos***

Handpicked by Artistic Director Eduardo Vilaro, the talented pre-professional dancers of Ballet Hispánico's second company form bridges: between the School of Dance and the professional company, between Ballet Hispánico and the community, and between their own training and careers in dance. *BHdos* dancers work with highly-skilled artistic leadership to bring Latino culture to schools, communities and corporations. With engaging and interactive performances, *BHdos* leads audiences through an exciting 50-minute exploration of dance influenced by Spain and Latin America. Each fully-costumed performance features the impressive choreography from the current Ballet Hispánico repertory.

#### **ABOUT BALLET HISPÁNICO**

**Ballet Hispánico**, the premier Latino dance organization in the United States, brings individuals and communities together to celebrate and explore Latino cultures through dance. 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 universal access to cultural identity, equity and quality arts education drives its programs. Ballet Hispánico has become a role model in and for the Latino community and is inspiring creativity and social awareness in our neighborhoods and across the country by providing access to arts education.

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