



**SMU Meadows Dance Ensemble Presents the World Premiere  
Of New Choreography for Stravinsky's *The Firebird***

*Choreography created by Claudia Lavista and Victor Manuel Ruiz  
Of Delfos Danza Contemporanea in Mazatlán, Mexico*

DALLAS (SMU) April 13, 2016 – On May 11, 2016, the Meadows Dance Ensemble will perform the world premiere of a new interpretation of Igor Stravinsky's *The Firebird* by noted choreographers Claudia Lavista and Victor Manuel Ruiz, artistic directors of Delfos Danza Contemporanea in Mazatlán, Mexico. The newly choreographed version of Stravinsky's 1910 classic *The Firebird* replaces the magical and mercurial glowing bird of Russian folklore with a more contemporary version of Stravinsky's masterwork, inspired by the visual aesthetics of Hieronymus Bosch.

The theme of migration provides the undercurrent to the dance, in both a large and a small sense. Dancers move under an undulating fabric "ocean" covered with dozens of ordinary household goods—a toaster, a lamp, a doll—alluding to the displacement of both people and things. Equal parts visual poetry and choreographic expression, the work provides a universe of symbols interwoven in a series of vignettes that allow for an open interpretation by audience members.

Following Delfos Danza Contemporanea's past success in reinterpreting works by Stravinsky, Patty Harrington Delaney, chair of the SMU Division of Dance, invited Lavista and Ruiz to create the choreography for Meadows students. In all, 17 dancers will perform the piece, under the direction of Lavista and Ruiz, who worked directly with the students during a residency at SMU Meadows. Students have also been invited to contribute their own personal reflections and experiences in the creation of the final piece.

The *Firebird* project exemplifies the work of Delfos Danza Contemporanea, a collective of artists and educators dedicated to new ideas, new approaches and new forms. Their 2015 version of Stravinsky's iconic *The Rite of Spring* was praised by critics as "breathtaking" and "unforgettable." Founded in 1992 by Lavista and Ruiz, the group is today considered Mexico's premier contemporary dance company and one of the top artistic companies in Latin America.

“Every human being is an immigrant,” says Lavista. “We spend our entire lives leaving behind ideas, spaces, and concepts. As we migrate we carry with us memories and relics from our previous lives. We develop new ways of thinking, communicating, and coexisting as we experience rootlessness and constant adaptation. We migrate to survive. We migrate because we have hope. During migration something within us dies, only to give birth to something else. This work is dedicated to the constant travelers—the men and women worldwide who mobilize their entire lives and start anew from scratch—and also to the small, internal migrations that happen to us all every day, allowing us to embrace the world in its magnificence and diversity.”

Lavista, the recipient of numerous national and international awards, has performed worldwide and created more than 45 works for companies throughout North America. She has also been a guest artist at prestigious dance festivals and colleges in the U.S. and Mexico and conducted workshops and master classes internationally. In addition to serving as co-artistic director of Delfos, she is co-director and a teacher of the Mazatlán Professional School of Contemporary Dance and director of the Creators Special Program at the Arts Center in Oaxaca, specializing in the development of young choreographers.

Ruiz is a dancer, choreographer, teacher, and lighting designer whose 30-year career has included numerous awards in each category. He has performed extensively, taught master classes internationally, created more than 50 works for dance companies, had his choreography presented at dance festivals and venues in multiple countries, and earned international praise for the clarity and poetry of his choreographic works and lighting design. With Lavista, he is co-artistic director and lighting designer of Delfos and co-director and a teacher of the Mazatlán Professional School of Contemporary Dance.

*The Firebird* will be performed at the Winspear Opera House on May 11, 2016, for “Meadows at the Winspear,” the annual fundraising event for the Meadows School of the Arts, with the Meadows Dance Ensemble collaborating with the acclaimed Meadows Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Paul Phillips.

## **ABOUT THE MEADOWS SCHOOL OF THE ARTS**

The Meadows School of the Arts, formally established at SMU in 1969 and named in honor of benefactor Algur H. Meadows, is one of the foremost arts education institutions in the United States. The Meadows School offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in advertising, art, art history, arts management and arts entrepreneurship, communication studies, creative computation, dance, film and media arts, journalism, music, and theatre. The goal of the Meadows School of the Arts, as a comprehensive educational institution, is to prepare students to meet the demands of professional careers. The Meadows School is a leader in developing innovative outreach and community engagement programs, challenging its students to make a difference locally and globally by developing connections between art, entrepreneurship, and change.

The Meadows School of the Arts is also a convener for the arts in North Texas, serving as a catalyst for new collaborations and providing critical industry research. For more information, visit [www.smu.edu/meadows](http://www.smu.edu/meadows).

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