Prominent Female Latin Choreographers Will Have a Page in Wikipedia

This is a translated version of an original article that may be accessed [here](#).

As Part of Women's History Month activities, Queens College will hold a Wiki-Edit-a-Thon to create pages about outstanding women in dance and choreography.

For the second consecutive year, Queens College will hold a Wiki-Edit-a-Thon to include biographies of outstanding artists as part of the celebrations for Women's History Month. / Supplied

**BY:** CARMEN MOLINA TAMACAS   MARCH 27, 2018
Desiree Godsell and Larissa Velez-Jackson, two leading female Latin dancers and choreographers based in New York and New Jersey, will have their own page in Wikipedia, the global collaboration platform encyclopedia.

This will be possible thanks to the second Wiki-Edit-a-Thon that Queens College will hold on Wednesday, March 28, as part of the activities dedicated to Women's History Month. The organization of the activity is carried out by Nancy Foasberg, librarian, and Edisa Weeks, professor of dance.

“There is an apparent systematic prejudice throughout Wikipedia to the extent that most of the active editors in Wikipedia are white, male, and highly educated, so that while in principle anyone can edit it, it is a rather specific group of people who in fact do. This has led to a bias in topics that are appropriately covered versus those that are not covered as well, and dance is one of those topics that receives minimal coverage in Wikipedia,” explained Foasberg.

She stated that Edit-a-Thons are partly “an attempt to rectify this imbalance by attracting new editors to Wikipedia.” During the day, they will teach the participants about the aspects of Wikipedia that can be discouraging, [such as] how to use the platform; how to find and cite the appropriate evidence for their statements; how to establish that the people about whom they wish to write are notable; etc. “Ultimately, we hope that the Edit-a-Thon achieves two things: to help novices feel comfortable with Wikipedia; and to create more content in these areas,” she said.

Weeks indicated that participants research information such as newspaper articles, identification of awards, prizes, mentions in books, and they write an objective biography.

**Featured artists**

In the first edition of the Wiki-Edit-a-Thon in 2017, short articles were created or existing ones improved for visual artists, authors, and choreographers Ni’Ja Whitson, Nia Love, Blondel Cummings, and Gabrielle Lamb.

For this year, the hope is to create or enrich pages of prominent dancers and choreographers such as Maria Bauman, Dawn Crandel, Davalois Fearon, Desiree Godsell,

Larissa Velez-Jackson, of Puerto Rican roots, in a photo by Scott Shaw. / Supplied

Larissa Velez-Jackson was raised in the Ironbound district of Newark, a working-class, multi-ethnic neighborhood. “My mom was born and raised in Newark, New Jersey. My father is from Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico. At an early age, I used to sing and dance all the time for family members, so my mom signed me up in a dance class at age three at the June McCain School of Dance in Kearny, NJ.” Velez-Jackson told El Diario.

As a teen, she studied at the New Jersey School of Ballet, Broadway Dance Center, and Steps on Broadway. As a choreographer, she is known as a hybrid artist, who “uses improvisation as a primary tool for research and creativity, focusing on personality and the body of dance / sound production. She uses a profound humor to endow the public with universal access to the critical discourse of contemporary art,” according to her official biography.
In 2010, she presented her work Danspace Project about which the *New York Times* said: “Velez-Jackson demonstrates her own formidable presence as she bursts into the space . . . A choreographer who is not afraid of being (or showing) ugly onstage, she also disarms her audiences with humor . . .” In 2011, she released a song and dance in collaboration with her husband, Jon Velez-Jackson.

Desiree Godsell travels the world presenting on and teaching salsa, bachata, and cha-cha-chá. /DesireeGodsell.com

**Desiree Godsell**, born and raised in Houston, Texas, is one of the most important exponents of Latin dance. She began her career dancing with the “King of Mambo” Eddie Torres and travels the world teaching salsa, bachata, and cha-cha-chá.

Godsell graduated from the High School of Performing and Visual Arts, which laid the foundations of her artistic career. Later, she obtained a BFA in Modern Dance from the University of the Arts [in] Philadelphia. When she moved to NYC, she began choreographing and dancing with Atlantic recording artist Santigold, and participated in the world tour for eight years, opening for musicians such as Coldplay, Kanye West, Jay-Z, MIA, and Rihanna, among many others.

In 2014, she won the Univision Latin dance competition with her dance partner Alex Morel. In 2017, she appeared as a dancer in the movie “Shine,” directed by Anthony Nardolillo.

In detail
What: Wiki-Edit-a-Thon

Where: Rosenthal Library, Tanenbaum Room (300i), Queens College

When: March 28, 12 pm to 5 pm.

Why: Women’s History Month