



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
TEXAS PERFORMING ARTS
 presents...



Photo: Cheryl Mann

Luna Negra

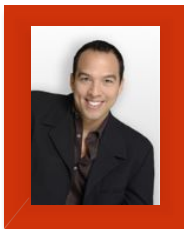
Dance Theater

Youth Performance - Friday, November 18, 2011

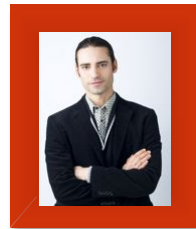
Meet Luna Negra

- Founded in 1999 by Cuban-born dancer and choreographer Eduardo Vilaro.
- Choreographer Gustavo Ramirez Sansano became artistic director in 2009
- Has 9-12 professional dancers, based in Chicago, Illinois
- Tours nationally and internationally
- Prides itself in offering a contemporary twist on Latin dance
- Celebrates Latino cultures through their dance performances, though not in the traditional ways we often think of Latin dance

Luna translates as “moon” which is usually considered white. However, the moon can have various shapes and shades depending on its phase. *Negra* translates as “black.” The awareness that the moon can be dark relates to understanding of the diversities and duality found in Latino nations and the influence of Latino culture in the world today—a richness is present yet not always apparent.



Eduardo Vilaro
 Founder
 From Havana, Cuba



Gustavo Ramirez Sansano
 Artistic Director
 From San Fulgencio, Spain

Latin dance takes on different forms. The picture on the right shows dancers from Luna Negra Dance Theater.



www.reocities.com



Photo: Kristie Kahns

Contemporary Dance



www.dancesport-newengland.com

Flamenco

Avoiding Stereotypes

When you hear the words “Latino dance,” a typical expectation would be the cha-cha, rumba, or flamenco. Instead, Luna Negra specifically performs contemporary dance. In fact, Luna Negra is the only contemporary dance company in the United States that solely performs the works of Latino choreographers.



Photo: Kristie Kahns

Luna Negra hopes to move beyond the stereotypes of traditional Latin dance. While the rich history of Latin America is a contributing factor to their choreography, Luna Negra prefers dances with a contemporary or unique twist.

“Luna Negra celebrates and explores Latino tradition and identity, moving beyond cultural stereotypes and expectations of Latino movement and dance forms. In doing so, we provide opportunities for the community at large to be exposed to and gain a deeper understanding of the diversity of Latino expressions in the 21st century.”

(quote from www.lunanegra.org)

Have you ever felt that someone has stereotyped you? What did they do or say, and how did it make you feel?

Pieces to be performed at the Youth Performance on November 18, 2011

Bate ~ Flabbergast ~ Solo una Vez



BATE choreographed by **Fernando Melo**

Fernando Melo is originally from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. At age 16 he left his hometown to train at the Vienna State Opera Ballet. He began his career as a dancer and choreographer in Europe. He frequently choreographs pieces for Luna Negra, and works as a dancer for Göteborg Ballet in Sweden.

Bate, pronounced "bahtchy," means heartbeat in Portuguese. The dance first premiered in 2005 in Sweden. Since then, *Bate* has been performed several times in the United States. *Bate* was inspired by Brazilian soap operas and the masculinity found in the Samba dance style. It displays how the men in these realms show not only their love and passion, but also their sadness and troubles.

Some things you will see:

- Props: a wide strip of cloth dragged or stretched across the stage; a rose in a vase; rose petals
- A man interacting with a rose
- Five male dancers moving behind a wall in which sections have been cut out like windows of a building
- Movements representing a heartbeat

(abbreviated description from www.arteyvidachicago.com/luna-negra-fall)



FLABBERGAST choreographed by **Gustavo Ramírez Sansano**

Gustavo Ramírez Sansano (Artistic Director/Choreographer) is originally from San Fulgencio, Spain. Previously, he directed Titoyaya Dance Project in Valencia, Spain. Sansano has received prizes from around the world for his choreography.

Flabbergast uses humor to explore stereotypes and preconceived ideas about new and foreign places. This piece was inspired by Sansano's experience coming to America the first time.

Some things you will see and hear:

- Props: Suitcases
- Voices talking on a Spanish newscast
- Movements representing various levels of being comfortable or uncomfortable

www.lashlash.com/publish/Entertainment



SOLO UNA VEZ choreographed by **Luis Eduardo Sayago Alonso**

Luis Eduardo Sayago Alonso, originally from Caracas, Venezuela, started with ten years of training in the art of Judo. He then began studying ballet and performed as a dancer in many different Venezuelan companies. He is now based in Germany.

Solo una Vez (Only One Time) opens with three male dancers contemplating their future spouses. On a chalkboard headed "REQUIREMENTS," one adds to a long list of traits he hopes to find in a wife: fluency in Chinese, graceful handwriting, chef skills. The next scrawls on the board wearing a birdcage over his head to demonstrate his closed thinking. The third wields a knife to slice open oranges: in Venezuela, love is said to be a search for the other half of the orange. Three female dancers enter. Imagine how the story will unfold.

Watching a Dance Performance

Pay attention to:



1. Use of props, lighting, costumes – How did these add to the story of the dance?
2. Characters and their emotions – How did you know what they were feeling?
3. Music – How did it clarify the mood?
4. Use of space – How did they move on and across the stage? Right-left; front-back; high-low; on-offstage?
5. Movements – Unique-typical; identical-opposite when several dance; Traditional-modern; mechanical-emotional?
6. Emotions - Could you identify with the dancers/characters and feel their emotions? Overall, how did the dance make you feel?

Language Arts Activities

Look up the word “choreography” in the dictionary and write the definition:
cho·re·og·ra·phy (noun) –

What is the origin of the word choreography?

Finish the analogy: Choreography is to _____,
as _____ is to _____.

Inside the Mind of a Choreographer

Choreographer Fernando Melo offers some words of experience in a recent interview. “I do not have a recipe for success. I believe that what has helped me so far is a constant effort to communicate with the audience... and having confidence to take risks.”

(interview taken from www.creativeurope.com/A_Dance_Floor)

Writing Prompt

Where in your life do you have the “confidence to take risks” like Fernando Melo does when it comes to choreographing dances?

In what areas of your life do you wish you had the confidence to take risks?

Dance is a tool to explore our cultural identity

Even though Luna Negra is often stereotyped for being a dance company focused on Latin choreography, they continue to embrace their cultural heritage.

“We encourage students to explore the world around them, examine their own history and find their own voice to express their unique identity.”

(quote taken from www.lunanegra.org)



Photo: Cheryl Mann

Excerpts from

Still I Rise

By Maya Angelou, 1978

<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/175742>

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise...

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own back yard...

Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise...
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise...
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise...

After reading excerpts from “Still I Rise” by Maya Angelou, answer the following questions.

Who is the intended audience? Who is the “you” she is addressing?

What is the meaning of the first two lines: “You may write me down in history with your bitter, twisted lies?”

How does this poem relate to Luna Negra’s mission to “celebrate the richness and diversity of Latino culture through the creation of works by contemporary Latino choreographers?”