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BALLET HISPANICO SIZZLES AT THE REICHHOLD CENTER

The tantalizing passion of Latin dance will lure audiences to the edge of their seats when Ballet Hispanico brings their feisty blend of salsa, classical, rumba and other repertoires to the stage at 8 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 21, at the Reichhold Center for the Arts.

Known for their vibrant public education and outreach, company members will warm up the dance floor with a master class at 6 p.m. Friday, Nov. 20 at the Reichhold Center stage for the general community. After Saturday's performance the Reichhold Center and Havana Blue Restaurant, located at Morningstar Beach resort, will host a salsa dance contest at the restaurant. Dancers from Ballet Hispanico will judge the salsa contest.

Self-described as the premiere dance representative of Hispanic culture in America, Ballet Hispanico was started by Venezuelan American founding artistic director Tina Ramirez in 1970 as a vehicle to give voice to the Latin experience through dance.

Since its start nearly 40 years ago, the Manhattan-based dance company has performed for more than two million people across the United States, Europe, and South America. The company's push over the last 40 years has been on changing stereotypes while exposing the beauty of the fusion of modern and ballet with Latin dances such as salsa, rumba, and flamenco.

In August, Ramirez passed the reins to former Ballet Hispanico principal dancer Eduardo Vilaro of Cuba, who took over after ten years as founder and artistic director of Luna Negra Dance Theater in Chicago.

During the Reichhold Center concert, the company will perform newer work such as "Club Havana," a sensual, cheeky portrait of the 1950s Latin ballroom era—complete with the mambo, cha-cha-cha, rumba and conga. The company will also introduce the elegant world premiere of a new work performed to Latin Jazz. Not to be missed is the raucous tribute to Brazilian carnival.

More than 70 works contribute to the company's full repertoire, which includes commissions by international choreographers Alberto Alonso, Talley Beatty, and Graciela Daniele, along with those by young artists Susan Marshall, Pedro Ruiz, and William Whitener.

Ballet Hispanico has appeared on CBS Sunday Morning, NBC, Hispanics Today, and the 1999 Hispanic Heritage Awards. The company also performed to acclaim at the John F. Kennedy Center, the Annenberg Center, Wolf Trap, Jacob's Pillow, Boston's Celebrity Series and The Joyce Theater. Tickets to Ballet Hispanico are \$50, \$40, \$30 and can be purchased online at www.reichholdcenter.com. Ticket outlets: UVI Bookstore, Urban Threadz, VI Bridal and Tuxedo, Essentric Shoe Boutique, Home Again or the Reichhold Center Box Office at (340) 693-1559. Ballet Hispanico is sponsored by: International Capital and Management, Virgin Islands Lottery, First Bank, First Insurance Agency, Tropical Shipping, Marriott Frenchman's Reef Hotel, Innovative Cable TV, and Virgin Islands Council on the Arts.

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