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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**BALLET HISPÁNICO ANNOUNCES TWO NEW INNOVATIVE
INITIATIVES TO DEVELOP AND SUPPORT THE NEXT
GENERATION OF INDUSTRY LEADERS AND ARTISTS**

**Nation's Leading Voice Intersecting Artistic Excellence and
Advocacy Launches Latinx Dance Institute**

**Ballet Hispánico School of Dance Introduces *Pa'lante* Scholars, a
New Tuition-Free Professional Studies Program Beginning
September 2021**

New York, NY – Ballet Hispánico, the nation's largest Latinx dance organization recognized as one of America's Cultural Treasures, is doubling down on its long-standing commitment and promise of support to Latinx dancers and the BIPOC communities it serves with the launch of two new innovative initiatives, **Latinx Dance Institute** and ***Pa'lante* Scholars**.

"From its inception, 50 years ago, Ballet Hispánico's vision was centered in access and service to a field and a community. As I look to the future, I envision a stronger, deeper commitment to our Company dance artists, achieved by encouraging personal development and providing new tools to expand their profession and careers," Eduardo Vilaro, Artistic Director and CEO, Ballet Hispánico. "Now is the time for our field to develop the leadership necessary to scaffold the future with diversity, integrity, and equity. We now must manifest security and trajectory for our dancers who give so much to this organization, industry, and community."

The brainchild of Vilaro, Latinx Dance Institute was created as a result of an urgent need to nurture, develop and promote the next generation of dance leaders, providing them with the necessary skills and visibility to expand their careers. Catalytic funding and partnership for The Latinx Dance Institute is provided by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, who shares Ballet Hispánico's deep commitment to elevating the voices of Latinx leadership. Additional funding is made possible by MacKenzie Scott's recent transformative gift. Major funding for *Instituto Coreográfico* is provided by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the Mertz Gilmore Foundation. This project is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Vilaro has named Johan Rivera, Associate Artistic Director and Latinx Dance Institute Director, effective immediately. Rivera, an integral member of the Ballet Hispánico staff and former Company dancer, will be responsible for helping to launch Ballet Hispánico's thought leadership programming by curating the Company's *Instituto Coreográfico*, the Latinx Leaders Summit, and the organization's engaging *Diálogos* series. In his role as Associate Artistic Director, Rivera will be joining the artistic team and assisting Vilaro with the curational aspects of the Company.

Under Vilaro's leadership and Rivera's stewardship, Ballet Hispánico is building a complementary system that holistically serves Latinx artists, and other artists of color, providing them with a new network filled with opportunities from student to choreographer, and from administrator to leader.

Among the many significant components that comprise the **Latinx Dance Institute**, a few highlights include:

- ***Instituto Coreográfico***— *Instituto Coreográfico* invites audience members, dance leaders, presenters, and choreographers to respond, reflect, and enter into dialogue about dance and culture with an emerging choreographer through showings and panel discussions.
- ***Latinx Leaders Summit*** — Latinx Dance Institute will host *Latinx Leaders Summit*, a two-day event of forums, discussions, workshops, and networking. The summit is an extension of the first *Latinx Leaders Convening*, which Ballet Hispánico hosted in the fall of 2019. Latinx dance leaders will confer, discuss, and find ways of working to create more visibility of everyone's cultural contributions and offer new ways of assuring diversity in the dance field.
- ***Diálogos***—The Institute will also help inform Ballet Hispánico's insightful conversation series, *Diálogos*, and bring deeper awareness of the art form to Latinx communities and New York City. The *Diálogos* are free public panel discussions exploring the interconnectedness of arts, social justice, and Latinx culture. The Latinx Dance Institute will give Ballet Hispánico the opportunity to focus its public discussions on Latinx experience and unearth deeper conversations of the artistic process in order to better serve the community.

In keeping with Ballet Hispánico's steadfast commitment to building the future artists and leaders of the dance community, the organization also announced the launch of ***Pa'lante Scholars, Professional Studies Program***. The comprehensive initiative will provide 20 dancers between the ages of 18-25 years old, tuition-free scholarships. The program will run from September 6, 2021-May 22, 2022.

The *Pa'lante Scholars* initiative is designed to bridge the gap between the pre-professional and professional stages of a dancer's career. Ballet Hispánico is answering the need for more career centered programs that build artistry and leadership for our communities, without the financial burden often tied to professional development.

The program immerses selected dancers in a professional intensive focusing on artistry development through a full-day, comprehensive curriculum that includes, but is not limited to, daily ballet and contemporary technique classes, master classes in Spanish Dance, Screen, Latin Rhythms, floor work, modern dance, acting, and voice along with professional development seminars on such topics as nutrition, personal advocacy, financial planning and literacy, and other life/work skills coaching. While focusing on the professionalism needed to succeed in the dance world, dancers will have the opportunity to learn and perform select pieces from Ballet Hispánico's renowned Company repertory as well as original works created by accomplished choreographers in the field. Each dancer will have the opportunity to have individualized coaching and mentorship in rehearsals from the director of the program, as well as other members of the Ballet Hispánico artistic team including Vilaro.

Ballet Hispánico is now accepting video audition applications. The deadline to submit an audition video is Sunday, August 15, 2021.

For more information on Latinx Dance Institute and *Pa'lante Scholars*, please visit <https://www.ballethispanico.org/>.

About Ballet Hispánico

For fifty years Ballet Hispánico has been the leading voice intersecting artistic excellence and advocacy and is now the largest Latinx cultural organization in the United States and one of America's Cultural Treasures. Ballet Hispánico brings communities together to celebrate and explore Latino cultures through innovative dance productions, transformative dance training, and enduring community engagement experiences.

National Medal of Arts recipient Tina Ramirez founded Ballet Hispánico in 1970, at the height of the post-war civil rights movements. From its inception Ballet Hispánico focused on providing a haven for Black and Brown Latinx youth and families seeking artistic place and cultural sanctuary. By providing the space for Latinx dance and dancers to flourish, Ballet Hispánico uplifted marginalized emerging and working artists, which combined with the training, authenticity of voice, and power of representation, fueled the organization's roots and trajectory. In 2009, Ballet Hispánico welcomed Eduardo Vilaro as its Artistic

Director, ushering in a new era by inserting fresh energy to the company's founding values and leading Ballet Hispánico into an artistically vibrant future. Today, Ballet Hispánico's New York City headquarters house a School of Dance and state-of-the-art dance studios for its programs and the arts community. From its grassroots origins as a dance school and community-based performing arts troupe, for fifty years Ballet Hispánico has stood as a catalyst for social change.

Ballet Hispánico provides the physical home and cultural heart for Latinx dance in the United States. Ballet Hispánico has developed a robust public presence across its three main programs: its Company, School of Dance, and Community Arts Partnerships.

Through its exemplary artistry, distinguished training program, and deep-rooted community engagement efforts Ballet Hispánico champions and amplifies underrepresented voices in the field. For fifty years Ballet Hispánico has provided a place of honor for the omitted, overlooked, and oppressed. As it looks to the next fifty years and beyond, Ballet Hispánico seeks to empower, and give agency to, the Latinx experience and those individuals within it.

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