

Honoring Ana Villafañe, Héctor J. Torres & Jay Haddock Ortiz, and Wells Fargo, represented by Anna Bard

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Washington D.C. – GALA Hispanic Theatre will host its annual **Noche de Estrellas** benefit event honoring three extraordinary leaders at the National Museum of Women in the Arts on Monday, April 6 at 6:30 pm. The 2020 honorees are: **Ana Villafañe**, who starred as Gloria Estefan in the hit Broadway Musical *On Your Feet!*, for Artistic Excellence and Inspiration; **Héctor J. Torres & Jay Haddock Ortiz**, principals at Absolute Hospitality LLC, for Leadership in Community; and **Wells Fargo**, represented by Anna Bard, for Philanthropy in the Arts.

Master of Ceremonies for the **Noche de Estrellas** is Tsi-tsi-ki Felix, News Anchor -Host "PoliticaYa". The guest auctioneer is **Michael Ruiz**, Fannie Mae.

Proceeds from the event support GALA's youth education programs, which include the Student Matinee program that serves 9,000 students and teachers in the metropolitan area, and the Paso Nuevo program, an arts and cultural enrichment program for Latino and multicultural teens in the District of Columbia. Paso Nuevo was recognized with a 2012 National Arts and Humanities Youth Arts Program Award by former First Lady Michelle Obama.

In addition to the Honoree Awards, **Noche de Estrellas** will feature performances by Tanya de León, 2020 Helen Hayes Award Nominee, Outstanding Actress in a Musical (FAME); Jonathan Acosta, composer and musician; and Paso Nuevo Alumni.

Silent and live auctions will include exotic get-aways, theater tickets, sumptuous dinners, and unique experiences. The event is black tie optional and will be attended by several Latin American Ambassadors and international diplomats, the Mayor of the District of Columbia, leaders of DC's arts and business communities, corporate representatives, and the press.

The **Noche de Estrellas** event will be held at the National Museum of Women in the Arts at 1250 New York Avenue, NW. Street parking is available after 6:00 pm.

THE HONOREES

Ana Villafañe / Artistic Excellence and Inspiration

Ana Villafañe was named one of the New York Times' "30 under 30" and has been honored by the National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts for her trailblazing Latinx representation in entertainment. Of Cuban and Salvadoran descent, she originated the role of Gloria Estefan in the hit Broadway musical *On Your Feet* (2014-2017). For her portrayal of Estefan, she received the 2015 Theatre World Award for Best Actress and was nominated for the Outer Critics Circle Award, Drama League Award, and Astaire Awards. Other credits

include the role of Nina Rosario in *In The Heights* at the Kennedy Center in 2018 and the critically acclaimed *Collective Rage: A Play in Five Betties* at MCC, where she made her Off-Broadway debut and for which she earned a second Drama League Award nomination. On television she co-starred with Kal Penn on NBC's comedy series "Sunnyside" in 2019 and plays Dr. Valentina Castro on NBC's hit medical drama "New Amsterdam." Ana is the official ambassador for Viva Hollywood, the Hispanic outreach program within the Broadway League, and the national spokesperson for the Arthritis Foundation. She is also a supporter of Revolución Latina and helped launch New York City's first Radio Lollipop program at Morgan Stanley's New York Presbyterian Children's Hospital. She joined Lin Manuel-Miranda, Jennifer López, Camila Cabello, Gina Rodriguez, Marc Anthony, Ruben Blades, and others on the chart-topping single "Almost like Praying" to help re-build Puerto Rico after hurricane Maria. Instagram: @anavillafaneofficial.

Héctor J. Torres & Jay Haddock Ortiz / **Leadership in Community**

Héctor J. Torres is a Principal of Absolute Hospitality LLC, which he founded with Jay Haddock after retiring as a hotel executive in Washington, DC and New York City. During his 49 years in the hospitality industry, he served as Vice President of Capital Hotels & Suites, and in various positions with Grand Heritage Hotels, Meristar Hotels, Sheraton Corp., Loew's, and Grand Metropolitan Hotels of London. Since his retirement in 2018, he has devoted his time to pursuing his creative interests as a painter, drawing from his experience as a teacher at Jamaica High School in New York City, lecturer of Art History at St. John's University in New York City, and instructor of studio art classes at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Héctor designed curriculum for community education programs that focused on bilingual, bi-cultural education for pre-school age children in the inner city, which led to the design of an HEW-funded program on "bi-culturalism" through the arts. His artwork has been exhibited at GALA; local galleries; exhibitions at Children's National Hospital; Art After Dark, hosted by Moya Design Partners and the Downtown BID; and a group show at the Children's National Hospital honoring Quincy Jones. He has also designed sets for three GALA productions; donated his artwork to community organizations, and has served on numerous boards of directors and advisory councils of local organizations, including GALA, Destination DC, Washington Performing Arts, and Identity, and advisory committees for the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities and the Small Business Association. Currently, he is a member of the boards of directors of Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School and Community Capital, and the GALA advisory board. Hector has been recognized as General Manager of the Year by the Hotel Association of Washington DC, Minority Business Leader by the Washington Business Journal, the Power Meter 100 of El Tiempo Latino, and by Whitman Walker Clinic for his work as curator for the "Art For Life" annual event and which received a Mayor's Art Award. Born in New York City, he graduated from St. John's University. Héctor is married to Jay Haddock Ortiz, his partner of 50 years

www.hectorjuliotorresartist.com

Jay Haddock Ortiz is a Principal of Absolute Hospitality LLC, which he created with Héctor Torres in 2018. He began his career in the hotel industry with Grand Metropolitan Hotels of London in New York; held positions with the Sheraton Corporation; and served as Executive Vice President of Potomac Hotel Group (now Modus Hotels), created with local developer Conrad Cafritz. In 1997, he and the Lipnick family created Capital Hotels & Suites, where he served as President until June 2018. A native of Puerto Rico, he has been active with numerous government and community organizations since coming to Washington, DC. He is a member of the board of directors of Events DC, where he has held several leadership positions, and the Hotel Association of Washington, DC; and is on the advisory boards of Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School and GALA Hispanic Theatre. He was appointed Chair of the Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs by Mayor Anthony Williams; was a member of the regional advisory board of the Small Business Administration; and served on the board of directors of Whitman Walker Clinic, where he created Art for Life, an annual fundraiser that raised \$1 million for the organization. Jay has been recognized as a 2017 and 2019 Power Meter 100 by El Tiempo Latino; the Mayor's Art Award for his work with "Art For Life"; the Chairman's Award from The Greater Hispanic Chamber of Commerce for his community work; the Minority Business Leader Award from the Washington Business Journal; and the Culinary Arts Visionary Award from the

Restaurant Association of Metropolitan Washington-Education Foundation for his dedication and leadership in culinary workforce development. A graduate of St. John's University of New York, he is married to Héctor Torres.

Wells Fargo, represented by Anna Bard / **Philanthropy in the Arts**

Anna Bard leads Community Relations in Maryland, Virginia and Washington, D.C. for Wells Fargo, one of our nation's most generous companies. Her team is responsible for Wells Fargo's philanthropic strategy, team member volunteerism, disaster response and executive engagement across the Mid-Atlantic. In 2018, Wells Fargo contributed over \$440 million to large and small organizations across the country. In Greater Washington DC, Anna's team directed over \$4.3 million in philanthropic investments to local nonprofit organizations. Wells Fargo's support of the arts is centered on the power of the arts in education and equity - which is why they've proudly supported GALA Theatre for over ten years!

Anna is an active member of Washington Regional Association of Grantmakers, their Racial Equity Working Group, and serves on the board of directors of DC Central Kitchen. A North Carolina native and graduate of UNC-Chapel Hill and Queens University, Anna has lived in the DC area for ten years. She and her husband have two sons, ages five and three, and a mini golden doodle.

The Honorary Host Committee

His Excellency José Arguillo, Ambassador of Argentina to the United States; Her Excellency Martha Bárcena Coqui, Ambassador of Mexico to the United States; His Excellency Francisco Campbell, Ambassador of Nicaragua to the United States; His Excellency Santiago Cabanas Ansorena, Ambassador of Spain to the United States; Mari Carmen Aponte, Former Ambassador of the United States to El Salvador; Luigi R. Einaudi, Former Ambassador of the United States to the OAS; Beatriz

Eugenia Nava, Acting Director, Mexican Cultural Institute; Honorable Muriel Bowser, Mayor, District of Columbia; Honorable Phil Mendelson, Chairman, City Council of the District of Columbia; Honorable Brianne Nadeau, Councilmember Ward 1, City Council of the District of Columbia; Honorable Anita Bonds, Councilmember at Large, City Council of the District of Columbia; Honorable David Grosso, Councilmember at Large, City Council of the District of Columbia; Honorable Robert C White Jr., Councilmember at Large, City Council of the District of Columbia; Allison Kokkoros, Chief Executive Officer, Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School; Dorothy P. McSweeney, Chair Emeritus, DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities; Jackie Reyes, Director, Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs.

Sponsors of GALA's 2020 Noche de Estrellas event (to date) include: Lead Level: Verizon. Star Level: Marvin Weissberg, Wells Fargo, Green Construction. Ovation Level: International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers, Community Capital Corp, M&T Bank. Luminary Level: City National Bank. In-Kind: Line DC, Watermark Design Office, 3 Stars Brewery, Limo Pro by Joe Gottesman, DanMartin Productions, and Giant Food.

Tickets

Tickets for the Noche de Estrellas are \$225 per person, and \$400 per couple. For more information about the event or sponsorship opportunities, please call **202-234-7174**, e-mail silvia@galatheatre.org, or visit www.galatheatre.org.

WHAT : Honoring Ana Villafañe, Hector J. Torres & Jay Haddock Ortiz, and Wells Fargo,
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WHEN : 2020-03-10 21:03:45

WHERE :

CONTACT:

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