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BWW Review: Ballet Hispanico Celebrates 45 Years at the Apollo Theater

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by Caryn Cooper



New York based company Ballet Hispanico performed this November 20-21, 2015, at the historic Apollo Theater, presenting the world premiere of "If walls could speak," by Brazilian native and acclaimed choreographer Fernando Melo. Artistic Director [Eduardo Vilaro](#) proudly presented Melo in his New York debut through a collaborative effort to co-commission the work in conjunction with the Apollo Theater and support by Univision Communications Inc.

This evening-length work, set to live music featuring the percussive sounds of Brazil, explored Melo's homeland, a land of soccer, samba, and sensuality, while focusing with abstract and poetic subtlety on the country's inequality and disorder. I have to say that this was not what I expected as I eagerly waited

for the program to begin, but was quite impressed. There were several intriguing moments that definitely caught my attention.

The set consisted of a two-way mirror that was beautifully used to show the memories of the past. I absolutely loved the use of lighting with the mirror to add special effects to the stage. Melo is very inventive in the way he fused the handling of props into his choreography. The range of props included plates, cups, newspapers, and lampshades. The coordination and precision needed of the dancers to execute such intricate movements was quite remarkable.

Often times, we as a society get caught up in the glitz and glamour, and don't take the time to take a closer look at what the people face on a daily basis. Melo brought you on a journey of the real culture of Brazil behind the façade--a profound look at the pain, disorder, and disparity people face, while addressing the notions of anonymity and isolation in the fast-paced, repetitive rhythm of big city living.

Innovative, prodigious and creative are the three best words to describe Ballet Hispanico as a real cultural gem. No other company presents the arts and Latino culture so beautifully through such cutting-edge choreography.

Ballet Hispanico continues its tour for the 2015-16 season throughout the U.S. and will return for their spring New York season at [The Joyce Theater](#) April 5-10, 2016.

Photo Credit: Paula Lobo