

ExxonMobil

DISCOVERY SERIES



De Aquí! with Mezclada Dance Company



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About the Performance

De Aquí!

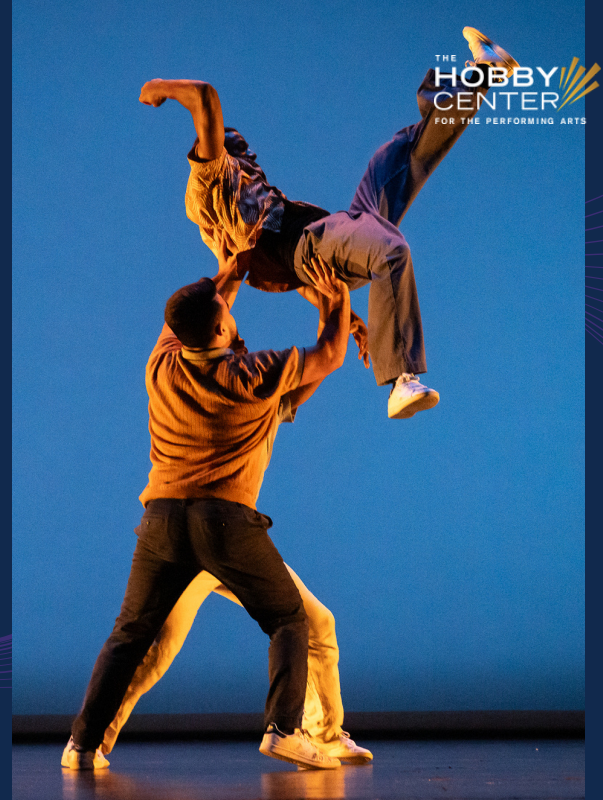
De Aquí! is a vibrant dance concert celebrating the impact and vibrancy of Latin culture in the United States. Through a dynamic mix of music and dance styles, Mezclada Dance Company highlights the richness of Latin music and movement within a fusion of choreography that blends Latin dance forms, hip hop, and contemporary styles. Rooted in Houston's diverse arts community, the performance showcases how artists carry their culture, identity, and creativity into a multicultural city.

The concert also features short films that spotlight Houston-based Latin artists, offering a glimpse into how they bring Latin influence into their artistic practices and contribute to the city's creative landscape in unique and powerful ways. Through movement, music, and storytelling, *De Aquí!* celebrates the pride, resilience, and cultural expression of Latin artists. You'll see 9 dance artists on stage and short films between sections.

De Aquí! was originally commissioned by Performing Arts Houston and continues to highlight the voices and artistry shaping Houston's vibrant cultural community.



**Scan or Click
for a
Sneak Peak!**



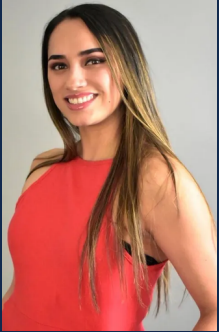
Mezclada Dance Company

Mezclada Dance Company is dedicated to celebrating diversity through mixing cultures and dance styles to create harmonious, original, and widely relatable blends of dance. Through performance and outreach, Mezclada positively represents underrepresented dance forms such as Latin and Hip Hop dance.

Through global experiences in Albania, China, Mexico, Montenegro, USA, and many more... The dancers of Mezclada Dance Company bring in their rich and global experiences to create work that represent the diversity of arts audiences.

Highlighted Artists

Featured in Short Films During Show



Jatziri Barron- A Mexican muralist and visual artist based in Houston whose artwork celebrates cultural identity, diversity, and community. Her colorful murals and paintings can be found throughout Houston and in collaborations with museums, businesses, and public spaces.



Hector Cisneros - Originally from Venezuela, Hector Cisneros is a Houston-based breaker, performer, and dance instructor. He competes nationally, performs with Mezclada Dance Company and the Houston Rockets Launch Crew, and inspires others through Hip Hop culture and movement.



Erika De Leon- Born and raised in Houston, attended Dow Elementary, Hogg Middle School, and Reagan and Jefferson Davis High Schools, is a B-girl, community leader, and nonprofit founder who uses Hip Hop culture to empower youth and women. Through dance, graffiti art, and leadership programs, she creates spaces where creativity and community thrive.



Elyssa Vega - Houston-based dancer, choreographer, and educator Elyssa Vega is passionate about mentoring the next generation of artists. She performs with Mezclada Dance Company, teaches across Texas, and helps students discover confidence and creativity through dance.



Joel Aguilera - Houston-born choreographer, educator, and Founder of Mezclada Dance Company. Joel Aguilera blends Hip Hop, Latin, and contemporary

dance to celebrate culture and community. Raised in a Colombian family, he teaches dance at the University of Houston and San Jacinto College while performing and choreographing nationally and internationally.

Rodrigo Aguilera -

Originally from Bogotá, Colombia, Rodrigo Aguilera is a Houston-based painter, graphic designer, and publisher whose work celebrates visual art and culture. He creates from his studio at Sawyer Yards while helping connect Houston audiences with local artists.



FROM ROOTS TO RHYTHM

The Story Behind *De Aquí!*

Dance and music travel, connect, and evolve. *De Aquí!* celebrates how cultures from around the world have influenced the arts we enjoy today—and how Houston artists continue this story.

ROOTS



WEST AFRICA

African rhythms, percussion, and movement traditions.



CARIBBEAN

Cuba & Puerto Rico

Afro-Latin music
Clave • Salsa
Son • Rumba



LATIN AMERICA

Colombia: Cumbia
Venezuela: Musical traditions
Mexico: Folklórico, Mariachi



INFLUENCE



LATIN JAZZ

Afro-Latin rhythms blend with jazz improvisation and big band sounds.



SALSA

Energetic music and partner dance that blends Afro-Caribbean and Latin influences.



HIP HOP

A culture of creativity born in the Bronx, NY in the 1970s.



BREAKING

The first dance style of Hip Hop, created in the Bronx.



TODAY



HOUSTON

A vibrant, multicultural city where art, culture, and community come together.



De Aquí!

Mezclada Dance Company blends Hip Hop, contemporary, and Latin dance to celebrate culture, identity, and creativity—*de aquí*, from here, for everyone.



Cultures connect. Stories inspire. Artists create.
The rhythm continues with us.

A TIMELINE OF INFLUENCE



BEFORE 1500

African rhythms and traditions spread across the world.



1500s–1800s

African and Indigenous influences shape music in the Caribbean and Latin America.



1920s–1960s

Latin Jazz grows in cities like Cuba, New Orleans, and New York City.



1970s

Hip Hop culture and Breaking are born in the Bronx, New York by Black and Latino youth.



1980s–TODAY

Dance styles continue to blend and evolve—salsa, funk, jazz, Hip Hop, and contemporary influence one another around the world.



TODAY

In Houston, artists honor their roots and create new stories that inspire the next generation.



Every movement has a story. Every artist adds a new chapter.



About the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts

The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts opened to the public in 2002 in downtown Houston, at the edge of the city's renowned Theater District. The district is home to several major performing arts organizations, including Houston Grand Opera, Houston Ballet, Houston Symphony, Performing Arts Houston, Theatre Under The Stars, DaCamera, and Alley Theatre. Located beside Tranquility Park and one block from Houston City Hall, the Hobby Center was named in honor of former Texas lieutenant governor and Houston businessman William P. Hobby Jr. after his family foundation made a significant contribution to the project. The Hobby Center was built on the site formerly occupied by the Houston Music Hall and Sam Houston Coliseum, both of which were demolished in 1998. Today, the Hobby Center includes three performance spaces designed specifically for theater, music, and live performance experiences:

- **Sarofim Hall** is a 2,650-seat proscenium theater designed to accommodate large-scale touring Broadway productions and major live performances. Resident companies include Theatre Under The Stars and Broadway Across America. The hall's design combines grandeur with theatrical elegance. Golden latticework frames the space, while multi-storied gold-leaf columns stand in contrast to deep midnight-blue walls. Overhead, the Joe and Lee Jamail Celestial Dome Ceiling features twinkling fiber-optic stars arranged to mirror the Texas night sky.
- **Zilkha Hall** is an intimate 500-seat "jewel-box" theater, a term used to describe smaller performance spaces designed with rich detail, warmth, and close audience connection. Home to many of Houston's local arts organizations, the hall features excellent acoustics, deep-rose tones, and walnut wood accents across two seating levels.
- **The Founders Club** is an intimate live music venue with cabaret-style seating. Guests may purchase tables of four or be seated with others, creating a social and relaxed atmosphere. The series features both local performers and nationally recognized artists in a format not commonly found in Houston. Concerts span a variety of genres, including Broadway songbook, jazz, and world music.

ExxonMobil DISCOVERY SERIES

The ExxonMobil Discovery Series is the Hobby Center's flagship education program, welcoming 5th grade students from across Houston to experience live performances by local and touring artists. Aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), the series brings dance, music, and theater to life in ways that connect directly to what students are learning in the classroom. Every performance is free—including transportation—and includes curriculum materials and artist Q&As that deepen the experience.

For the 2026-27 school year, the Hobby Center is thrilled to be partnering with 22+ school districts to serve nearly 50,000 5th graders.

Special thanks to lead underwriter ExxonMobil and generous supporters: Cullen Trust for the Performing Arts, Elkins Foundation, George and Mary Josephine Hamman Foundation, Albert and Ethel Herzstein Charitable Foundation, Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, The John M. O'Quinn Foundation, Texas Commission on the Arts, H-E-B, Vivian L. Smith Foundation, and Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion

Theater Etiquette

Before you come to the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, Please take some time to talk with your students about what to expect. Going to a live performance is a group experience unlike any other, and many students are more familiar with going to the movies or sporting events. Please help them prepare for what they'll see and how they should act. Other things to Keep in Mind: Make sure your students use the restroom before they leave school or at the theater before the show. If you get up during the performance, you may miss the best part! The performance runs approximately one hour long with no intermission. In entering or exiting the theater, safety is the primary concern. Please follow instructions from the house managers and ushers in taking your seats.

Going to a performance is different than going to a movie:

- This production is performed live. The performers can see, hear and react to the audience!
- Audience members can show the performers when they appreciate their performance! If something is funny, you can laugh! If the performers are doing a great job, then you can clap!
- Sometimes, the performers will ask you to participate by singing or clapping; please do not talk unless the performers ask you to!
- At the end of the show, the performers will bow. This is called a curtain call. If you really loved the show, you can give them a standing ovation to show that you appreciate their hard work!
- School clothes are appropriate, but some people like to dress up to go to the theater. Just make sure you are comfortable.

Going to a performance is the same as going to a movie:

- The lights dim before the performance begins and the theater stays dark during the show.
- Audience members are expected to stay quiet in their seats during the performance.
- Audience members may NOT take any pictures or video during the performance. (This is distracting to the performers and other audience members and this show contains copyrighted artistic material.)
- All cell phones and other electronic devices should be powered OFF or put on SILENT as soon as you enter the theater.

VISIT RESTROOM BEFORE - NOT DURING.

ARRIVE EARLY.

QUIET & SEATED DURING SHOW.

NO PHOTOS OR VIDEOS DURING SHOW.

PHONES OFF/SILENCED.

RESPECT THE SPACE & OTHERS.

LISTEN & ENGAGE.

APPLAUD APPROPRIATELY.

Vocabulary

Breaking – A foundational element of Hip Hop culture and the first dance style of Hip Hop. Created in the Bronx, New York in the 1970s by Black and Latino communities.

Clave – A repeating rhythm pattern that serves as the foundation of many Afro-Latin music styles. Clave also refers to the wooden percussion instrument used to play the rhythm.

Comunidad – The Spanish word for "community," or a group of people connected through shared experiences, culture, or location.

Cypher – In Hip Hop culture, a circle where dancers, musicians, or artists take turns sharing their creativity and expression.

De Aquí – A Spanish phrase meaning "from here" or "from this place."

Diaspora – A group of people who move or are spread from their original homeland to different parts of the world, carrying traditions, music, language, and culture with them.

Footwork – Movement performed on the floor using the hands and feet. Footwork is one of the defining characteristics of Breaking and showcases rhythm, coordination, creativity, and speed.

Freezes – A pose or picture created by a dancer, usually held for a moment to match the music or end a movement sequence.

Funk – A style of music and movement that originated in Black American communities in the 1960s and 1970s. Funk music is known for strong rhythms, groove, bass lines, and expressive energy, and it heavily influenced Hip Hop culture and dance styles.

Fusion – The blending of different styles, cultures, or ideas to create something new.

Hip Hop – A culture created in the Bronx, New York in the 1970s by Black and Latino communities. Hip Hop is built on four foundational elements: MCing (rapping), DJing, Graffiti Art, and Breaking.

Latin Jazz – A music genre that combines Afro-Latin rhythms with jazz improvisation and big band music. Its roots connect Cuba, New Orleans, and New York City, blending instruments and rhythms from African, Caribbean, and American musical traditions.

Movimiento – The Spanish word for "movement," which can refer to physical movement in dance or a larger cultural or social movement.

País – The Spanish word for "country" or "nation."

Power Moves – Dynamic, acrobatic movements in Breaking that require strength, momentum, and control. Examples include windmills, headspins, flares, and backspins.

Raíces – The Spanish word for "roots," referring to heritage, ancestry, and cultural origins.

Ritmo – The Spanish word for "rhythm," or the pattern and flow of music and movement.

Sabor – The Spanish word for "flavor." In dance and music, it refers to style, personality, confidence, and expression.

Salsa – A music and dance style that blends Afro-Caribbean and Latin American influences. Salsa music developed in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and New York City and is known for its energetic rhythms, partner dancing, and percussion instruments.

Threading – A movement concept in Breaking where a dancer weaves parts of their body through openings created by their arms or legs.

Toprock – The standing portion of Breaking, often used as the introduction or preparation before going to the floor. Toprock is influenced by styles such as salsa, jazz, tap, and social dances.

THE SOUNDTRACK OF DE AQUÍ!

Listen • Notice • Move

Music tells stories before a dancer takes the stage. Listen to these songs featured in *De Aquí!* and discover how rhythm, instruments, and culture inspire movement.



Song (Click or Scan)	Artist	Listen For...
Jubileo	Fania All Stars	Energetic brass, layered percussion, and the excitement of salsa music.
Cuerdas y Tumbao	Eddie Palmieri	Latin jazz piano, improvisation, and the steady tumbao rhythm.
Maria También	Khruangbin	A smooth blend of global influences, guitar melodies, and relaxed grooves.
Tito's Colada	Tito Puente	Driving percussion, timbales, and Afro-Latin rhythms that invite movement.
Não Posso Demorar	JuJu Orchestra	Funk, jazz, and Afro-Latin influences woven into a modern sound.
Quimbara	Celia Cruz	Powerful vocals, joyful energy, call-and-response, and classic salsa rhythms.

PRE-SHOW

DISCUSSION

Latino Influence in the Arts

- Where have you experienced Latino culture through music, food, art, dance, or celebrations?
- How do you think different cultures influence one another over time?
- As you watch *De Aquí!*, look for ways Latino culture has shaped the music and dance you recognize today.

Stories Through Movement

- How can dancers tell stories without using words?
- What clues can movement, music, or facial expressions give the audience?
- What kinds of stories do you think can be shared through dance?

Creative Community

- What makes Houston a place where many cultures and artistic traditions come together?
- Why might an artist choose to share their culture through dance, music, or visual art?
- As you watch the films, notice how each Houston artist's identity influences their creative work.

Creating Something New

- What happens when different dance styles or cultures come together?
- How can celebrating our differences help create something everyone can enjoy?



All performance photos by Melissa Taylor

PRE-SHOW

ACTIVITIES



All performance photos by Melissa Taylor

Culture Collage

Create a collage using words and images that represent your family's culture, traditions, interests, or community, then share how those experiences help tell your story.

Mix Your Moves

Learn two simple movements from different dance styles, then combine them to choreograph an original eight-count phrase.

Family Music Playlist

Create a music playlist that feels like your family. What songs make you think of your roots? List them, design your playlist, and share.

Movement Detective

Watch a short dance video without sound and record what emotions, relationships, or story you think the dancers are communicating.

Connections Map

Label a world map with countries featured in *De Aquí!* and draw arrows showing how music, dance, and culture have influenced one another.

Learn the Salsa Step



• [Scan or Click](#)

<<<<

PRE-SHOW

PRINTABLE ACTIVITY

Worksheet - Discovering De Aquí!

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 WHAT MAKES CULTURE?

Culture includes the traditions, experiences, and creative expressions that make communities unique.

Complete the web below by writing or drawing examples that represent your own culture or community.



Reflection: Which part of your culture do you enjoy sharing with others?

2 EVERY ARTIST HAS A STORY

Artists are influenced by their backgrounds, experiences, and the cultures they come from.

Complete the chart below.

Artist	Where are they from?	What do they create?	How might their culture influence their work?
Beyoncé			
Selena			
Lin-Manuel Miranda			
Frida Kahlo			
Celia Cruz			



THINK ABOUT IT

Every artist has a unique story. As you watch *De Aquí!*, notice how the featured Houston artists share their own identities, cultures, and experiences through dance, music, and visual art.

3 DANCE DETECTIVE

Dancers can tell stories and show emotions without using words.

How could a dancer show the following?

Joy	Strength	Friendship	Celebration	Pride

Draw a simple stick figure or describe the movement you would use.

12

4 SPOT THE FUSION

Different dance styles each have their own history and movement vocabulary.

Draw one movement you think belongs to each style.

Breaking	Salsa	Contemporary



PREDICTION

What do you think happens when these styles are blended together into one performance?

FIFTH GRADE

TEKS Alignment

ELAR & READING- §110.7

TEKS: 5.6(E), 5.7(E), 5.9(E)

Student Learning Connection:

Students analyze how movement, music, film, and narration communicate ideas, themes, and cultural perspectives while making inferences about the artists' experiences and messages.

Science -§112.16

TEKS: 5.6(A), 5.12(A)

Student Learning Connection:

Students investigate patterns, movement, and energy by exploring how dancers use force, balance, coordination, and body control to communicate through choreography.

Mathematics - §111.7

TEKS: 5.1(A), 5.1(E), 5.7(A)

Student Learning Connection:

Students recognize mathematical patterns, sequencing, timing, symmetry, and spatial relationships while analyzing choreography and rhythmic movement.

Social Studies - §113.16

TEKS: 5.14(A), 5.14(B), 5.16(A)

Student Learning Connection:

Students examine how cultures influence communities by exploring the contributions of Latino artists and the ways music, dance, and traditions have shaped life in Houston and across the United States.

Health - §115.17

TEKS: 5.1 (B), 5.2(A), 5.3(A)

Student Learning Connection:

Students explore empathy, respect, cooperation, and positive self-expression while recognizing how movement, creativity, and cultural understanding strengthen healthy communities.

Fine Arts -§117.114

TEKS:(a1), (a2), (a3)

Student Learning Connection:

Students analyze how choreography, music, rhythm, cultural traditions, and artistic choices communicate ideas, emotions, and stories through dance.

FIFTH GRADE

STAAR Alignment



RLA

STAAR Reporting Category:

*Reading Comprehension,
Vocabulary, Author's Craft,
Composition, Inquiry & Research*

Student Learning Connection

Analyze how dance, music, film, and narration work together to communicate ideas, cultural identity, and artistic expression. Make inferences about themes, purpose, and the experiences of the artists while connecting the performance to informational texts about culture, history, and the arts.

Mathematics

STAAR Reporting Category:

*Pattern, Relationships, Data
Analysis, and Mathematical
Processes*

Student Learning Connection

Recognize patterns, sequences, symmetry, and spatial relationships through choreography and rhythm. Apply mathematical reasoning by identifying repeating movement patterns, counting musical phrases, and analyzing formations used throughout the performance.

Science

STAAR Reporting Category:

Force, Motion, and Energy

Student Learning Connection

Investigate how force, motion, balance, and coordination work together during dance and movement. Explore how the human body transfers energy through choreography while observing how speed, direction, and momentum affect performance.

FIFTH GRADE

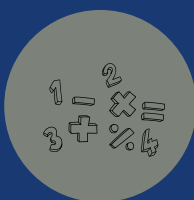
Curriculum Connections



English Language Arts

In The Classroom

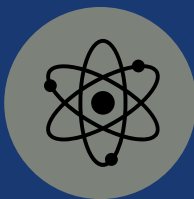
Explore how stories can be told through movement, music, film, and narration. Students analyze theme, point of view, and artistic expression while making connections between informational texts, personal experiences, and cultural perspectives.



Mathematics

In The Classroom

Investigate patterns, rhythm, symmetry, sequencing, and spatial relationships through dance and choreography. Students recognize mathematical thinking in movement while exploring how repeated patterns and timing create artistic expression.



Science

In The Classroom

Explore how force, motion, balance, coordination, and energy work together during movement. Students observe how the human body responds during physical activity while investigating the science behind dance and performance.



Social Studies

In The Classroom

Examine how cultures influence communities, traditions, and the arts. Students explore how Latino history, music, dance, and storytelling have shaped American culture while discovering the diverse artists who make Houston a vibrant creative city.



Health / SEL

In The Classroom

Build empathy, confidence, collaboration, and respect by exploring how artistic expression reflects personal identity and community. Students discuss how celebrating different cultures strengthens relationships and creates inclusive spaces where everyone belongs.

Discussion



Creating Something New

- Why do you think different dance styles were blended together?
- How did music, dance, and film work together to tell one story?
- Where do you see different cultures coming together in your own community?

Every Artist Has a Story

- Which featured artist inspired you most? Why?
- How did the artists' identities influence their work?
- What story would you share about your own community?



From Here



- What do you think *De Aquí!* ("from here") means after seeing the performance?
- How have your family or community shaped who you are?
- What makes your story unique?

The Ripple Effect

- What message from the performance stayed with you?
- How can artists bring people together?
- How can you use your talents to make a positive impact?



POST-SHOW Activities

Reflective Writing

- **My Story, My Voice**

Write a short reflection about your own culture, family, or community and explain how it has shaped who you are.



Create & Choreograph

- **Movement Mash-Up**

Many inventions are inspired by animals. Choose one animal from Switcheroo at the Houston Zoo and design an invention based on one of its adaptations. Draw your invention, label its features, and explain how it could solve a real-world problem.

Geography Challenge

- **Mapping the Movement**

Locate the countries and cities connected to *De Aquí!* on a map and trace how music and dance traditions traveled to influence American culture.



Culture Connections

- **Explore Influences**

Working in teams, students match images, music clips, countries, artists, and dance styles featured in *De Aquí!* to discover how different cultures influenced one another.

Career Spotlight

- **Behind the Camera**

Imagine you're the filmmaker creating *De Aquí!*. Plan three interview questions, choose camera shots, and storyboard a short video featuring an artist in your community.



REFLECT ON DE AQUÍ!

Think back to the artists, stories, movement, and music you experienced in the performance.



Name: _____

Date: _____

1 MEET THE ARTIST

Choose one artist featured in *De Aquí!* and complete the profile.



ARTIST

THEIR ART FORM

WHAT INSPIRED THEM?

WHAT MESSAGE DID THEY SHARE?

2 WHAT DID YOU NOTICE?

Place a check next to everything you noticed in the performance.

☐ Breaking

☐ Salsa

☐ Contemporary dance

☐ Hip Hop

☐ Afro-Latin music

☐ Film

☐ Storytelling

☐ Houston artists

☐ Audience participation

3 MAKE THE CONNECTION

Pick one word from the word bank that each idea brings to mind. More than one answer may be possible.

IDENTITY → _____

CULTURE → _____

COMMUNITY → _____

CREATIVITY → _____



Dance • Family • Music • Art • Traditions • Stories • Movement • Expression

4 MY STORY

Interview a classmate. Take turns answering the questions.



Who are you?

Where are you from?

Why do you create?

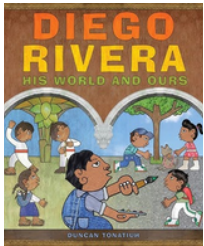


ONE CONNECTION I MADE

The artists in *De Aquí!* made me think differently about _____ because _____

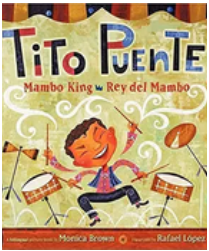
FIFTH GRADE RESOURCES

Books



"Diego Rivera: His World and Ours" by Duncan Tonatiuh

Introduces students to Mexican artist Diego Rivera and the murals he created to celebrate history, culture, and everyday people. The book encourages readers to consider what stories Rivera might portray if he were creating art today.



"Tito Puente: Mambo King / Rey del Mambo" by Monica Brown

This bilingual picture-book biography follows Tito Puente from his music-filled childhood in Spanish Harlem to his celebrated career as the King of Mambo. It highlights his creativity, cultural pride, and lifelong passion for rhythm and performance.



"Maybe Something Beautiful: How Art Transformed a Neighborhood" by F. Isabel Campoy & Theresa Howell

Based on a true story, this book follows a young girl and a muralist who bring neighbors together to transform a gray community through colorful public art.

Websites

Smithsonian Latino Center



Explore stories, art, and resources celebrating Latino history, culture, and contributions in the United States.

Link: [Smithsonian](https://www.smithsonian.org/latino-center)

Dance Videos from Mezclada



Watch Mezclada Dance Company blend movement, music, film, and Latino cultural influences.

Link: [Dance Videos](https://www.mezclada.com/dance-videos)

CONNECT WITH US

thehobbycenter.org/education

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**Let us know what you think.
Please take our survey!**



Post-Show
Student Survey



Post-Show
Teacher Survey

