



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ajkun Ballet Company Reclaims 'Don Quixote' for New York: A Bold, Affordable Vision of Grand Ballet in the Upper East Side

With Lead Roles Coached by Herman Cornejo and Curated by Chiara Ajkun, This Vibrant Production Offers a Prestigious and Accessible Vision of Grand Ballet

NEW YORK — The **Ajkun Ballet Company**, the premier professional performing wing of the **Ajkun Ballet Theatre** ecosystem, announces a vibrant new production of the Spanish masterpiece **Don Quixote**. Scheduled for **May 30 and 31, 2026**, in Manhattan's Upper East Side, the production represents a pivotal moment in the New York arts scene: a world-class, prestigious ballet experience delivered at a price point that honors the affordability agenda of the city's current cultural leadership.

A Modern Vision: The Classics Collection

Part of **The Classics Collection**, this production is curated through Dr. Chiara Ajkun's "less is more" philosophy. By meticulously stripping away the art form's historical "dust," Ajkun presents a version that is visceral, transformative, and narratively tight. In a bold artistic move, this production **excludes the Scene of the Dryads**, a choice made to preserve the integrity and momentum of the Spaniard narrative.

In alignment with this vision, the production adopts a **"Museum" focus**, a curated aesthetic that ensures the centerpiece of the performance remains the dancing and emotional art rather than large, overwhelming scenery. By directing the audience's focus toward the technical mastery and visceral energy of the artists themselves, the Ajkun Ballet Company treats the dancer as the primary masterpiece. This minimalist approach provides a sophisticated, modern alternative to traditional grand-scale decor, allowing the heart of the narrative to shine through the movement and creating a deeper, more intimate connection between the artist and the viewer.

The production is further elevated by the coaching of the lead dancers by legendary principal dancer **Herman Cornejo**. His elite expertise ensures that



the principal roles deliver the technical virtuosity and dramatic gravitas expected on the world's grandest stages.

The Baryshnikov Legacy & The New York Stage

The production draws inspiration from the 1980s, when Mikhail Baryshnikov successfully brought American ballet to the world proscenium, proving that grand classical repertoire could be both artistically elite and broadly accessible. Ajkun Ballet Company continues this legacy, presenting the vibrant energy of **Ludwig Minkus's score**—noted for its rhythmic drive and Spanish soul—as the heartbeat of the performance.

Artistic Excellence as Social Justice

Aligning with the vision of Cultural Affairs Commissioner Diya Vij to advance Mayor Mamdani's affordability agenda within the arts sector and address historic funding inequities, this production makes ballet accessible to all.

While tickets at Opera Houses often create a financial barrier, Ajkun Ballet Company offers a boutique, luxury experience at a highly affordable rate. Tourists and locals alike can enjoy the best of NYC without breaking the bank.

Furthermore, the great dancers of the Ajkun Ballet Company—young, vibrant, and highly skilled—are well worth watching. Providing them this platform brings a sense of justice to the field, offering audiences a chance to witness exceptional artistry outside of the highly compensated environment of the city's largest opera houses.

In the Words of Chiara Ajkun

“Don Quixote has been one of my favorite ballets to perform. It offers a Spanish theme, vibrant technique, and a necessary hint of comedy. It provides a vast array of characters for our dancers to inhabit—from the athletic duo of Basilio and Kitri to the vain Gamache, the Spanish vibes of Toreadors and tambourines, and the intense dancing of the Gypsy.”

Performance Details & Tickets

- **Dates:** May 30 & 31, 2026
- **Location:** The Theater at St. Jean (150 East 76th Street, Upper East Side, Manhattan)
- **Official Ticket Link:** ajkunbt.org/donquixote



About Ajkun Ballet Company

The Ajkun Ballet Company is the professional performing wing of the Ajkun Ballet Theatre ecosystem. Dedicated to reinventing the classical landscape, the company delivers professional performances characterized by technical virtuosity and profound dramatic gravitas, ensuring the vitality of ballet for a modern, global audience.

#

Media Contact:

Abbi Jonhson/PR Senior Company Artist

ajkun@aol.com

347-346-9951

Website: www.ajkunbt.org

High-resolution Images: [Ajkun-Ballet-Theatre-DonQuixote-2026](#)

Website: www.ajkunbt.org

Website Press & Media:

Note to Editors:

Dr. Chiara Ajkun is available for interviews regarding the "Classics" philosophy and the production's staging.