

INTRODUCTION: 1:27 min. Photo: Alberto Oviedo.

# Lourdes Lopez: A Lifetime in the Ballet

By Elman + Skye

**L**ourdes Lopez became Artistic Director of Miami City Ballet (MCB) in September 2012, bringing with her a nearly 40-year career in dance, television, teaching and arts management. As a Soloist and Principal Dancer with New York City Ballet, she danced for two legends of the art form, George Balanchine and Jerome Robbins.

Lopez was born in Havana, Cuba in 1958 and raised in Miami by her parents along with two sisters. She began taking ballet lessons at the age of 5, on the recommendation of a doctor. At the age of 11 she received a full scholarship to the School of American Ballet, (SAB), the official school of New York City Ballet, where she continued her ballet training in Miami during the year and then in New York during the summers. At 14, she moved to New York permanently to devote herself to full-time studies at SAB, and shortly after turning 16, she joined the corps de ballet of New York City Ballet.

Under the direction of George Balanchine and Jerome Robbins, her star rose quickly at New York City Ballet where she was soon dancing corps and soloist roles in much of the company's repertory. She was promoted to Soloist in 1981 and Principal Dancer in 1984, performing countless featured roles including Violin Concerto, Firebird, Serenade, Liebeslieder Walzer, Divertimento No. 15, Symphony in C, Agon, The Four Temperaments, Dances at a Gathering, Glass Pieces, Fancy Free, In the Night, Four Seasons, and Brandenburg. Lopez's great interest in children also found her writing and contributing to many of the company's Family Matinee series.

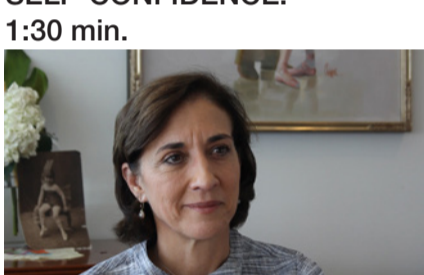
Upon retirement, Lopez joined WNBC-TV in New York as a Cultural Arts reporter, writing and producing feature segments on the arts, artists and arts education. She was also a full-time senior faculty member and Director of Student Placement, Student Evaluation and Curriculum Planning at New York's Ballet Academy East. She served on the dance faculty of Barnard College and guest taught at numerous dance institutions and festivals in the United States.

In 2002, Lopez became the Executive Director of The George Balanchine Foundation, which works to educate the public about dance and to further the art of ballet, with a special emphasis on the work and achievements of George Balanchine. In this position, she oversaw the 2004 Balanchine Centennial Celebration, a worldwide festival honoring the choreographer and his legacy. Among the events that year was the symposium "Balanchine: Past, Present and Future," which was held in St. Petersburg, Russia, and which was a collaboration among the Mariinsky Theater, the Hermitage Museum, and The George Balanchine Foundation. Lopez co-founded The Cuban Artists Fund, which supports Cuban and Cuban-American artists in their endeavors. She also co-founded Morphoses with Christopher Wheeldon in 2007 — a New York-based dance company aiming to revitalize dance through innovative collaborations with important artists from the worlds of music, visual arts, design, film and fashion; and by inviting younger and broader audiences to engage in and actively experience dance.

In 2014 Lopez was elected to serve on the Ford Foundation's Board of Trustees, marking the first time an artist was elected to serve on its board. In 2007 she received an award from the American Immigration Law Foundation honoring Cuban Americans for their accomplishments and contributions to American society and in 2011, she received the prestigious Jerome Robbins Award for her years in dance. She has served as a dance panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts. Lopez is married to investment banker George Skouras. They are the parents of two daughters: Adriel and Calliste.

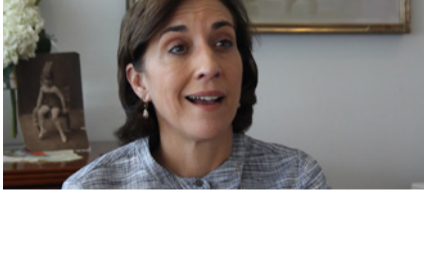
The videos below are organized by topic and run between 30 seconds and 5 minutes. Click on any video. You must be connected to the Internet to view the videos.

**SEIZES OPPORTUNITIES:**  
2:21 min.



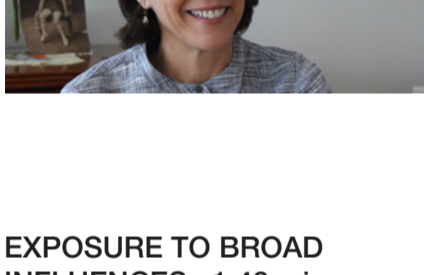
*When did you start to feel passionate about ballet, and what was it like to move from Miami to New York City at the age of 14?*

**SELF-CONFIDENCE:**  
1:30 min.



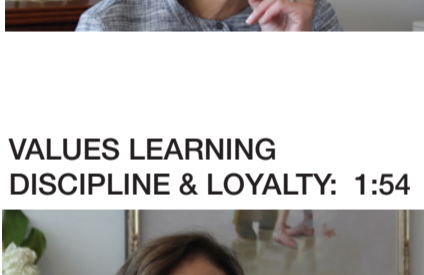
*Did you live in a dormitory?*

**WORK ETHIC:**  
1:26 min.



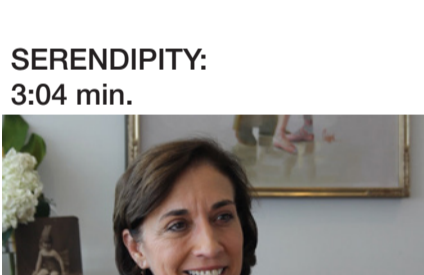
*Who were your biggest influencers ?*

**OPEN TO CHANGE:**  
3:12 min.



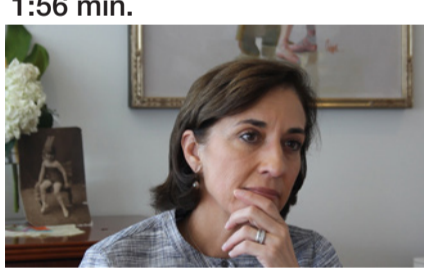
*What was your motivation for leaving New York, after living there for 40 years, and returning home to Miami ?*

**EXPOSURE TO BROAD INFLUENCES:** 1:48 min.



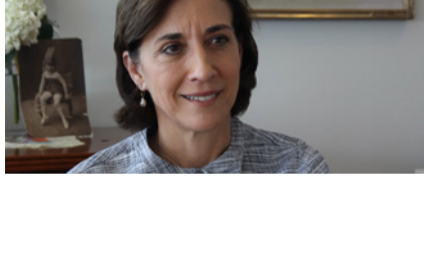
*Miami is the most diverse city in the USA. Does your programing aim for global diversity ?*

**VALUES LEARNING DISCIPLINE & LOYALTY:** 1:54



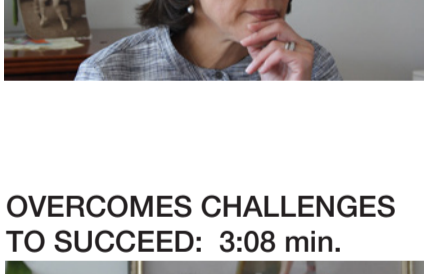
*Miami is a world-class city. A southern port of entry to a continent. Do you want performers in your company to reflect global diversity and Latinos in particular ?*

**SERENDIPITY:**  
3:04 min.



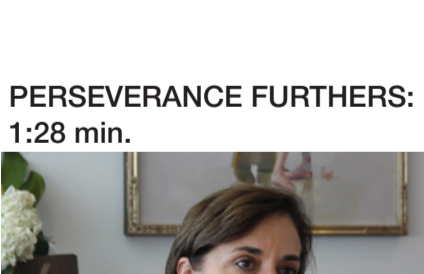
*You have employed work by artists Shepard Fairey and Michele Oka Doner in your programs. Do you actively seek artists with Miami connections ?*

**COLLABORATION:**  
1:56 min.



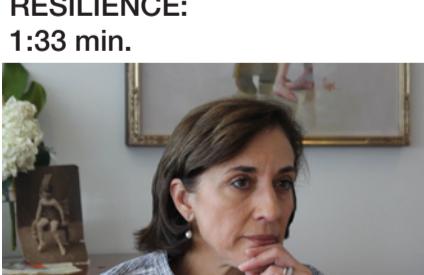
*What role does serendipity play in your selection of collaborators ?*

**INSIGHT & INSPIRATION:**  
2:46 min.



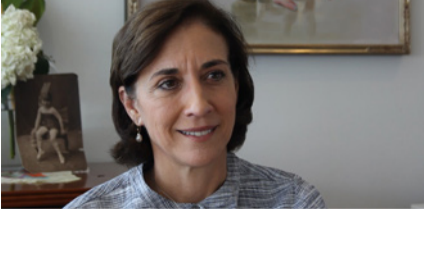
*Why did you decide to make Miami City Ballet the world's second largest repository of Balanchine's works ?*

**UNDERSTANDS THE BUSINESS OF ART:** 4:45 min.



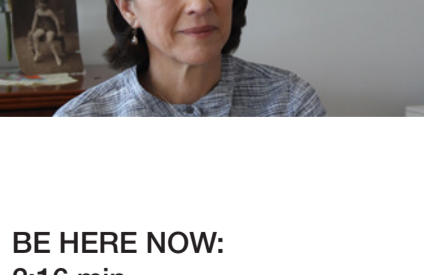
*Tell us about the outreach programs at Miami City Ballet.*

**OVERCOMES CHALLENGES TO SUCCEED:** 3:08 min.



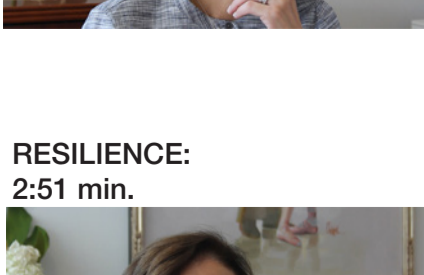
*In some ways dancers have more in common with professional athletes than other forms of art. Do dancers prepare very well for life after dance?*

**PERSEVERANCE FURTHERS:**  
1:28 min.



*Tony Schwartz developed a concept called "The Corporate Athlete" — athletes train 90% of their time to perform 10%, while business people perform 90% of their time and only train 10%. How does this compare to dancers?*

**RESILIENCE:**  
1:33 min.



*Do dancers use steroids ?*

**SERENDIPITY:**  
3:02 min.



*Describe a challenging situation with a successful outcome.*

**BE HERE NOW:**  
0:35 sec.



*What do you know now that you wish you knew when you first started to become a professional dancer ?*

**BE HERE NOW:**  
2:16 min.



*What are your key criteria for a successful performance or an unsuccessful performance ?*

**RESILIENCE:**  
2:51 min.



*Does it matter if dance critics have never danced ballet ?*

**CRITICAL THINKING:**

1:06 min.



*What is the impact of dance critics ?*

**INSIGHT & INSPIRATION:**

3:47 min.



*What are your goals for Miami City Ballet ?*