

# The New York Times

VOWS

## Falling Into Each Other's Arms, a Step at a Time

By Tammy La Gorce

Melissa Fernandez and Lyvan Verdecia, performers with Ballet Hispánico, share a life on and off the dance floor.



Melissa Fernandez and Lyvan Verdecia met through social media in the spring of 2015. She was living in Harlem and had been performing for three years with [Ballet](#)

[Hispánico](#), a contemporary dance company in Manhattan. He was in Miami working as a day laborer, hopping on trucks bound for South Florida fields in need of harvesting. He also worked as a roofer and at an industrial laundromat in Miami.

“I didn’t have anything, anything, anything,” said Mr. Verdecia, 25, a dancer who had left his home in Cuba in search of a new life.

A similar spirit suffused their Aug. 1 wedding at the Cuban resort Club Habana. Ms. Fernandez, in a flowing, strapless white dress by [Tatyana Merenyuk](#), the designer of her gown for the 2019 Ballet Hispánico gala, walked down an outdoor, Spanish-tiled aisle with her father to a simple altar dotted with rose petals. Her four bridesmaids wore teal and emerald green dresses. Mr. Verdecia wore a royal blue suit, and his three groomsmen wore guayabera shirts and khaki pants. About 80 guests from both sides of the Florida straits watched as AnaMaria Correa, a former administrator at Ballet Hispánico who was ordained by the Universal Life Church, officiated in a ceremony conducted in Spanish.

“Melissa and Lyvan come to this day as friends and partners in life, already united in their hearts and souls,” she said. After the couple exchanged rings, they held hands and made a promise to each other. “From this day on,” they repeated together, “You will walk with me. My heart is your refuge and my arms are your home.”



The newlyweds surrounded by family and friends. Credit Lisette Poole for The New York Times

*Lisette Poole contributed reporting from Havana.*

