

artSEEDS

Contemporary Performance
for Young Audiences



Malpaso Dance Company - *Despedida*

Student Matinée | February 27, 2015 | 10 a.m. at Kelly Strayhorn Theater

Welcome! Thank you for choosing to bring your students to Kelly Strayhorn Theater's artSEEDS presentation of *Despedida* by Malpaso Dance Company. This dance performance was inspired in part by a poem written by Argentinian poet Jorge Luis Borges, also titled *Despedida*. This matinée program has been specially designed for your students. We believe you will find the program powerful, provocative, engaging, and educational. The performance will inspire creative thinking and encourage self-expression among your students.

To help introduce the matinée, we have assembled this study guide. It includes a short biography, images, short clips of performances and a few questions you can begin using in your classroom to prepare students for your visit.

Matinee Overview:

We have planned a very interactive morning that will expose your student to various aspects of the creative process.

- Please plan to arrive at 9:30 am on Friday, February 27, 2015. The theater is located at 5941 Penn Ave (near the intersection of Penn and Highland Avenues in East Liberty), Pittsburgh, PA 15206.
- Upon arrival, your students will be given a brief orientation to the theater where they will also learn a little about career opportunities in the performing arts.
- As an introduction to the performance, students will participate in a brief warm-up activity.
- The artists will perform *Despedida* in its entirety. The piece runs just under 30 minutes.
- Students will be able to ask questions about the performance with the artists.

Despedida

by Jorge Luis Borges

Entre mi amor y yo han de levantarse
trescientas noches como trescientas paredes
y el mar será una magia entre nosotros.

No habrá sino recuerdos.
Oh tardes merecidas por la pena,
noches esperanzadas de mirarte,
campos de mi camino, firmamento
que estoy viendo y perdiendo...

Definitiva como un mármol
entristecerá tu ausencia otras tardes.

Between my love and me 300 nights
Like 300 walls will have to be raised
And the sea shall be like magic between us.

Nothing will remain except memories.
O afternoons brought in with suffering,
The nights aspiring to see you,
The fields on my way, the firmament
That I am seeing and losing...

Certain as marble
Your absence shall sadden other afternoons.

About the Artists

Based in Havana, Cuba, **Malpaso Dance Company** is committed to bringing Cuban contemporary dance into the 21st century by collaborating with top international choreographers and nurturing new voices in Cuban choreography. The company's core artistic vision is led by resident repertory choreographer Osnel Delgado Wambrug. The company was founded in 2012 by Delgado, Dailelys Carrazana Gonzalez, and Fernando Saéz. The ensemble consists of 10 dancers, including former members of Danza Contemporánea de Cuba (DCC).

Osnel Delgado Wambrug, co-founder, dancer, and choreographer of *Despedida*, graduated as dancer from the National Dance School in 2003. He was a member of DCC from 2003 to 2011. An award-recipient for his choreographic work, Delgado is currently a professor at the National Dance School in Havana.

Dailelys Carrazana Gonzalez, co-founder and dancer, graduated from the National Ballet School in Havana in 2003. She was a member of DCC from 2003 to 2011.

Nor María Olaechea Juárez, ballet master, graduated from the National Ballet School in 1971. In 1983, she received her Bachelor of Arts from the Institute of Culture NK Krupskaya in St. Petersburg, Russia. She was a professor at the National Ballet School from 1998 to 2010. Since 2010, she has been a professor at Instituto Superior de Arte.

Jorge Luis Borges (1899–1986), author of *Despedida*, was an Argentine short-story writer, essayist, poet and translator, and a key figure in Spanish language literature. His tales of fantasy and dreamworlds are classics of 20th-century world literature. Borges was profoundly influenced by European culture and English literature.



Links and Resources:

Videos: <http://kelly-strayhorn.org/events/malpasso-dance-company>

Interview with Fernando Saéz, Malpaso co-founder: <http://remezcla.com/culture/malpasso-dance-company-cuba-qa>

PRE-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES

Vocabulary

- Despedida Spanish for “farewell”
- Malpaso Spanish for “misstep”
- Cuba An island country in the Caribbean. The nation of Cuba comprises the main island of Cuba, the Isla de la Juventud and several archipelagos. Havana is the capital of Cuba and its largest city.

Literacy

Read and discuss Borges’ poetry, or Despedida more in depth. This piece is apparently a farewell to a loved one, but is it more than that? Possible discussion questions for the poem include:

- What happens in the poem?
- What similes/metaphors stand out to you? Why?
- What does it mean for the sea to be “like magic”?
- What does it mean to be “certain as marble”?

Culture/Geography

Have the students do a cultural research about Cuba. Perhaps break the class up and have groups research specific individual topics including contemporary food, music, arts, athletics, commerce, movies, weather, architecture, landscape, clothes, politics, education, religion, etc. Each student should be able to share one interesting idea or fact they discovered. Then have the students discuss similarity and differences to their own cultural experience. Other discussion questions include:

- Why is it important to think about other cultures?
- What is uniquely Pittsburgh in terms of culture? In terms of geography? How do they affect one another?

AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

Writing Exercise

Write a review about Despedida as a dance critic. Click [HERE](#) for an example by local critic, Jane Vranish. Make sure to address the following without giving too much away:

- What was the performance, who performed it, and a summary of what the performance was about?
- What did you like most about the performance?
- Would you recommend this to someone else to see, why or why not?

Writing Exercise

Who would you create a dance piece about? Would it be based on a particular dancer, a piece of literature, music, or your own life? Write about it. Why did you choose this topic? Why do you think you should be the person to share this story? What is your relationship to them?

Contact Info

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