

"The show we would love to do and ... a show that we would prefer not to do."
Academy president Sid Ganis on planning two Oscar shows, in case the writers strike continues. **AP**

weekend**15**

PIMA group

House dance party

SHAUN BRADY
shaun.brady@metro.us

PREVIEW. Old houses often seem filled with secrets and ghosts, especially a preserved historic residence like the Powel House in Society Hill. Dancer/choreographer Melisa Putz's new piece, "Look!", performed by her PIMA Group, conjures that haunting atmosphere for an audience to explore.

As viewers roam the house, dancers travel through rooms, performing duets or whispering and gesturing to one another. These graceful apparitions remain largely oblivious to the viewers in their midst, but occasionally confront them via eye contact or whispers that can be disorientingly uncomfortable – not just for the audience.

"As dancers," Putz says, "we get almost as intimidated as the audience. It's so exciting to put yourself in that slightly intimidating situation."

PIMA developed "Look!" through improvisations and workshops inside the house. "For this particular piece, I didn't start with a concept beforehand," she says. "It ended up with this social situation, sharing a secret or something soft and subtle between two people in an intimate space. Then it moves out of those rooms into a broader, more external social scene."

PIMA Group: "Look!"

Feb. 1-2, 8 and 9:30 p.m.

Feb. 3, 2 and 3:30 p.m.

Powel House Museum

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Jazz, with Cuban flair

SHAUN BRADY
shaun.brady@metro.us

PREVIEW. Cuban-born pianist Elio Villafranca studied at Havana's Instituto Superior de Arte, a very European-influenced conservatory, which explains the classical influences on his music. But he's better known as an accomplished jazz pianist. When asked where that influence comes from, he answers the question with a question. "Have you ever been in Havana? When you get there, you'll understand."

The answer makes perfect sense if one considers the history of jazz, which has incorporated Afro-Cuban rhythms and flavors virtually since the music's beginnings. So while Villafranca's classrooms may have been filled with the sounds of European and Cuban classical composers, the streets of Havana rang out with jazz.



Cuban-born pianist Elio Villafranca.

"Cuba's not a colony of the United States," he says, "but we are a colony in mind. We consumed every single thing about jazz in that country. The main reason I came here was because I wanted to really learn the language of jazz."

HIS LATEST PERFORMANCE is "Cuban Incantations," a

suite compiled from scores that Villafranca composed for several independent documentary films. The films that this music was originally written to accompany have ties to Villafranca's two former

homes themselves (those being Philadelphia and Cuba). They include "Philadelphia Diary," a PBS doc created by local filmmakers from stories and interviews about Philly neighborhoods; "Murals", which profiles Philly's Mural Arts Program; "Mirror Dance", a portrait of identical twin Cuban ballerinas separated after the Cuban revolution when one left for the US - Philadelphia, to be exact – and the other stayed behind; and "La Promesa (The Vow)," about a man's grueling attempt to keep his promise to crawl on his back to a Cuban church in hopes of curing his ailing son.

Elio Villafranca's "Cuban Incantations"

Feb. 2, 8 p.m.

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