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**THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR CHOREOGRAPHY-AKRON
& BALLET HISPANICO CO-HOST
DANCING CONVERSATION: AGING AS ACTION IN NYC**



Pictured L to R: Ashton Applewhite, Christy Bolingbroke, Clarence Brooks, Virginia Johnson, Audrey Madison, and Eduardo Vilaro.

Akron, OH (March 24, 2026) — As part of its 10th anniversary programming, The National Center for Choreography–Akron (NCCAkron) co-hosts a **Dancing Conversation: Aging as Action** event with Ballet Hispánico May 5 in New York, NY. **NCCAkron Executive/Artistic Director Christy Bolingbroke** (Akron, OH) will facilitate a discussion with artists and activists about how creative practices can inform aging.

Speakers include **Ashton Applewhite** (Brooklyn, NY), activist and author; **Clarence Brooks** (New York, NY), a dance artist who has performed works by 130+ choreographers; **Virginia Johnson** (New York, NY), author and renowned ballerina; **Audrey Hubbard Madison** (Brooklyn, NY), Founder of MoJazz Dance; and **Eduardo Vilaro** (New York, NY), Artistic Director & CEO of Ballet Hispánico.

[NCCAkron](#) is one of only two national centers for choreography in the U.S. Nationally recognized for redefining support for dance artists and thought leaders, to date, NCCAkron has worked with 800+ choreographers from 100 U.S. cities as they explore, experiment, and shape the future of the art form. The organization also offers audiences opportunities to experiment with and understand dance through conversations, events, podcasts, and books.

Dancing Conversations are free public talks hosted by NCCAkron, highlighting how dance and the arts relate to or reflect everyday life.

Christy Bolingbroke shares, “At NCCAkron, we believe dance helps us process the world in which we all live. Dancers and artists are working longer in their chosen vocation than ever before, reflecting a broader workforce where as many as five generations work together. Who better to explore the intersection of ageism and ableism that accompanies something inevitable for all of us—aging—than dance artists speaking from their lived experience and training?”

Event Details

Dancing Conversation: Aging as Action, co-hosted with Ballet Hispánico

Tuesday, May 5, 6-7pm

Ballet Hispánico Studios

167 West 89th Street, New York, NY, 10024

FREE with RSVP:

<https://www.nccakron.org/event-details/dancing-conversation-aging-as-action-1>

Speaker Bios

Ashton Applewhite An internationally recognized expert on ageism, Ashton Applewhite is the author of *This Chair Rocks: A Manifesto Against Ageism* and a co-founder of the Old School Anti-Ageism Clearinghouse. She has written for *Harper's*, *the Guardian*, and *the New York Times*; speaks widely at venues that have included the United Nations and the TED mainstage; and is at the forefront of the emerging movement to raise awareness of ageism and make age a criterion for diversity. In 2022 the United Nations named Ashton one of the Healthy Aging 50: fifty leaders transforming the world to be a better place to grow older.

Clarence Brooks is a freelance dance artist who has worked with Dance Exchange, danceTactics performance group, David Parker & The Bang Group, Pioneer Winter Collective, Sokolow Theatre/Dance Ensemble, and Megan Williams Dance Projects. A retired associate professor of dance, they are the recipient of several fellowships, awards, and honors; are in the documentary *The World of Alwin Nikolais*; are published in *Exposure Doesn't Pay the Bills: An Artist Guide to Building a Legacy in the 21st Century* and *One Teacher in 10: LGBT Educators Share Their Stories*; was a featured model in Allen Edmonds centennial celebration catalog, and their performance of Talley Beatty's "Mourner's Bench" is archived in the Library of Congress. They sit on the boards of danceTactics performance group, Doris Humphrey Foundation for Dance, Florida Dance Education Organization, Miami Dance Futures, Natural Movers Foundation, Inc, and Sokolow Theatre/Dance Ensemble. Follow Clarence on Instagram: @clbdreadeddancer.

Virginia Johnson (NCCAkron Board Member) is a renowned and trailblazing former ballerina who has shaped her field through work as a performer, editor and artistic director. She was a Dance Theatre of Harlem founding member under the direction of co-founder Arthur Mitchell. Johnson was an integral part of the organization for nearly 30 years. Johnson then helped create *Pointe* magazine, where she spent nine years as editor-in-chief before rejoining DTH as artistic director on Arthur Mitchell's invitation. In this role, she restored Dance Theatre of Harlem's professional touring company after an eight-year hiatus, balancing the rich history of DTH with building a new and vibrant future for the company and art form of ballet. In July 2023, she passed artistic leadership of DTH to former Principal Dancer and Resident Choreographer Robert Garland. She is currently a Dance Discipline panelist for YoungArts and a Visiting Scholar at NYU's Center for Ballet and the Arts, where she is writing a book about the 21st century evolution of ballet in this country. She serves on the Advisory Board of Dance NYC, on the Board of Works & Process and is an Honorary Member of The Society, Inc.

Audrey Hubbard Madison is the founder and artistic director of MoJazz Dance LLC, celebrating over 30 years as a performance and learning entity comprised of a performing dance company of women of a certain age, currently 50-75+ years young; and open-level modern jazz dance classes for those who "used to dance or always wanted to." She was an original member of the Charles Moore Dance Theater, initially known as Dances and Drums of Africa. Performance highlights include Dance Africa, Dance Black America, Jacob's Pillow, Symphony Space, Lincoln Center Outdoors and Theater of Riverside Church. During her tenure as a school-based educator, 1979 - 2006, Audrey created extensive dance programs for elementary and middle school students. She retired from the New York City Department of Education in 2013 after thirty-six years of service in both academic teaching and supervisory capacities. Since 2018, Audrey also joyfully works as a choreographer/ guest artist for Dances for a Variable Population, teaching dedicated and committed participants of the Queensbridge Riis Older Adult Center. Through Dance, in all forms, Audrey celebrates life through movement developing novice students into confident performers. Her guiding force is to encourage the dancer in each of us.

Eduardo Vilaro (NCCAkron Board Chair) is the Artistic Director & CEO of Ballet Hispánico. He joined Ballet Hispánico as Artistic Director in August 2009, becoming only the second person to head the company since its founding in 1970. In 2015, Mr. Vilaro added the role of Chief Executive Officer to his responsibilities. He has been part of the Ballet Hispánico family since 1988 as a dancer and educator until 1996. After completing his master's in interdisciplinary arts at Columbia College Chicago, he embarked on his own act of advocacy, with a ten-year record of achievement as Founder and Artistic Director of Luna Negra Dance Theater in Chicago.

Born in Cuba and raised in New York from the age of six, he is a frequent speaker on the merits of the intersectionality of cultures and the importance of nurturing and building Latinx leaders. His choreography is devoted to capturing the Latin American experience in its totality and diversity, and through its intersectional points with other diasporas and ability to spurn new dialogues about what it means to be an American. He has created more than 40 ballets during his career for Luna Negra, Ballet Hispánico, and commissions from the Ravinia Festival, the

Chicago Sinfonietta, the Grant Park Festival, the Lexington Ballet, and the Chicago Symphony. In 2001, he was a recipient of a Ruth Page Award for choreography. Mr. Vilaro was inducted into the Bronx Walk of Fame in 2016 and was awarded *HOMBRE* Magazine's 2017 Arts & Culture Trailblazer of the Year. In 2019, Mr. Vilaro received the West Side Spirit's WESTY Award, was honored by WNET for his contributions to the arts, and, recently was the recipient of the James W. Dodge Foreign Language Advocate Award. In August 2020, *City & State Magazine* included Mr. Vilaro in the inaugural Power of Diversity: Latin 100 list. He is a well-respected speaker on such topics as diversity, equity, and inclusion in the arts.

About NCCAkron

For ten years, the National Center for Choreography–Akron (NCCAkron) has been a leader in dance research and development and a connector for artists. As one of only two choreography centers in the U.S., NCCAkron is an incubator and hub for dance. We also offer audiences opportunities to experiment with and understand dance through conversations, events, podcasts, and books. Over the past decade, NCCAkron has supported 800+ dance artists across 100 U.S. cities, serving as a cultural matchmaker for choreographers and a hyperagent for the national dance field. Offering space and resources for rigorous play and positive failure, NCCAkron has redefined what it means to support dance artists. For more information, visit nccakron.org.

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