

Línea Recta **(2016)**



Lyvan Verdecia and Melissa Verdecia in *Línea Recta* | Photo by Paula Lobo

Choreography by Annabelle Lopez Ochoa

Music by Eric Vaarzon Morel

Costume Design by Danielle Truss

Lighting Design by Michael Mazzola

About The Choreography

Colombian-Belgian choreographer Annabelle Lopez Ochoa's motivation for creating *Línea Recta* originated from the intense flamenco training in her childhood. Annabelle observed there is rarely "touch" between the dancers in flamenco. She became intrigued to create a physical connection between dancers in the construction of her own work. Annabelle used props including a long bustle skirt and fans as a third element between the dancers, which emphasized the distance between their partners, reiterating the conspicuous absence of physical partnering.

The title of the piece, *Línea Recta*, comes from a French expression meaning, "directly to the point," contradicting a key element of the flamenco dance style, which aims to have dancers circle around each other.

About the Choreographer

Annabelle Lopez Ochoa completed her dance education at the Royal Ballet School of Antwerp in Belgium. After a 12-year long career in various European dance companies, Annabelle decided in 2003 to focus solely on choreography. Annabelle is an award-winning and sought-after choreographer that has created works for 61 dance companies around the world. Ms. Lopez Ochoa is a versatile choreographer who works regularly within the dance field but also creates choreographies for theatre, opera, musical theatre and in 2006, for the celebrated Dutch fashion designers Viktor & Rolf.

Ms. Lopez Ochoa has won several choreography awards and accolades which range from the Jacob's Pillow Choreography Award and honorary mention in the *Libro de Honor del Teatro Alicia Alonso, Cuba*. In 2014, Fall for Dance NYC commissioned her work, *Sombrerísimo*, created for Ballet Hispánico, included in the "Best of 2013" by *Dance Magazine*.



Artistic Components

Music

Flamenco guitar runs in the family for composer, Eric Vaarzon Morel, who created the music heard in *Línea Recta*. His grandfather was a painter and a Dutch flamenco guitarist. Morel learned to play the flamenco guitar at sixteen years old and in the 1980s, he toured throughout Europe with a flamenco group. He started his own band named “Chanela” and worked internationally with a variety of artists.

Costume

The costumes, designed by Danielle Truss, were inspired by the typical flamenco dress, known as a *sevillana* dress or a gypsy dress, and by the work of Colombian photographer, Ruvén Afanador, in *Mil Besos*. In the opening of the work, the lead dancer uses a red dress with a long skirt. Ms. Lopez Ochoa’s initial idea for the skirt was to have it represent a river. She imagined the long skirt moving through space creating waves. The dress highlights the movement of the dancer creating the image of a creature, a worm, or perhaps a caterpillar. During the creative process, Ms. Lopez Ochoa discovered that the costume informs the movement, and utilized this to complement the choreography.

Props

Fans were introduced to Spain by the people of North Africa in the 14th century. They became very popular and characteristic of flamenco dance. In *Línea Recta*, the dancers use them to complement the movement and help reference the flamenco influences of the work.

Vocabulary

Flamenco

Flamenco is an art form based on the various folkloric music traditions of southern Spain and originated in the culture and traditions of the *Cale Roma* people, commonly known in Spanish as *Gitanos*, from the Andalusia region. They also having a historical presence in Extremadura and Murcia. In a wider sense, the term is used to refer to a variety of Spanish and Roma musical styles. Flamenco origins are still unclear and the subject of many hypotheses. The most widespread belief is that flamenco was developed through the cross-cultural exchange between Andalusia's *morisco* (formerly Muslim) peasantry and incoming *gitanos* during the 16th century, specifically in Southwestern Andalusia. However, new research has supported older origins of flamenco in the Roma migrations of the 14th century from Rajasthan, pointing to the many similarities between flamenco and Kathak, a dance of Northern India which later adapted into modern flamenco. On 16 November 2010, UNESCO officially added flamenco to the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

Fusion

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the word “fusion” refers to “a union by or as if by melting: such as, a merging of diverse, distinct, or separate elements into a unified whole.” In dance we refer to fusion when dances combine different techniques or dance forms. In the case of *Línea Recta*, the work is a fusion of ballet, flamenco, and modern dance.

Palmas

Palmas is a handclapping style which plays an essential role in flamenco music. It is used to help punctuate and accentuate the song and dance. There are two main ways to clap in flamenco, ***palmas sordas*** and ***palmas claras***. ***Palmas claras*** are used



during furious and loud footwork or during loud musical pieces. The first three fingers of one hand are held firm and clapped into the outstretched palm of the other. This should result in a very crisp snappy sound. **Palmas sorda** are used during guitar intros or during the singing, so as not to drown it out. The hands are cupped softly so that the fingers of one hand fit snugly into the gap between the thumb and forefinger of the other. When the hands are brought together a muffled pop can be heard.

Dance Partnering

This is dancing performed by a pair of dancers, in which the pair strives to achieve a harmony of coordinated movements so that the audience remains unaware of the mechanics.

Guiding Questions

1. *How do you find ways of embracing different cultures within your own family traditions?*
2. *What are other ways dancers can partner together without making any physical contact?*

Classroom Activities

Activity A: Find two props at home. Use these props to inspire a short dance creation.

Activity B: Invite students to choose a song that relates to their family's culture and to play it for the class. Afterwards, have them talk about their culture, the instruments being used, and how music plays a role in their culture and in celebrating traditions.

Additional Resources

- [Behind the Scenes: Annabelle Lopez Ochoa's *Linea Recta*](#)
- [5 Interesting Facts About Flamenco](#)
- [Mil Besos, Ruvén Afanador](#)