Audiences from all walks of life will be thrilled and inspired by this beautiful performance from Ballet Hispánico, America’s leading Latinx dance company. This widely-acclaimed organization is known for celebrating the diversity of Latinx culture through a fusion of classical, Latin and contemporary dance, all powered by theatricality, athleticism and passion.

The performance will feature a mix of energetic and unexpected choreography, lively and rhythmic music, vibrant costumes, animated staging and intermittent narration. The audience will be treated on a journey through the styles, origins and meanings of some of the most iconic Latin American and Spanish dance traditions, as seen through the eyes of contemporary choreographers. Ballet Hispánico's dancers are known to invite audience interaction, moving the party from the stage to the seats. Ballet Hispánico’s dancers revel in sharing their passion for the mission of the organization and are eloquent teachers as well as amazing performers. At many shows, they interact directly with their young audiences, answering questions about their dance careers, choreography, auditions and the hard work and joy that go into creating these performances.

Ballet Hispánico, which is nearly 50 years old, has performed for more than three million people, throughout 11 countries, and on three continents. Ballet Hispánico’s choreographers represent a wide range of nationalities from across the Spanish and Caribbean diaspora. Artists from Venezuela, Cuba, Trinidad, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Spain, Brazil, Argentina and Colombia have created works for the company. Founded by National Medal of Arts recipient Tina Ramirez, Ballet Hispánico has been led since 2009 by Artistic Director & CEO Eduardo Vilaro, who has infused the organization’s legacy with a bold and eclectic brand of contemporary dance that reflects America’s changing cultural landscape.

Ballet Hispánico brings the joy of dance and Hispanic culture to the world through performances by its internationally acclaimed Company, its innovative dance training programs, and community education activities that inspire individuals of all ages and backgrounds.

Eduardo Vilaro, the current artistic director of Ballet Hispánico, was born in Cuba and moved to New York when he was six years old.

He started at Ballet Hispánico in 1985 as a dancer and teacher. He went onto establish Luna Negra Dance Theater in Chicago, where he also served as artistic director. During his 10-year tenure there, he created more than 20 ballet pieces and was commissioned by the Ravinia Festival, the Chicago Sinfonietta, the Grant Park Festival, the Lexington Ballet and the Chicago Symphony. In August 2009, he came back to Ballet Hispánico to take the helm as artistic director. In 2013, he also assumed the role of the Company’s CEO. He has been recognized often for his work, with citations including a Ruth Page Award for choreography, a Bronx Walk of Fame designation, and HOMBRE Magazine’s 2017 Arts & Culture Trailblazer of the Year.

Tina Ramirez, founder of Ballet Hispánico, was born in Venezuela. Her father was a Mexican bullfighter. She immigrated to the United States when she was only seven years old. As a dancer in New York City, she attended classes offered by teachers such as Lola Bravo, Alexandra Danilova and Anna Sokolow. She danced with the Federico Rey Dance Company and also performed on Broadway in productions including as Kismet and Lute Song. She also appeared in a television production of Man of La Mancha.

She founded Ballet Hispánico in 1970 after training younger dancers in New York. During her time as the company’s artistic director, she had more than 45 choreographers create in excess of 70 works for the company. Some of these choreographers are world-renowned artists in dance.

Ramirez has received numerous awards, including the prestigious Dance Magazine Award, Hispanic Heritage Award, Governor’s Arts Award, and the 2005 National Medal of Arts, which she received from then President George W. Bush at the White House.
**Inspired ideas in the classroom**

**Teacher Focus**

**Prepare for the performance**
- Introduce Ballet Hispánico to your students by watching the YouTube link on Ballet Hispánico.
- If you have 15 minutes... Start a conversation with students about dance and Latin culture.
- If you have 45 minutes... (Above task and...) Ask the students if they have any questions for the dancers and create a list of questions.
- If you have 45 minutes... (Above task and...) Help your students write letters to the dancers of Ballet Hispánico.
- Content link: Meet the Dance Company: Ballet Hispánico: youtube.be/xwEvfPjy9e

**Experience the performance**
- As students watch the performance, encourage them to notice the movement and music used in choreography. Ask students if they recognize any familiar gestures, movements or rhythms. Explain the term choreography and choreographer from the vocabulary section of this Teacher Resource Guide, page 8.
- As you watch the performance, think about the statement from the video: "When you think about it and look at the choreography there is a thread and the thread is each choreographer’s passion for their culture. You’re going to find yourself in there."
- Do you notice any familiar gestures or movements on stage? Notice if your body starts to respond to the music by tapping your feet and moving in your seat. How do you feel while you are watching the performance? Notice your own facial expression as you watch the performance.

**Reflect, respond and read**
- Encourage your students to reflect on the following statement from the video: "We [the dancers] are all trained in classical and contemporary ballet but yet we fuse them with Salsa, Merengue, Cha Cha Cha, Mambo and a little bit of Samba." Ask students if they know any of these Latin dances. Have students read about Latin American and Spanish dances in the Vocabulary section of the Teacher Resource Guide.
- Read about Latin American and Spanish dances in the Vocabulary section of the Teacher Resource Guide.
- After watching the performance, did you notice the different Latin dances? What body parts were used the most? What other styles of dance did you notice? How did the different styles of dance compare to each other? What did the dancer’s facial expressions say to you? How did the music help you understand the meanings of the dances? Complete Activity Sheet 1 by matching the dances to their country of origin.

**Focus**
- Help students understand the roots of Latin American dance and how Latin dance is a result of blending different styles. Explain to students the concept of fusion, which is to blend or mix something together to make something new.
- Read the Cultural Connections section of this Teacher Resource Guide, page 7. Have you ever blended two or more things together to make something new? Think about what new dances or music you could create by combining movements or beats from contrasting styles. Have you ever listened to music that has a steady slow beat and a fast rhythm? How could you create a new dance with someone who is very different than you? How would you compromise to blend movements together? Consider how you would collaborate with someone to create music from two different rhythms or patterns of sounds.

**Originate**
- Discuss with your students the art of collaboration. Explain how Ballet Hispánico embraces cultures from indigenous, African and European communities to create the fusion that is Latin dance. Encourage your students to explore and create fusions from their own culture and other traditions.
- Collaborate with another student to create a new dance. To create a new dance, choose a movement from your culture or a gesture that you do frequently. Repeat the movement at least three times, three different ways. Teach your movement to your partner. Next, your partner creates a movement of their own representing their culture or a gesture from that everyday life. Repeat the movement three times, three different ways. Put both movements together to create a new dance.

**Rehearse**
- Give students time to collaborate with each other and create. Encourage students to emulate the dancers of Ballet Hispánico while representing who they are. Explain the importance of feedback and revision. Allow students time to give constructive criticism and feedback to revise their dances. Solicit the help of performing arts teachers in your school to help students with their presentations.
- Practice your new dance with your partner. Explain to each other the origins of your movements. Tell your partner why you picked those particular movements. Practice the dance using different levels, directions and rhythms. Explore performing your dance slowly or fast. Solicit classmates to accompany your dance with their own rhythms. Practice your new dance with accompaniment from classmates. Decide on which accompaniment you’d like to use. Share your dance with another group and ask for feedback. Based on the feedback, revise your dance and make sure it is performance ready. Decide on a title for your collaborative dance. Practice, practice, practice!

**Make magic**
- Make a presentation area in the classroom. Remind students of audience etiquette as they watch their classmates perform. Invite other classes and administration into your class to observe your students’ presentations. Encourage your students to talk about their creative and collaborative process.
- Present your collaborative dance to your audience. Explain how you and your partner collaborated to create an entirely new dance. Be proud of your culture and the work you did with your partner.

**Student Activity**

- After watching the video on Ballet Hispánico, discuss what you know about dance and Latinx culture.
- Read the Cultural Connections section of this Teacher Resource Guide, page 7. Have you ever blended two or more things together to make something new? Think about what new dances or music you could create by combining movements or beats from contrasting styles. Have you ever listened to music that has a steady slow beat and a fast rhythm? How could you create a new dance with someone who is very different than you? How would you compromise to blend movements together? Consider how you would collaborate with someone to create music from two different rhythms or patterns of sounds.

**NJ Student Learning Standards**

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</tbody>
</table>
1.1 The Creative Process
All students will demonstrate an understanding of the elements and principles that govern the creation of works of art in dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

1.2 History of Arts & Culture
All students will understand the role, development, and influence of the arts throughout history and across cultures.

1.3 Performance
All students will synthesize skills, media, methods and technologies that are appropriate to creating, performing and/or presenting works of art in dance, music, theatre and visual art.

1.4 Aesthetic Response & Critique
All students will demonstrate and apply an understanding of arts philosophies, judgment and analysis to works of art in dance, music, theatre and visual art.

National Arts Standards

New Jersey Student Learning Standards

English Language Arts

NJSLSA.R.1.
Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences and relevant connections from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

NJSLSA.R.7.
Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

NJSLSA.W.4.
Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

NJSLSA.SL.1.
Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

NJSLSA.SL.2.
Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

NJSLSA.SL.4.
Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Social Studies

6.2 World History/Global Studies
All students will acquire the knowledge and skills to think analytically and systematically about how past interactions of people, cultures, and the environment affect issues across time and cultures. Such knowledge and skills enable students to make informed decisions as socially and ethically responsible world citizens in the 21st century.

Cultural Connections

The Roots of Latin American Dance
Dance is a medium that breaks down barriers, allowing viewers of any culture or language full access to the performance. Instrumental music provides the background, and the performers communicate not with words but with movement, body language, facial expressions and gestures. This allows everyone, of any age, to understand and enjoy the “story” being told onstage.

Ballet Hispánico’s performances demonstrate the cross-cultural appeal of Latin American and Spanish dance to audiences of all ages. The emotion of the dancers and the interactions between them are made clear as they expressively interpret the music.

Ballet Hispánico dance styles are the result of the inventive melding of contemporary dance, ballet and of course Latin American, Spanish and African dances. But Latin American dance is itself the result of a fusion of traditions, created when people from indigenous, African and European communities came together centuries ago.

Indigenous Roots
When conquistadors from Spain and Portugal came to the New World in the late 16th and early 17th Century, they stumbled upon empires with elaborate social systems and complex religious practices. In many of these Pre-Columbian communities in Americas, as explorers noted in their writings at the time, dance was an integral part of life. Many of these original dances of the indigenous peoples of the Americas were vehicles for storytelling, religious ceremonial rites and community bonding. Among the Aztecs, for example, dancers made movements that were controlled and precise and joined other people in massive, ritualistic dance groups. Catholic priests who came to the Americas with Europe’s conquering armies accommodated or co-opted indigenous religious practice by allowing them to blend with Catholic traditions; feast days that coincided with special events on ancient indigenous calendars were blended into a single celebration, and saints merged with indigenous gods and goddesses. In this way, ancient New World dances became part of Catholic practice.

This mixing of traditions is still seen today in ceremonies honoring some saints, such as the feast day of St. James (July 25th) which is celebrated in many Spanish-speaking countries in the Americas. On this day, people dance in costume to tell stories—and echo of indigenous rituals, according to scholars.

African Influence
While they were engaged in the brutal conquest of indigenous peoples in the New World, Europeans also enslaved Africans and brought them across the Atlantic to work plantations in the Americas. During the era of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, from the 16th to late 19th century, some 10 to 12 million African people were forced into bondage. The vast majority of those who were enslaved, almost 5 million, went to Brazil. Africans brought their own unique dances to the Americas; the incorporation of these traditions was a pivotal step in the evolution of Latin American dance. African dances introduced to the New World were characterized by energetic hip thrusts, body parts moving in contrasting gestures, shoulder shimmies and exuberant spontaneity. Like the indigenous population of the Americas, Africans used dance in religious ceremonies, to tell stories and to celebrate.

The impact of African culture is evident in the complex, rhythmic and sensual forms of Latin American dance. Dances such as the samba, salsa, mambo, bachata, merengue and other Latin dance forms incorporate the hip thrusts and rolls, isolated shoulder movements and squares that are clear indications of an African influence in their evolution, according to historians.

European Influence
Colonists from Europe brought to the New World courtly social dances such as the elegant minuet and la volta, characterized by intricate steps and stylized hand movements—and by the separation of the dancers, who move in tandem without touching each other. The most popular Latin American dances, however, involve couples touching in a sensual embrace. These evolved from the introduction of the European waltz and polka. In these dances, dancing couples did touch—a practice considered scandalous by the Catholic Church. Nevertheless, these dances swept aristocratic circles in Latin America and then filtered to the lower classes. Black Latinxs took these dances and gave them their own flair with hip thrusts and rolls, isolated shoulder movements and squares that are more sensuous, flirtatious feeling.
Ballet
A highly formalized dance form with origins in Renaissance Europe. The dance is characterized by precision, grace, and formalized gestures and steps. It can be academic in nature, having been codified over centuries by various dance masters and teachers. Many educators in dance, whatever dance form they perform regularly, believe that a background in ballet is an essential part of a dancer’s training. The word “ballet” can also mean a company of ballet dancers.

Choreography
The art of creating dance movements or pieces. Also, the composition of new dance arrangements.

Contemporary or modern dance
These two terms are used interchangeably, but they can mean different things depending on context. Modern dance usually refers to dance that rebelled against the rigid forms of ballet and was more stripped down and elemental. This type of dance arose in Europe in the late 19th and early 20th Century. The famous artist Martha Graham exemplified modern dance. Contemporary dance refers to dance styles that are evolving right now, and are usually a mixture of different styles. Contemporary dance can draw from jazz, tap, ballet, breakdancing and other forms.

Costume
Special clothing worn by performers to help make the performance more dramatic, to fit the music style or the story being staged. Costumes can be historical in nature, utilizing items such as corsets and gowns. Or costumes can be modern in appearance and flowing in order to emphasize a performer’s movement on stage.

Dance captain
One of the dancers of a dance company who is the leader. He or she guides other dancers through the steps and makes sure their movements match the planned choreography.

Dance company
A group of selected dancers who consistently rehearse and perform together as a unit.

Latin America
The countries south of the United States where Spanish, Portuguese or French is spoken, including most of South America and Central America. Mexico, Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Haiti (both of which are located on the island of Hispaniola.) The term is also used to broadly describe everything south of the United States border, which also includes Dutch and English speaking parts of the Caribbean, Indigenous languages such as Mayan are also spoken in parts of Latin America.

Latinx/Hispanic
These two terms are used interchangeably but they technically mean two different things. Hispanic refers to people who speak Spanish or who come from a country that was formerly colonized by Spain. Latinx refers to people who come from Latin America: Central America, South America, Mexico and the Caribbean. The languages spoken in these regions are Romance languages: Spanish, Portuguese and French. All three languages evolved from ancient Latin. The “x” in Latinx denotes gender neutrality.

The New World
Another name for North, South and Central America and the Caribbean. Used by European colonizers in describing the Americas during the late 15th and early 16th centuries. Another name that can be used is the Americas.

Pre-Columbian
A term that usually refers to a type of culture or indigenous (native) group that existed before Spanish conquistadors colonized the Americas.

Some Popular Latin American and Spanish Dances

Bachata
A dance from the Dominican Republic. Couples in an upright posture move with their feet in small steps. Women roll their hips while dancing this form. Dancers move back and forth in a line. This dance does not incorporate many turns, particularly when compared to salsa.

Flamenco
Dance from the Andalusia region, located in the south of Spain. Has roots in the Moorish, Jewish and Gypsy communities of Spain. Dancers would clap their hands, twist and turn their wrists and hands in sinuous forms, and vigorously tap their feet. Female dancers typically wear billowing gowns that would emphasize their movement. Some dancers used finger cymbals to punctuate their performance.

Mambo
A Cuban dance characterized by couples, standing mostly upright, stepping back and forth with their arms joined like in a Waltz. Some variations feature isolated shoulder rolls, bending at the waist and with women twirling in circles, making for a flirty performance. Ballroom style can be frenetic compared to mambo danced in the Cuban countryside.

Salsa
Relatively recent dance with roots in Cuba and Puerto Rico. Couples keep their body mostly upright and exuberantly dance in concentric patterns with twirling steps. The dance incorporates many twists and turns, punctuated at times with one of the dancers dipping backwards.

Samba
A dance originally from Brazil. People dance samba by rocking and twirling their hips and taking rapid rhythmic steps. The dance can be done with a partner or solo. Often seen during Carnivals in Brazil where people wear elaborate costumes and headdresses as they dance.

Tango
A popular, romantic dance from Argentina that features couples dancing close together in an embrace, long sensual steps, dramatic gestures and dips. Professional ballroom dancers perform the tango with heaps of emotional expression and sensual flair.
resources

Websites
Ballet Hispánico
ballethispanico.org
Ballet Hispánico on PBS
pbs.org/program/ballet-hispánico/
Ballet Hispánico on Google Arts and Culture
artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/BAISVUKcHkLQA
#WomanOfInterest: Tina Ramirez — Spreading Dance and Culture to the World
starquestdance.com/tina-ramirez-dancer/
Tina Ramirez Receives National Medal of Arts
arts.gov/honors/medals/tina-ramirez
I Am Woman: Tina Ramirez
#PersonOfChange: An Interview with Ballet Hispánico’s Eduardo Vilaro
medium.com/@AntonioMinino/personofchange-an-interview-with-ballet-hispánico-eduardo-vilaro-28e5f5236e83
Eduardo Vilaro - Exploring Latino Identity with Ballet Hispánico
Dance History - Dance Origins
dancefacts.net/dance-history/
A Brief History of Ballet
atlantaballet.com/resources/brief-history-of-ballet
Introduction to Modern Dance
danceus.org/modern-dance/introduction-to-modern-dance/
Origins of Latin Dance
arthurmurraystudios.com/the-origins-of-latin-dance/
10 Most Popular Latin Dance Styles in the World
flodance.com/articles/5066991-10-most-popular-latin-dance-styles-in-the-world
Latin dance styles from different countries
danceboulevard.com/tag/different-types-of-latin-dance/

Videos
Meet the Dance Company: Ballet Hispánico
youtube.com/watch?v=4uxvErZjJi0
Under a Minute: Ballet Hispánico’s Eduardo Vilaro
youtube.com/watch?v=OOk5C2EiJKo
Ballet Hispánico - A Latino Voice through Movement
youtube.com/watch?v=LE05QE0Eeog
Ballet Hispánico Performance Highlight Reel
youtube.com/watch?v=pDyP30IOjAg
Evolution of Latin Dance
youtube.com/watch?v=qag6OJB_NpA
Salsa Dancing Miami Beach
youtube.com/watch?v=ZEq54f1q0Xs
Cuban Mambo danced by professional dancers in Havana, Cuba
youtube.com/watch?v=OqIbAxwMrU
Bachata Dance
youtube.com/watch?v=GYZ2E5ex6XU
Tango Dance
youtube.com/watch?v=xAaPrOYiQWc
Flamenco Dance, Seville, Spain
youtube.com/watch?v=xNhtFv_S3W7A

Books
Jose! Born to Dance: The Story of Jose Limon
by Susanna Reich and Raul Colon
Under the Mambo Moon
by Julie Durango
Marisol
by Gary Soto
A Kid’s Guide to Latino History
by Valerie Petrillo
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For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call our education sales team at 973.353.7058 or email artseducation@njpac.org. Visit njpac.org/education.

In-School Residencies: Drama + Social Studies. Dance + Math. It all adds up in NJPAC's In-School Residencies in which professional teaching artists partner with educators to bring the arts into the classroom. Each 7- to 10-week program culminates in a student performance or an interactive family workshop. All programs address state and national standards. NJPAC is the regional provider in New Jersey for international arts programs like the NJ Wolf Trap Program and Dancing Classrooms Global.

Assemblies: NJPAC presents engaging school assembly programs that are presented by professional artists that invite students into the enchanting world of live performance. NJPAC's assembly series promotes cultural awareness and invigorates learning by presenting works that are connected to your school's curriculum.

Professional Development: NJPAC Professional Development engages classroom teachers, arts specialists and teaching artists as integrated teams that combine arts pedagogy, content, classroom management and social behavioral strategies to ignite and inspire arts-rich classrooms. Working as a team empowers teachers to share practice and strategy. Our goal is to inspire artistic and intellectual capacities in students, building competence and confidence in both students and teachers.

Saturday Programs: NJPAC's Saturday programs are geared towards students at every level—from those who dream of starring on Broadway to those who are still learning their scales. Students work with professional artists to build technique and develop their own creative style in film, contemporary modern dance, hip hop, jazz, musical theater and symphonic band.

Summer Programs: Want to begin to explore the arts? Or immerse yourself in the study of one genre? Then join us at NJPAC next summer in one of seven programs that spark the creativity in every child through the study of music, dance and theater.

The arts in your school

Teacher Resource Guide Committee
Diana Crum, Erika Hicks, Megan Namnama, Susan Pope, Nadiyah Smith-McCoy, Andrea Seigel
Sharon Adarlo, Teacher Resource Guide Writer

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