

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Getting Into the Swing

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Ballet Hispanico comes to the Joyce Theater this week. *Jeux McCormick*

Ballet Hispanico artistic director Eduardo Vilaro grew up on Latin social dancing, but he didn't have his first choreographic experience until he was cast in an eighth-grade production of "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" at Saint Margaret Mary's school in the Bronx. He played Linus, who had a duet with a blanket. "I was hooked."

Those who want to see how Mr. Vilaro's movement vocabulary has developed in the intervening decades should pay close attention to this year's program for the Cuban-inspired "Danzon," a collaboration between Ballet Hispanico and saxophonist Paquito D'Rivera, whose ensemble will play live during performances.

"It's important for audiences to understand the relationship between musical and nonmusical performers," Mr. Vilaro said. "It adds so many other layers for what they're seeing."



When we asked the company to assemble numbers related to its season at the Joyce, we were curious about the 11 iPods used in "A Vueltas con los Ochenta," a dance inspired by the cultural revolution in Spain in the post-dictatorship 1980s.

Mr. Vilaro said that in one section of the piece, each dancer has a solo to music only he or she, and not the audience, can hear. "You can only imagine what's happening in there," he said.

We were also curious about the 90 paper airplanes used in "Sortijas," a world premiere duet about the ties that bind. "The paper planes are used as a metaphor for the passing of time," he said. "They're flown in from the wings by the other dancers. I think they have a lot of fun with it."