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Press Contacts:

Erica Diamond

Senior Account Executive
The Patton Group
(305) 534-0081, ext. 21
erica@thepattongroupinc.com

Roberto Santiago

Public Relations Manager
Miami City Ballet
(305) 929-7000, ext. 1602
rsantiago@miamicityballet.org

75TH BIRTHDAY BASH HELD FOR BALLET LEGEND EDWARD VILLELLA!

Miami City Ballet dancers, staff, supporters and friends celebrated the 75th birthday of legendary Founding Artistic Director, Edward Villella, with cocktails, dinner, dancing and a pre-screening of the company's National PBS special!

(MIAMI BEACH, FL) On Saturday, October 1st, [Miami City Ballet](#) dancers, staff, friends and supporters gathered together to celebrate and honor America's most renowned male ballet dancer, Company Founding Artistic Director, [Edward Villella](#). The celebration, a special 75th birthday bash for Villella, took place at Miami City Ballet studios (Ophelia and Juan Js. Roca Center) in Miami Beach. The evening's festivities included cocktails, dinner, dancing and a pre-screening of the ballet's WNET/ PBS National television special.

The evening began with a cocktail reception sponsored by Bacardi U.S.A., followed by dinner in the 225-seat studio theater, and a special pre-screening of the WNET/PBS program: PBS Arts from Miami: *Great Performances: "Miami City Ballet Dances Balanchine & Tharp"*. The program features a trio of signature works by **George Balanchine** and **Twyla Tharp** that showcase the company's critically acclaimed performances of Balanchine's ***Square Dance*** and ***Western Symphony*** and Tharp's **"The Golden Section."**

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Dancing and tributes followed. Friends and supporters in attendance included Company co-founder Toby Lerner Ansin, Ana-Marie and Robert Barlick, Tina and Dan Carlo, Charlie Cinnamon, James and Bobi Eroncig, Ron and Charlene Esserman, Marvin Ross Friedman and Adrienne bon Haes, Darla and John Karlton, Rose Miniaci and family and Henry and Harriet Pownall. Miami Beach City Commissioner Michael Gongora read a special proclamation declaring October 1st “Edward Villella Day.”

The evening ended with a room-wide, standing ovation "Happy Birthday" serenade as Edward blew out the candles on his cake. A special video montage played highlighting many of the most memorable and outstanding moments of his illustrious career. Corporate sponsorship was provided by Bacardi U.S.A., Brooks Brothers, Aventura Worldwide Transportation Service and Jenny’s Flowers, Inc. Print sponsorship courtesy of *Selecta Magazine*. The event was a fund-raiser to support the artistic efforts of Miami City Ballet.

PBS Arts from Miami: *Great Performances: “Miami City Ballet Dances Balanchine & Tharp”* is a production of THIRTEEN in association with WNET, one of America’s most prolific and respected public media providers. The program airs on PBS stations across the country on Friday, October 28 at 9 p.m. ET and locally in Miami on WPBT2.

Edward Villella is regarded as the greatest American-born male ballet dancer of our time. He proved that a tough, brash kid out of Maritime College could become a major artist, and in doing so, changed the way men danced in America and the way male dancers were perceived. He currently serves on the Board of Trustees for the School of American Ballet. His biggest accomplishment is co-founding Miami City Ballet with philanthropist Toby Lerner Ansin in 1985. Villella has taken the renowned company to dizzying heights, winning critical acclaim in South Florida, New York and around the world. This July, the company made its Paris debut performing for three-weeks to sold-out houses and standing ovations at the world-famous Théâtre du Châtelet.

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Miami City Ballet's new season runs October through April at the Adrienne Arsht Center in Miami, Broward Center in Fort Lauderdale and Kravis Center in West Palm Beach. Highlights include the World Premiere of ***Viscera*** by Liam Scarlett, the return of the full-length productions of ***Giselle*** and ***Coppélia*** and *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker™*. The Opus One Orchestra performs live for all repertory programs. Subscribe now for best seating and prices at www.miamicityballet.org or call (305) 929-7010 or toll-free (877) 929-7010.

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About Miami City Ballet:

Critically acclaimed by *The New York Times*, Miami City Ballet (MCB) was founded in 1985 by Artistic Director Edward Villella. The company engages over 40 dancers and features a repertoire of more than 90 ballets which they perform in the four home counties of Broward, Miami-Dade, Palm Beach and Collier, and around the world. MCB maintains its headquarters in Miami Beach in a facility designed by renowned architectural firm Arquitectonica. The facility houses rehearsal studios and administrative offices as well as the Company's school: Miami City Ballet School. Visit us at www.miamicityballet.org. You can also "like" us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/miamicityballet) or follow us on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/miamicityballet).

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