Grand Prix Dance Open America – Puerto Rico Regionals



Ivonne Lemus

Next Generation Ballet's Principal Rehearsal Director

Ivonne Lemus, current Principal Ballet Mistress of Next Generation Ballet, a former dancer with The Royal Winnipeg Ballet and former soloist with Ballet National of Cuba. Ms. Lemus graduated from the National Ballet School of Cuba in 1986 and while with the company, she had the privilege of being trained by Alicia Alonso, Josefina Mendez, Loipa Araujo, and Laura Alonso.

Through Ballet National of Cuba, Ms. Lemus participated in numerous International Ballet Festivals and has performed in more than 30 countries including those in Europe, South America, Australia, Asia, and the United States of America. Throughout Ms. Lemus's teaching career, she has coached numerous award-winning students at various competitions, namely, 2006 Gold Medalist winner, Misa Kuranaga at the International Ballet Competition, Jackson, MS., 2012 Grand Prix Winner, Hannah Bettes at Youth America Grand Prix Finals, and Audience Favorite at Prix de Lausanne, 2009 Gold Medalist Winner, Jeffrey Cirio at the Helsinki International Ballet Competition, and 2019 Gold Medalist, Hector Jain at ADC|IBC. Ms. Lemus's students have also competed at Beijing International Ballet & Choreography Competition, Dance Open America, and World Ballet Competition.

Ms. Lemus has several former students dancing professionally in top companies around the world, including Stuttgart Ballet, Zurich Ballet, Dutch National Ballet, Royal Swedish Ballet, Royal Ballet, American Ballet Theater, Ballet West, Houston Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, and Miami City Ballet. As a teacher with Next Generation Ballet, Ms. Lemus has staged many classical works such as Swan Lake, Cinderella, Coppelia, Giselle, Don Quixote, and Le Corsaire. Ms. Lemus was awarded Teacher of the Year 2021.



Maray Gutierrez

Ruth Page School of Dance
Ruth Page Professional Dance Training Program

Maray Gutierrez is a Cuban-born dance artist, choreographer, educator, and mentor whose work is grounded in artistic expression and human connection. She currently serves as Artistic Associate of the Ruth Page Professional Dance Training Program in Chicago, where she teaches, coaches repertory, leads choreography workshops, and mentors emerging dance artists.

A native of Havana, Gutierrez graduated from the Escuela Nacional de Danza Moderna y Folklórica with a professional Dancer-Teacher qualification in modern and folkloric dance. She spent nearly a decade as a principal dancer with Danza Contemporánea de Cuba, performing throughout Cuba and internationally. Her Cuban training and professional experience continue to shape an artistic approach grounded in expressive range and cultural identity.

After relocating to Chicago, Gutierrez performed with Luna Negra Dance Theater, Hedwig Dances, Lyric Opera of Chicago, CDI/Concert Dance Inc., and Houston Grand Opera. Her long association with Hedwig Dances encompassed performance, creative collaboration, education, and 14 years of artistic leadership. She was featured in the Hedwig Dances film Arch of Repose and appeared in the PBS documentary of Ruth Page's Billy Sunday, which received a Chicago/Midwest Emmy nomination for Outstanding Entertainment Program.

Gutierrez's choreography has been presented by Ballet Hispánico, Northwestern University, Milwaukee Ballet II, Southeast Missouri State University, Northeastern Illinois University, Luna Negra Dance Theater, and Hedwig Dances. She was named one of "See Chicago Dance's Top 10 Women of 2006" for her choreography with Luna Negra Dance Theater.

She has been honored with a 3Arts Make a Wave grant, the Hedwig Dances Dance Leadership Award, and Second Prize in Women's Modern Dance from UNEAC in Havana. She also served as co-chair of Dance for Life Chicago from 2022 to 2024.

As an educator, Gutierrez has taught throughout the United States and internationally, teaching modern and contemporary dance while encouraging creative exploration. Her teaching brings together technical discipline, artistic curiosity, confidence, and individual expression, encouraging dancers to develop not only as performers but also as thoughtful artists.



Maximiliano Guerra

Artistic Director - Washington State Ballet Theater (Seattle, USA)

Maximiliano Guerra is internationally recognized as one of the most important dancers of his generation, celebrated for his extraordinary technical mastery, dramatic depth, and artistic versatility across classical and contemporary repertoire. Critics around the world have highlighted his ability to merge virtuosity with profound interpretative sensitivity, making him a defining figure in modern ballet.

Born in Argentina, Guerra trained at the Instituto Superior de Arte del Teatro Colón, studying with renowned masters such as Wasil Tupin, Mercedes Serrano, Mario Galizzi, Leandro Regueiro, and internationally with Woyzeck Lowsky, Stanley Williams, Loipa Araujo, Phillip Beamish, and Barbara Rey. After early engagements with Ballet del Teatro Argentino de La Plata and Fundación Teresa Carreño (Caracas), he joined the Ballet Estable del Teatro Colón in 1985.

His international career began in 1988 with the Los Angeles Ballet Company, followed by his appointment as Principal Dancer and later Senior Principal Dancer of the London Festival Ballet (English National Ballet). In 1991, he became Principal Dancer of the Deutsche Oper Berlin, and that same year he made history as the first non-Soviet dancer to perform Yuri Grigorovich's Spartacus at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow and Novosibirsk Opera Theater in Siberia.

From 1992 onward, Guerra performed as Principal Guest Artist with the world's most prestigious companies, including the Kirov Ballet, and began a celebrated collaboration with Teatro alla Scala di Milano, where he served as Primo Ballerino Ospite Principale until 2014. He has danced in the most important theaters worldwide: Bolshoi (Moscow), San Carlo (Napoli), Royal Albert Hall (London), Metropolitan Opera House (New York), Kirov (St. Petersburg), Deutsche Oper Berlin, Munchen Staats Theatre, Kennedy Center (Washington), Bunka Kaikan (Tokyo), Wielki Theater (Warsaw), Hamburg Opera, Stuttgart State Theater, Paris Opera, Teatro Colón, Teatro alla Scala, and many more.

His repertoire exceeds 120 works, including major classical titles and iconic neoclassical and contemporary creations. He has performed works by Nureyev, Makarova, Grigorovich, Cranko, Ashton, Lavrovsky, MacMillan, Balanchine, Béjart, Neumeier, Forsythe, Van Manen, Wainrot, Araiz, and many others. John Neumeier created Nachtskizzen especially for him, and Oscar Araiz created Astor, the Angel and the Devil of Piazzolla and Con Gloria Morir inspired by Guerra's artistry.

As a choreographer, Guerra created Don Quixote, The Dreamer of the Mancha for the Stuttgart Ballet (2000), a production so successful that the theater added fifteen extra performances. He later premiered Grazie Rudy, Más Argentino, La Última Luna, Sequences, and numerous works for Mercosur Ballet and international companies.

He has served as Artistic Director of the Ballet Estable del Teatro Colón (2015–2017), restaging his productions of Romeo and Juliet and Don Quixote, and creating new productions of Giselle and The Nutcracker. He continues choreographing internationally, including a new Swan Lake for UNCUYO Ballet.

He has been honored with major international awards, including Grand Prix Trujillo, Silver Medal New York, Gold Medal Varna, Nijinsky Moscow, Gino Tani Rome, Konex, Star of the Sea, UNESCO Messenger of Peace, International Recognition United Nations, Illustrious Citizen of Buenos Aires, and a NASA "Constellation" star named in his honor.

More than 20 Years of Teaching, Mentorship & Artistic Leadership Beyond his celebrated performance career, Maximiliano Guerra is a master teacher, pedagogue, and mentor whose influence spans more than two decades across Latin America, Europe, and the United States.

Founder & Director - Fábrica de Arte Ballet and Dance School (Buenos Aires). For over 15 years, Guerra led one of Argentina's most respected artistic institutions, forming generations of dancers with rigorous technique, artistic identity, and human development at the core. Many of his students have joined major companies worldwide.

His teaching is recognized for its exceptional results, combining technical precision, musicality, emotional intelligence, and a deep understanding of classical and contemporary styles.

Together with his wife, Myriam Barroso, Guerra has developed curricula, syllabi, and artistic programs tailored to the needs of diverse communities and schools. Their collaborative work has shaped institutions in Argentina and the United States, always prioritizing excellence, and cultural relevance.

Through his foundation, Guerra has created new artistic pathways for underserved families, offering scholarships, community programs, and artistic outreach that expand access to dance education.

Maximiliano Guerra serves as Artistic Director of Washington State Ballet Theater, where he is building a new artistic chapter in the Pacific Northwest, USA. His vision focuses on: elevating ballet training and performance standards; creating community-centered programs; expanding access to dance for families across Washington State; uniting dancers through collaboration, mentorship, and artistic excellence

His leadership is shaping a growing artistic community and strengthening the cultural fabric and development of the region.



Osmay Molina

Former Principal Dancer – National Ballet of Cuba

Founder and Faculty Member of Centro Danza, Puerto Rico

Born in Havana, Cuba, Osmay Molina is a distinguished ballet artist and educator whose career reflects an exceptional combination of classical artistry, technical excellence, and dedication to dance education.

He began his ballet training at the prestigious Alejo Carpentier Ballet School and later graduated from the National School of Art (ENA), where he quickly distinguished himself through his outstanding technique, artistic sensitivity, and stage presence. During his student years, he received international recognition by winning two prestigious competitions in Italy: the Positano Competition and the Vignale Danza International Competition.

In 1993, he joined the National Ballet of Cuba (Ballet Nacional de Cuba) under the artistic direction of the legendary Alicia Alonso, rapidly advancing through the company to achieve the rank of Principal Dancer. Renowned for his elegance, noble bearing, and refined classical style, he became affectionately known among critics and audiences as "The Prince of Cuban Ballet."

Throughout his distinguished career with the company, he performed leading roles in the great classical ballet repertoire, including *Giselle, Swan Lake, The Sleeping Beauty, Coppélia, Cinderella, Don Quixote, Les Sylphides,* and *La Fille Mal Gardée*, among many others. His repertoire also included celebrated pas de deux such as *Le Corsaire* and *Grand Pas Classique*, as well as numerous neoclassical and contemporary works by internationally renowned guest choreographers. One of the highlights of his career was being selected to perform the principal role in the National Ballet of Cuba's premiere production of *La Sylphide*, an important milestone in the company's history.

In 2003, Osmay relocated to Puerto Rico, joining Ballet Concierto de Puerto Rico as a Principal Dancer. In 2004, he became a member of Balleteatro Nacional de Puerto Rico. Expanding his artistic horizons, he also performed with the contemporary dance company Andanza from 2006 to 2009, participating in numerous tours and original productions that explored the relationship between classical and contemporary dance.

His final performance as a professional dancer took place in October 2012 at the XXIII International Ballet Festival of Havana, where he had the honor of sharing the stage once again with Alicia Alonso.

Following his retirement from the stage, Osmay Molina devoted himself to dance education and artistic development, establishing a respected career as a ballet teacher and mentor. He has taught at several leading institutions in Puerto Rico, including Ballets de San Juan,

CoDa21, Mauro Ballet, the Escuela de Balleteatro Nacional de Puerto Rico, the School of the Performing Arts, and Academia Cristiana Dánzale.

As the Founder and Faculty Member of Centro Danza, he continues to share his extensive professional experience and artistic knowledge, inspiring and nurturing new generations of dancers through the discipline, passion, and excellence that have defined his career.



Deborah Marquez

Founder & Artistic Director
Grand Prix Dance Open America

Deborah Marquez is the Founder and Artistic Director of Grand Prix Dance Open America and the Founding Director of Ballet Arts Dance Company, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization established in 2011.

Born in Havana, Cuba, Deborah began her ballet training at the Provincial Ballet School Alejo Carpentier and continued her studies at the National Ballet School in Havana under the direction of the renowned teacher Ramona de Saá. In 1994 Deborah joined Centro Pro-Danza as a Principal Dancer, led by the distinguished maître Laura Alonso. During this period, she performed numerous leading roles, including the Sugar Plum Fairy in The Nutcracker, La Sylphide, Swanilda in Coppélia, Kitri and Mercedes in Don Quixote, Teresita in Napoli, Lucy in Dracula, Constanza in The Three Musketeers, and Gamsatti in La Bayadère, among others. In 2000, she joined the National Ballet of Cuba, under the artistic direction of Alicia Alonso, where she performed the major classical repertoire as well as contemporary works, including Rara Avis by Alberto Méndez. She toured extensively throughout Europe and South America, working under the guidance of celebrated ballet masters and artists including Alicia Alonso, Joaquín Banegas, Lázaro Araujo, Josefina Méndez, Fernando Alonso, and others.

In 2002, Deborah moved to the United States and joined Ballet Florida, under the direction of Marie Hale, beginning a new chapter in her professional career. During her years with the company, she had the opportunity to work with some of the most distinguished choreographers in the world, including Ben Stevenson, Mauricio Wainrot, Twyla Tharp, Vicente Nebrada, Trey McIntyre, Val Caniparoli, Norbert Vesak, Thierry Malandain, David Parsons, and Marie Hale. Her repertoire included works such as Dracula, Cleopatra, Esmeralda, Five Poems, Bartók Concerto, Four Last Songs, Three Preludes, Libertango, The Rite of Spring, From Far Away, Anne Frank, Baker's Dozen, Our Waltzes, Romeo and Juliet, Cinderella, Second Before the Ground, Lambarena, Lady of the Camellias, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Stone Flower, and The Envelope, among many others.

While performing with Ballet Florida, Deborah also danced works by George Balanchine, including Allegro Brillante, Classical Symphony, and Il Ballo Della Regina. Her professional

career in the U.S. continued for more than two decades, encompassing performance, teaching, choreography, artistic direction, and the development of young dancers.

Her achievements as a dancer include the First Prize for Best Choreography – Song to the Movement at the National Arts School Festival in Havana in 1989; the First Prize for Best Performance and Technique at the National Art Schools Festival in Havana in 1990; a Bronze Medal at the Second International Ballet Competition "Alicia Alonso" in Havana in 1997; and a Silver Medal at the International Ballet Competition of Belo Horizonte, Brazil, in 1998. In 1999, she was invited to perform The Nutcracker with the Ontario Ballet Theatre in Toronto.

In 2010, Deborah founded the School of Ballet Arts in Palm Beach County, Florida. Since then, she has trained and coached thousands of young dancers, many of whom have continued their education at prestigious university dance programs and pursued professional careers with leading dance companies. Each year, Ballet Arts alumni continue to join major American dance companies, reflecting Deborah's long-standing commitment to developing and preparing the next generation of professional dancers.

In 2011, she founded Ballet Arts Dance Company, for which she has choreographed, directed, and staged numerous full-length classical ballet productions. These productions have included the annual The Nutcracker, as well as Dracula, Coppélia, Don Quixote, The Sleeping Beauty, and Paquita, among others.

In 2016, Deborah brought CUBALLET USA, the International Ballet Summer Intensive founded by Laura Alonso, to the United States, creating an important opportunity for American students to experience and study the Cuban ballet methodology directly with leading Cuban ballet teachers and artists. That same year, she received the Palm Beach County Randolph A. Frank Award for Outstanding Arts Educator, recognizing her significant contribution to arts education and her dedication to providing young dancers with exceptional training and opportunities to pursue professional careers.

Also in 2020, Deborah co-founded Dance Open America, an international ballet competition initially developed through a digital platform. Over the years, Grand Prix Dance Open America has experienced remarkable international growth, expanding its presence through regional competitions and events across the United States, Puerto Rico, Spain, Sri Lanka, Japan, and Taiwan, while welcoming dancers and studios from countries around the world.

Grand Prix Dance Open America has evolved into a growing international platform that provides dancers with opportunities to compete, receive professional feedback, train with internationally recognized teachers, and connect with prestigious institutions and artists. Throughout its development, the organization has awarded more than $1 million in scholarship certificates, further strengthening its commitment to supporting the next generation of dancers and their continued artistic education. Each season has brought new opportunities to connect with dancers, teachers, studios, and leading figures in the international dance community.

Today, Deborah Marquez combines her experience as a former professional dancer with more than two decades of teaching, coaching, choreography, artistic direction, and arts leadership. Through Grand Prix Dance Open America, Ballet Arts Dance Company, and the School of Ballet Arts, she remains dedicated to creating opportunities for young dancers; helping them develop the technical, artistic, and professional skills to pursue careers in dance.