

# *Cuban National Ballet planning new projects with US companies*

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New York, May 16 (RHC-PL)—The Cuban National Ballet -BNC- is planning new cooperation projects with prestigious US companies, such as ABT and NYCB.

In statements to Prensa Latina news agency, the Cuban ballet ensemble's deputy director, premier dancer Viengsay Valdés, the BNC and the US ballet companies are jointly preparing a grand gala next year in Havana to honor BNC's Director and ballet legend, prima ballerina assoluta Alicia Alonso.

In her recent visit to New York, Valdés met with American Ballet Theater's Artistic Director, Kevin McKenzie, and Executive Director, Kara Medoff Barnet. She also had fruitful talks with the Artistic Directors of the New York City Ballet, Wendy Whelan and Jonathan Stafford, and Executive Director, Katherine Brown. Valdés also met with Linda Shelton, Director of the Joyce Theatre, and spoke with US choreographer, Justin Peck, from NYCB; Kyle Abraham, of the Paul Taylor Dance Company; former ABT Director, Jane Hermann, and renowned Russian-American choreographer Alexei Ratmansky, whose version of *Harlequinade* Valdés was able to see.

Valdés is scheduled to prepare a new BNC season with 'new proposals and challenges for our dancers', she said, and an upcoming tour of Spain.

.The prima ballerina, who is known was one of the top Cuban ballet dancers, has been a guest artist with the Washington Ballet in the US; the Ballet Concierto of Puerto Rico; the Joburg Ballet in South Africa; the Bolshoi and Mariinsky in Russia, among other ensembles. Valdés has been granted the National Cultural Order in 1999, the Alejo Carpentier Medal in 2003 and the Raúl Gómez García Order in 2014 by the Ministry of Culture, while she's been awarded with the Best Female Performance Prize of the Cuban Writers and Artists Association –UNEAC- in 2009 and the Lorna Burdsall Award in 2015.

Valdés was chosen among the 100 top ballerinas in the world in the 2010-2011 season by the prestigious magazine Dance Europe, and has taken her art to stages from the world over. As of January 22, 2019, Viengsay Valdés has been the deputy Artistic Director of the company, led by ballet legend Alicia Alonso.

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