



EDUCATORS GUIDE

Ballet Hispánico



This guide is geared toward teachers of grades 5 - 7.

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Francesca Galluccio-Steele and Phil Steele



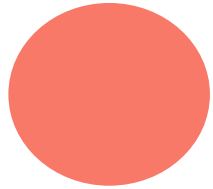
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About This Guide

Use this guide to help your students anticipate, investigate, and reflect upon your live performance experience. This guide is geared toward teachers of grades 5 - 7.

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The great thing about the arts is that they can often evolve to meet their context. That means that many of the activities shared are flexible to a lot of different contexts depending on how you choose to frame them in your class. We know that you all are experts on your classroom and your students and so we invite you to use these lessons and activities as guideposts and adapt them to fit your classroom management style, range of student ability, and time constraints.

LEARNING CONNECTIONS

Visual and Performing Arts (Dance)
English Language Arts (Reading, Speaking and Listening)
Social Studies (Latine History and Culture, Dance history)
Social Emotional Learning (Self-Awareness, Self-Management,
Relationship Skills, Social Awareness)
21st Century Skills (Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration, Communication)

LEARNING STANDARDS ICON KEY



Educators, we invite you to share with us what you did in your classroom around this guide or the production. You can email eschildkret@portlandovations.org or reach us via [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#).

We want to hear and see what great learning is happening in your classrooms.

Introducing the Performance

It is often helpful to share some context with your students before they attend a live performance. Read below for more information on Ballet Hispánico and the performance you're coming to see.

About the Performance

Ballet Hispánico's School-Time Performance contains excerpts of four pieces from their repertoire, *Danse Creole* (1976) choreographed by Geoffrey Holder, *Club Havana* (2000) choreographed by Pedro Ruiz, *Línea Recta* (2016) choreographed by Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, and *Con Brazos Abiertos* (2017) choreographed by Michelle Manzanales.

Danse Creole

Danse Creole was inspired by the folk dances of Trinidad, where choreographer Geoffrey Holder was born. Trinidadian folklore developed from a mix of West African roots, European influences, and the religious traditions, legends, and spiritual healing practices of the indigenous Taino. Most of Holder's work reflects the context of the Caribbean Island, presenting a unique blend of cultures that developed throughout the country's history of colonialization and the intersection of Indigenous, Spanish, West African, East Indian, and French cultural influences.

In *Danse Creole*, these cultural influences can be seen in the way the dance is performed by couples in a poised manner—reminiscent of a quadrille—and in the percussive rhythm, steps, gestures, hip movements, and expressive spine articulations drawn from West African music and dance. The choreography also incorporates other cultural references, including East Indian head isolations. Like the island it reflects, a mosaic of ethnicities and cultural layers shaped the creation of this work.

Dog



Dancers of Ballet Hispánico, photo by Erin Baiano

Club Havana

Latin dance forms first came to the United States in the 1920s and 30s, when Cuban immigrants introduced the conga and rumba. In the late 1940s through the 1950s, the mambo and cha-cha were added to the mix, creating a fever all over New York. Cuban choreographer, Pedro Ruiz has drawn on all this history, together with ballroom and contemporary dance, to create this swirling party. Ruiz's vibrant choreography brings the intoxicating rhythms of the conga, rumba, mambo, and cha-cha to life in an artistic representation of the famous "Club Havana."

Línea Recta

Colombian-Belgian choreographer Annabelle Lopez Ochoa's motivation for creating Línea Recta originated from the intense flamenco training in her childhood. Ochoa observed that the dancers in flamenco rarely ever physically touch each other, unusual for partner dancing. She became intrigued with the idea of creating a physical connection between dancers. Ochoa's choreography incorporates props, including a long bustle skirt and fans as the third element between the dancers, which emphasizes the distance between dancers, reiterating the conspicuous absence of physical partnering. The title of the piece, Línea Recta, comes from a French expression meaning, "directly to the point," contradicting a key element of the flamenco dance style, in which dancers circle around each other.

Con Brazos Abiertos

Michelle Manzanales' Con Brazos Abiertos is a work inspired by Manzanales' inherent struggle being a Mexican-American living in America. She brings the audience to a specific moment in her life during her childhood in Texas, exploring with humility, nostalgia, and humor the iconic Mexican symbols she was reluctant to embrace when she was younger. She felt constantly caught between two different cultures, and many times alienated from each of them. The piece evolves in a celebration of culture and search for identity and belonging. In the words of Manzanalez: "Con Brazos Abiertos is about embracing all sides and aspects of yourself, of your life. Con Brazos Abiertos is embracing who you are."



Dancers in Línea Recta, photo by Paula Lobo

About the Company

Ballet Hispánico is the largest Latine cultural organization in the United States and one of America's cultural treasures. Dance visionary and 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 families seeking place and artistic sanctuary. By creating the space for Latine dance and dancers to flourish, Ballet Hispánico uplifts marginalized artists and youth through training, cultural pride, and the power of representation. Eduardo Vilaro joined Ballet Hispánico as a company dancer in 1985, became the organization's second Artistic Director in 2009, and CEO in 2015. Under Vilaro's leadership, Ballet Hispánico has flourished, and is now comprised of three main programs: the Company, which performs across the United States, the School of Dance, which furthers Latine dance, and Community Arts Partnerships, which expand Ballet Hispánico's social mission.

Today Ballet Hispánico is a catalyst for social change. The company's mission opens a platform for new social dialogue, and nurtures and sees a community in its fullness. Through its exemplary artistry, distinguished training program, and deep-rooted community engagement, Ballet Hispánico champions and amplifies Latine voices in the field. For over fifty years Ballet Hispánico has provided a place of honor for the omitted, overlooked, and othered. As it looks to the future, Ballet Hispánico is pushing the culture forward on issues of dance and Latine creative expression.



Dancers of Ballet Hispánico, photo by Erin Baiano

Being an Audience Member

An audience member is a part of a larger community – an audience – and you all work together to create your theater experience. Audience members play a special and important role in the performance. The performers are very aware of the audience while they perform. Sharing their hard work and joy with you is one of the best parts of being a performer. Each performance calls for different audience responses. Lively bands, musicians and dancers may desire audience members to clap and move to the beat. Other performers require silent focus on the stage and talking from the audience can be distracting. A theater is designed to magnify sound and even the smallest whispers can be heard throughout the auditorium. The dancers in Step Afrika! highly encourage clapping, laughing and cheering at the parts of the performance that you enjoy. They also might invite you to participate in call and response.

As you enjoy the show, think about being a part of the performance.

- What are the differences between attending a live performance and going to a movie or watching television?
- What are some different types of live performances? How many can you name?
- What kind of responses might an audience give to different types of performances?
- What are the different cues that a performer will give you so that you know how to respond? For example, might they bow or pause for applause?



The interior of Merrill Auditorium

Essential Questions

What is Latine social dance?

Latine Social Dance is a collective term for partner dances that originate in Central America, South America, and the Caribbean, in places colonized by the Spanish and Portuguese. These dance traditions reflect distinctive influences of Indigenous, West African, and European dance and storytelling, and follow the history of power shifts in the region. Latine Social Dance includes styles like salsa, mambo, merengue, rumba, cha-cha, and tango, among many others, each categorized by specific beats, rhythms, and steps. As the name implies, Latine Social Dance has its roots in dances created by and for social situations like celebrations, ceremonies, and night clubs. While many Latine Social Dances are now a standard part of professional Ballroom competition, as well as the repertory for choreographers and dancers, these styles remain popular as social dances across the United States and in Centra America, South America, and the Caribbean.

Why use the term Latine or Latinx?

In Spanish, nouns are gendered male and female. Nouns ending in “o” are usually (though not always) gendered male, and nouns ending in “a” are usually (though not always) gendered female. Latinx and Latine are both gender neutral ways to refer collectively to Latino/Latina people. They allow for the possibility to refer collectively to a group of people without assuming gender, and without imposing a gender binary. While Latinx has been in use for many years in the United States, many now prefer the term “Latine,” as “Latinx” is not easily pronounced in Spanish and “e” is a more common gender neutral ending for Spanish-speakers.



Dancers of Ballet Hispánico, photo by Paula Lobo

What are the key elements of dance?

Dance is the movement of the human body through space in time using energy. Dancers use movement to express emotions, ideas, relationships, stories, and beliefs. There are five key elements to look for as you watch the performance. You can remember these elements using the acronym, B.A.S.T.E:

Body: the awareness of specific body parts and how they can be moved in isolation and combination.

Body Shape: curving, angling, twisting

Body Parts: arms, legs, head, feet, hands, torso

Action: Movement that either travels across the floor (locomotor) or stays in place (non-locomotor).

When more than one dancer is involved, actions can be leading or following.

Locomotor: walk, run, leap, hop, skip, slide, etc. (anything that moves from one point to another)

Non-locomotor: bend, twist, gesture (anything that does not move from one point to another)

Space: the physical space the body moves through, the direction of movements, and the shapes, levels, and patterns of a group of dancers.

Levels: low, medium, high

Direction: forward, backward, diagonal, sideways

Focus: straight, curved, open, closed, peripheral

Time: An element of music and dance. It includes beat, tempo, accent, and duration

Beat: patterned, counted

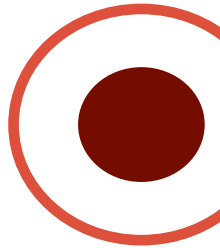
Tempo: fast, medium, slow

Accent: sharp, smooth

Duration: long, short

Energy: The force applied to dance to accentuate the weight, attack, strength, and flow of a dancer's movement

Quality: strong, light, soft, sudden, sustained, free, bound



PRE-PERFORMANCE LESSON ACTIVITIES

Here are some ideas for lesson activities that expand on the essential questions, topics, and themes of Ballet Hispanico's performance.

Glossary

Choreography: The sequence of steps and movements in dance, usually set to music, but can also be set to silence, poetry, or text.

Contemporary Dance: a style of expressive dance that combines elements of several dance genres including, but not limited to modern, jazz, hip-hop, lyrical, and classical ballet.

Diaspora: The dispersion of a peoples from their original homeland.

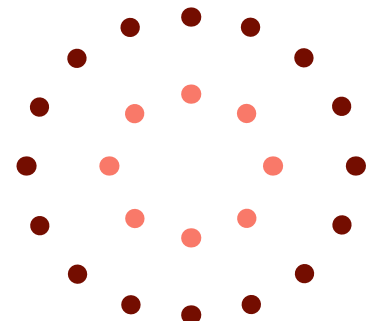
Excerpt: a part of a dance, not the whole dance.

Flamenco: An art form based on the folkloric music traditions of southern Spain and originated in the culture and traditions of the Galego people from Andalusia. It is characterized by complex rhythms that incorporate instruments, stomping, and clapping.

Fusion: In dance, a combination of different techniques, styles, and forms to create something wholly new. The work *Línea Recta* is a fusion of ballet, flamenco, and modern dance.

Palmas: A handclapping style which plays an essential role in flamenco music and dance. There are two main ways to clap in flamenco: Palmas Sordas and Palmas Claras. Palmas Sordas are used during guitar intros or during the singing in order to avoid overpowering the music. Hands are cupped softly so that the fingers of one hand fit snugly into the gap between the thumb and forefinger of the other to create a muffled clapping. Palmas Claras are used during furious and loud footwork and during loud musical sections. The first three fingers of one hand are held firm and clapped into the outstretched palm of the other to create a crisp snappy sound.

Quadrille: A European social dance performed in a square formation, popular in France in the late 1800s. The dance consists of four to six consecutive contradances performed by four couples, who take turns dancing, creating geometric patterns, and exchanging partners. Look for elements of Quadrille in the piece *Danse Creole*.



ACTIVITY: Explore the places where Latine Social Dance originates

Engage students in an exploration of the places and cultures where Latine Social Dance originates. In research groups, invite students to investigate the social and cultural history of countries and/or regions in Central America, South America, and the Caribbean, focusing on collecting images and facts. Students might choose to investigate:

- History
- Nature and Climate
- Social Customs
- Fashion
- Food
- People

Invite each group to present their research to the class in preparation for watching Ballet Hispánico's performance.



ACTIVITY: Partner images

Practice using the elements of dance (BASTE) in this simple activity.

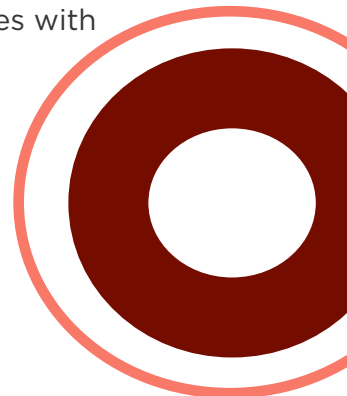
Note: this activity can be combined with the post-show activity Flocking for a deeper exploration of dance elements.

Directions:

1. Divide the class into pairs. Decide who will be Partner A and who will be Partner 1.
2. Invite Partner A to create a shape with their body. The shape should be non-locomotor (ie: it stays in one place).
3. Once Partner A has created their shape and frozen, give Partner 1 a moment to observe the shape, noting the space their partner's body uses.
4. Invite Partner 1 to add to the shape by connecting with the space around their partner's body.
5. Once Partner 1 has joined the shape and frozen, invite partner A to step away, observe the new shape, and connect to the space around Partner 1's body in a new way.



This activity can continue in pairs, or pairs can combine with other groups to create larger shapes. Remind students to consider levels, direction, and focus as they create their shapes. Afterwards, reflect on how students used the elements of BASTE to create new shapes with their bodies and their partners.



POST-PERFORMANCE LESSON ACTIVITIES

Post-Performance Discussion Questions

1. How did you feel when you were watching the dancers move? What parts of the performance stood out to you the most?
2. How would you describe the performance to someone who hasn't seen it?
3. What themes or symbols did you notice in the performance? What did you see that specifically led you to that conclusion? Did any of those themes repeat in different ways throughout the show?
4. Did any of the movement or music remind you of something you have experienced before? If so, what did they remind you of?



Dancers of Ballet Hispánico, photo by Rachel Neville

ACTIVITY: Flocking

Flocking is an expansion of the mirror exercise, where one partner leads and the other follows. Using similar strategies, flocking allows for larger groups to explore movement together with their full bodies. It requires cooperation and creativity from participants, making it an excellent way to explore the elements of dance with students with a wide range of experience in movement. It can be done in groups of 4 or more. You can even involve the whole class in a single “flock.” As with mirroring, the object of this activity is to cooperate with leading and following so it looks like everyone is moving as one.

Note: this activity can be combined with the pre-show activity Partner Images on page 10 for a deeper exploration of dance elements.

Directions:

1. Invite students to stand in a group, all facing the same direction. They should have enough room to move without touching one another. If working in groups of 4, students should stand in a diamond shape, with one at the front, two at the sides, and one at the back (all facing the same direction).
2. The individual at the front of the group is the first leader of the movement. Remind the leader to move slowly and deliberately so that their motions are easy to follow, and to move in ways the whole group can participate in.
3. After students have had an opportunity to follow the leader, invite the group to shift direction to the right, left or back (the whole group should move together so that they are still all facing the same direction). Now the group has a new leader. Invite the new leader to continue moving slowly and deliberately in their own way.
4. Shift direction 2 more times until all four group members have had a chance to be the leader. Invite students to practice shifting direction and movement fluidly. Consider the elements of dance (BASTE), and find ways to vary Body, Action (can you flock with both locomotor and non-locomotor movements?), Space (levels are particularly fun to play with), Time, and Energy.

After the activity, reflect as a group on how it felt to be a leader and a follower. Ask participants to describe how they used elements of dance in their leading and following, and where they saw these elements in Ballet Hispánico’s performance.



RESOURCES

- Learn more about Ballet Hispánico: <https://www.ballethispanico.org/>
- Go behind the scenes of Línea Recta: [Behind the Scenes: Annabelle Lopez Ochoa's LINEA RECTA on Vimeo](#)
- Learn more about the work of Photographer Ruvén Afandor, whose work inspired the costumes in Línea Recta: [Mil Besos, Rizzoli - Ruvén Afanador](#) (ruvenafanador.com)
- Go behind the scenes of Con Brazos Abiertos: [Instituto Coreográfico 2015: Michelle Manzanales Week 2 on Vimeo](#)
- Learn more about choreographer [Geoffrey Holder: Geoffrey Lamont Holder \(1930-2014\)](#) • [\(blackpast.org\)](#)
- Watch a full archival performance of Danse Creole (15 minutes): [DANSE CREOLE \(vimeo.com\)](#)



Portland Ovation, founded in 1931, produces dynamic performing arts events including classical music, jazz, opera, dance, theater, and Broadway. We believe that cultural enrichment should be high quality and accessible to all. Ovation collaborates with other nonprofit organizations, education systems, and the business sector to promote lifelong learning while celebrating the power and virtuosity of the performing arts. We bring the exhilaration of the performing arts into our communities with free events as part of Ovation Offstage, connecting artists and audiences. Join us at unexpected “art happenings,” classroom workshops, masterclasses, community discussions, and pre-performance lectures to explore together the relevance and connection of the performing arts to our lives.

Land Acknowledgment

Portland Ovation’s programs are presented on Wabanaki land, home of the Maliseet, Mi’kmaq, Passamaquoddy, Abenaki and Penobscot Nations, their elders past and present, and future generations.

We encourage you to learn more and take action in support of Maine’s Indigenous communities through the following organizations

[Abbe Museum](#)

Maine’s premier museum dedicated to indigenous history and culture. Their mission is to inspire new learning about the Wabanaki Nations with every visit.

[Maine-Wabanaki Reach](#)

A Native-led non-profit that supports the self-determination of Wabanaki people through education, truth-telling, restorative justice, and restorative practices in Wabanaki and Maine communities.

Created and written by Dr. Liz Schildkret

Additional information and images provided by Mariana Ranz and Ballet Hispánico

Designed by Katie Day

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We want to know what *you* thought about the performance. You can write your answers below or draw a picture on the back of this page. Thank you!

PERFORMANCE: Ballet Hispánico

SCHOOL NAME: _____ **TEACHER NAME:** _____ **GRADE:** _____

YOUR NAME: _____ May we use your name when we share your comments?
Yes__ No__

What did you like about Ballet Hispánico? Why did you like that part?

What was something that you learned during the performance?

What would you like to tell other kids about Ballet Hispánico?

What types of performance would you like Portland Oventions to offer in the future? (Feel free to share what type of art you are interested in (theater, dance, music), what cultures you might like to see, what topics the art might connect with, or specific artists.)

We want to know what *you* thought about the performance.

Draw a picture of a part from Ballet Hispánico's performance that you liked. Thank you!



YOUR NAME: _____ **SCHOOL:** _____ **TEACHER:** _____ **GRADE:** _____

Please scan and email to offstage@portlandovations.org or mail to Portland Ovation 120 Exchange St Portland, ME 04101

Please take a few moments to fill out this survey after you attend the performance. You can also fill it out [online here](#). Your response provides valuable insight on the impact, accessibility, and relevancy of the School-Time Performance Series and will allow us to improve and strengthen the program. Thank you.

PERFORMANCE: Ballet Hispánico - May 12, 2023

TEACHER NAME: _____ **GRADE(S) OF STUDENTS:** _____

SCHOOL NAME: _____ **CITY/TOWN:** _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

1. From your perspective as a teacher, how would you rate Ballet Hispánico?

- Excellent Very Good Good Fair Poor

3. What made this a valuable experience for your students? (If it wasn't, what can we do better?)

4. What was your primary reason for choosing to bring your students to Ballet Hispánico?

- I wanted my students to experience the performing arts.
 The performance topic fit with my curriculum goals.
 The date and time of the performance fit our schedule.
 The ticket price is affordable.
 Other (please specify):

5. How did this live performance connect to or enhance your curriculum?

6. Did you use the Educators Guide provided by Portland Ovation before or after attending the performance? Yes No

7. Why or why not?

8. What improvements could we make to the Educators Guide to serve you and your classroom better?

9. How would you rate the following components of attending the School-Time Performance?

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Reserving & paying for tickets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication about the day of the performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arrival at the venue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Departure from the venue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. What types of performances would you like to bring your students to in the future? (Feel free to share art forms, topics/themes, specific artists, etc.)?

11. A number of generous individuals and organizations make it possible for Portland Ovation to offer these School-Time Performance tickets at extremely discounted rates. Is there anything you'd like them to know in terms of your experiences or its impact on your students?