

JUNE 12, 2024

Ballet Hispánico Brings The Music Center's 2023-2024 Dance Season to a Thunderous Close with the L.A. Premiere of Explosive *Doña Perón*

The New York-Based Company Marks Its First Visit to The Music Center in 15 Years; Plus, Following Her Celebrated U.S. Premiere of 'Frida' in 2023, Choreographer Annabelle Lopez Ochoa Returns to L.A.'s Performing Arts Destination with New Dance Work Portraying Argentina's Infamous First Lady

LOS ANGELES (June 12, 2024) -- The Music Center's 2023-2024 dance season of *Glorya Kaufman Presents Dance at The Music Center* finishes dramatically with the L.A. premiere of Ballet Hispánico's *Doña Perón*--a modern ballet about the infamous Argentinian icon Eva "Evita" Perón--at The Music Center's Dorothy Chandler Pavilion from July 12-14, 2024. An explosive portrait of one of the most recognizable and controversial women in Argentinian history, *Doña Perón* was created by choreographer Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, who captivated Music Center audiences in 2023 with the lauded U.S. premiere of *Frida* performed by Dutch National Ballet. *Doña Perón* is Ochoa's first full-length work for the New York-based Ballet Hispánico and marks the company's first visit to The Music Center in 15 years.

"We are ecstatic to finish our 21st season of *Glorya Kaufman Presents Dance at The Music Center* with the narrative of an iconic Latina figure by a Latina choreographer," said Rachel S. Moore, president and CEO of The Music Center. "This has been one of our boldest seasons yet, featuring several works about strong, dynamic women created by strong, incredibly talented women. In July, we end another extraordinary dance season with one of America's cultural treasures--Ballet Hispánico--which has joined forces with the celebrated choreographer Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, whose works we will be presenting for the third time. *Doña Perón* will captivate Angelenos both through the story it tells and the dancers who bring this story to life!"

The illegitimate daughter of a wealthy landowner, Evita Perón concealed her past as she rose in the ranks from dancehall performer to Argentina's First Lady before her untimely death at the age of 33. *Doña Perón* brings to light the extremes of power at the forefront of Evita's life; her work as an activist and advocate for Argentina's women and working-class raised skepticism as she indulged in the opulence of a high-class life. Was she a voice for the people or a deceitful actress? Ochoa explores these diverging legacies and more, with Artistic Collaborator Nancy Meckler and Composer Peter Salem--the same team whom Ochoa collaborated with for Dutch National Ballet's *Frida*. "Ballet Hispánico uses every element of its artistry at its disposal," writes *Broadway World*. "This isn't just a performance--it is an entire universe." *The New York Times* adds: "In this banding together, you see not just a riveting story but a company having reached a new horizon."

"I am delighted to bring Ballet Hispánico to The Music Center, one of the world's greatest venues, at the iconic Dorothy Chandler Pavilion," said Eduardo Vilaro, artistic director and CEO of Ballet Hispánico. "Now in my 15th year as artistic director, I couldn't be more pleased that we return to introduce Los Angeles to our amazing artists with Annabelle Lopez Ochoa's tour de force, *Doña Perón*."

"Evita Peron is a complex woman. Devoid of judgment, we decided to dig deep into her past and the childhood events that shaped her hunger for fame, her thirst for recognition, and her fight for acceptance," adds Ochoa. "She gave a voice to the underdog and did it with such passion and grit that some of her choices were controversial. As a female choreographer, I want to give female dancers interesting and complex roles to tackle. It is a challenge but also gratifying to be able to show all of these facets in *Doña Perón*."

Further expressing the facets and inspired by Ballet Hispánico's *Diálogos* signature conversation series exploring the interconnections of the arts, social justice and Latino cultures, The Music Center will present *Diálogos* on Thursday, July 11, 2024, from 7:00-9:00 p.m., in the outdoor stage of LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes, one of the foremost local cultural hubs dedicated to celebrating Latino culture through exhibitions, music, dance, culinary arts and storytelling experiences. The free, family-friendly event in Downtown L.A. will focus on the embodied roots of Afro-Latinidad in movement, in a public discussion led by Ballet Hispánico's Artistic Director and CEO Eduardo Vilaro and L.A.-based professional Peruvian folk dance artist Nadia Calmet, paired with performances by Ballet Hispánico dancers and local

musicians. Guests are welcome to bring folding chairs, blankets and a picnic. Doors open at 7:00 p.m.; the program begins at 7:30 p.m.

Dance stemming from Afro-Latino roots continues on Friday, July 12, 2024, at *The Music Center's Dance DTLA*, Los Angeles' largest free outdoor summer dance party, which takes place on Jerry Moss Plaza at The Music Center from 7:00-11:00 p.m. The evening will highlight Reggaeton, beginning with easy-to-follow lessons led by teaching artist Dennis Guzman, and dancing into the night.

For over 50 years, Ballet Hispánico has been the leading voice in intersecting artistic excellence and advocacy and is now the largest Latino cultural organization in the United States. The company 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 has focused on providing a haven for Black and Brown Latino youth and families seeking an artistic place and cultural sanctuary. By providing the space for Latino dance and dancers to flourish, Ballet Hispánico uplifts marginalized emerging and working artists, which, combined with the training, authenticity of voice and power of representation, fuels the company'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 houses 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, Ballet Hispánico has stood as a catalyst for social change for over five decades. Ballet Hispánico provides the physical home and cultural heart for Latino dance in the United States.

Tickets to Ballet Hispánico's *Doña Perón* are available for purchase now by visiting musiccenter.org/ballethispanico or by calling (213) 972-0711.

For the latest news about The Music Center's *Diálogos*, follow The Music Center on social @musiccenterla.

For information on *The Music Center's Dance DTLA*, visit musiccenter.org/dancedtla.

CALENDAR LISTING - BALLET HISPÁNICO

Ballet Hispánico

The Music Center's Dorothy Chandler Pavilion

Friday, July 12, 2024, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, July 13, 2024, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, July 14, 2024, 2:00 p.m.

Live musicians

Last company appearance at The Music Center: 2009

Doña Perón

Choreography: Annabelle Lopez Ochoa

Artistic Collaborator: Nancy Meckler

Music: Peter Salem

Lighting, Set and Video Design: Christopher Ash

Costume Design: Mark Eric

Ballet Hispánico's *Doña Perón* is an explosive portrait of one of the most recognizable and controversial women in Argentinian history: Eva "Evita" Perón. The illegitimate daughter of a wealthy landowner, Evita concealed her past as she rose in the ranks from dancehall performer to Argentina's First Lady--all before her untimely death at the age of 33. *Doña Perón* brings to light the extremes of power at the forefront of Evita's life. Her work as an activist and advocate for Argentina's women and working class raised skepticism as she indulged in the opulence of a high-class life. Was she a voice for the people or a deceitful actress? Colombian-Belgian choreographer Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, who choreographed *Frida* for Dutch National Ballet in the 20th dance season of *Glorya Kaufman Presents Dance at The Music Center*, explores these diverging legacies. *Doña Perón*, described as a "milestone" and "breakthrough" by *The*

New York Times, marks Ochoa's first full-length work for Ballet Hispánico and reclaims the narrative of an iconic Latina

CALENDAR LISTING - DIÁLOGOS COMMUNITY EVENT

The Music Center's *Diálogos*

LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes

501 North Main Street

Los Angeles 90012

Thursday, July 11, 2024, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Inspired by Ballet Hispánico's *Diálogos* signature conversation series exploring the interconnections of the arts, social justice and Latino cultures, The Music Center will present "diálogos"--a public discussion. The free event in Downtown L.A., to be held in LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes' outdoor stage, will focus on the embodied roots of Afro-Latinidad in movement, led by Ballet Hispanico's Artistic Director Eduardo Vilaro and L.A.-based professional Peruvian folk dance artist Nadia Calmet, paired with performances by Ballet Hispánico dancers and local musicians. Guests are welcome to bring folding chairs, blankets and a picnic. Doors open at 7:00 p.m.; program begins at 7:30 p.m.

ABOUT GLORIA KAUFMAN PRESENTS DANCE AT THE MUSIC CENTER

Gloria Kaufman Presents Dance at The Music Center, a TMC Arts program, is one of the leading presenters of dance on the West Coast. The celebrated series offers significant works by prestigious ballet and contemporary dance artists from around the world. Now entering its 21st year, Dance at The Music Center is a powerful force, supporting new works and artists-in-residence projects by today's most influential companies and choreographers. Performances are complemented by special experiences for both ticket buyers and the public with opportunities to learn more about the choreography and the themes explored, including panels, master classes, dance film festivals, interactive experiences and more. The 21st season of *Gloria Kaufman Presents Dance at The Music Center* is generously supported by Gloria Kaufman Foundation, Center Dance Arts, Dorothy B. Chandler Program Fund and Elisabeth Katte Harris.

ABOUT CENTER DANCE ARTS

Center Dance Arts is a dynamic community of patrons with a passion for dance. Center Dance Arts members bring dance to life in Los Angeles by promoting The Music Center's world-class dance performances, extensive educational outreach and free and low-cost community experiences so all may experience the transformative power of dance. For more information, visit musiccenter.org/cda.

ABOUT THE MUSIC CENTER

The Music Center convenes artists, communities and ideas with the goal of deepening the cultural lives of every resident in Los Angeles County. Celebrating its 60th year in 2024, the \$70 million non-profit performing arts organization has two divisions: TMC Arts and TMC Ops. TMC Arts, The Music Center's programming engine, provides year-round programming inside The Music Center's four theatres, on Jerry Moss Plaza, outside at Gloria Molina Grand Park--a 12-acre adjacent green space--in schools and other locations all over Los Angeles County. TMC Arts presents world-class dance with *Gloria Kaufman Presents Dance at The Music Center*, free and low-cost public concerts and events, as well as live and digital K-12 arts education programs, workshops, performances, interactive experiences and special events. TMC Ops manages the theatres, the Plaza and Gloria Molina Grand Park, which comprise \$2 billion in county assets, on behalf of the County of Los Angeles. The Music Center is also home to four renowned resident companies--Center Theatre Group, Los Angeles Master Chorale, LA Opera and LA Phil. For more information, visit musiccenter.org. Follow The Music Center on social media @MusicCenterLA.

ABOUT BALLET HISPÁNICO

Ballet Hispánico was founded on the principle that everyone deserves dance, quality dance training and innovative performances. In creating the company in 1970, Tina Ramirez shattered a glass ceiling--challenging iconic representations and exposing the joy and celebration to be found in Latindad. Despite its humble origins, Ballet Hispánico immediately served as a catalyst for people in the Latine/x/Hispanic community, especially for Latino youth, to follow their dreams in the cultural world.

Today, as the largest Latino cultural organization in the United States and one of America's Cultural Treasures, Ballet Hispánico's three main programs, the Company, School of Dance, and Community Arts Partnerships bring together communities to celebrate the ever growing and multifaceted Hispanic diasporas. Ballet Hispánico's New York City headquarters provide the space and cultural heart for Latinx dance in the United States. It is a space that expands on Ramirez's original vision by providing our community the ability to train through dedicated scholarship opportunities, exceptional dance training, inclusive cultural dialogues, and exemplary performances. No matter their background or

identity, Ballet Hispánico welcomes and serves all, breaking stereotypes and celebrating the beauty and diversity of Hispanic cultures through dance. Eduardo Vilaro joined Ballet Hispánico as a Company dancer in 1985 and became the organization's second Artistic Director in 2009 and CEO in 2015. Vilaro is building on Ramirez's impact: expanding and deepening a legacy of showcasing the depth of our cultures, and exposing the intersectionality found in the Hispanic diasporas by focusing on nurturing Hispanic leaders. Through programs like the Instituto Coreográfico, the Latinx Leaders Summit and Diálogos, Ballet Hispánico has become a center for artistic leadership development. As an immigrant himself, Mr. Vilaro's vision of inclusion and cultural revelation has elevated a community from the margins to its place ingrained at the center of the American cultural landscape.

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