



LUNA NEGRA DANCE THEATER

Art Form: Dance

Style: Modern

Culture: Latin American

Technical Needs

- ❑ sound system
- ❑ normal stage lighting
- ❑ microphones

Meet the Artists

Eduardo Vilaro, founder and artistic director of the **Luna Negra Dance Theater** is an accomplished dancer and choreographer. He studied dance at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Company and the Martha Graham School, and has performed as a principal dancer with the internationally renowned Ballet Hispanico of New York.

Eduardo has a Master of Arts degree from Columbia College in Interdisciplinary Arts and is on the faculty of the Chicago Academy for the Arts. Aware of the need for Latino representation, Eduardo established the Luna Negra Dance Theater. Luna Negra fuses the line of ballet with the weight of contemporary dance and the expressiveness of folkloric traditions. Through dance, Luna Negra is committed to fostering an understanding and appreciation of Latino culture and its dance

About the Performance

The performance opens with a brief introduction of Luna Negra's dance style, and how African, European and indigenous Indian cultures have had a major impact on Latino culture, music and dance. The performance includes the following dances:

“**Somos**” translated from Spanish means “who we are.” This dance is created by fusing Afro-Cuban movements and rhythms with contemporary movements to result in a mysterious and engaging ritual of dance.

“**Amor y Dolor**” explores the pain and fear of immigrating to a new and different world.

Luna Negra performs a Latino ballet which celebrates salsa rhythm.

“**Ognat**” a combination of tango inspired movement and contemporary dance

Contextual Information

A brief history of several Latino Dances:

Mambo: The mambo dance originated in Cuba where there were substantial settlements of Haitians. In the backcountry of Haiti, the “mambo” is a voodoo priestess, who serves the villagers as counselor, healer, exorcist, soothsayer, spiritual advisor and organizer of public entertainment. However, there is not a folk dance in Haiti called the mambo. The fusion of Swing and Cuban music produced this fascinating rhythm and in turn created a new sensational dance. The mambo could not have been conceived earlier since up to that time, the Cuban and American jazz were still not wedded. The mambo dance is attributed to Perez Prado who introduced it at La Tropicana night-club in Havana in 1943. Since then, other Latin American band leaders such as Tito Rodriguez, Pupi Campo, Tito Puente, Machito and Xavier Cugat have achieved styles of their own and furthered the Mambo craze.

Salsa: Salsa is not easily defined. Who invented salsa? Cubans? Puerto Ricans? Salsa is a distillation of many Latin and Afro-Caribbean dances. Each played a large part in its evolution. Salsa is similar to mambo in that both have a pattern of six steps danced over eight counts of music. The dances share many of the same moves. In salsa, turns have become an important feature, so the overall look and feel is quite different from those of mambo. Mambo moves generally forward and backward, whereas, salsa has more of a side to side feel.

Tango: Tango is one of the most fascinating of all dances. Originating in Spain or Morocco, the tango was introduced to the New World by the Spanish settlers, eventually coming back to Spain with Black and Creole influences. In the early 19th Century, the tango was a solo dance performed by the woman. The tango was later transformed and done by one or two couples walking together using castanets. The dance was soon considered immoral with its flirting music! Ballroom tango originated in the lower class of Buenos Aires. Clothing was dictated by full skirts for the woman and gauchos (wide-leg short pants) with high boots and spurs for the man.

Vocabulary

Ballet: dance which is based on five basic foot and arm positions and uses flowing leaps and turns

Contemporary: of the same era or time; modern

Choreographer: the person who invents the steps and patterns of a dance to be presented to an audience

Dance: a series of rhythmic and patterned body movements usually performed to music

Folk dance: dances invented and performed by any member of a people or group for their own enjoyment

Latin America: the countries of the Western Hemisphere, south of the United States having Spanish, Portuguese or French as their official languages

Latino: a native or inhabitant of Latin America

Mambo: a dance of Latin American origin in 4/4 time

Rhythm: time divided up into parts; the result of energy acting on movement; a pattern of beats with accents

Salsa: a popular form of Latin American dance music, characterized by elements of jazz, blues and rock

Tango: Latin American ballroom dance either in 2/4 or 4/4 time

