

What My Teacher Taught Me: Lyvan Verdecia

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Lyvan Verdecia and Melissa Fernandez

When Ballet Hispánico's Lyvan Verdecia was studying at the Cuban National Ballet School as a teenager, Martha Iris Fernandez helped him perfect his turns.

“Male dancers in Cuba are known for their turns and their jumps. For me, jumps always came naturally, but turns—not so much. So Martha would focus on turns and turns and turns, getting me to execute them at a level that made them look effortless. She would emphasize the placement of my spine and make sure I always had a high passé—things that separate the amateur from the professional.”

Martha Iris Fernandez is a classical ballet teacher at the Cuban National Ballet School in Havana.

See [Ballet Hispánico](#) tonight and tomorrow at 8 pm at the Apollo Theater in New York City.

Photo by Paula Lobo, courtesy of Ballet Hispánico