

MARIA TORRES

Choreographer / Director / Dancer / Master Teacher



**PRESS
KIT**

Maria Torres O'Connor ~ Biography

“My father played the congas and on Saturdays my mom would cook and then we would spend the rest of the evening, all five of us, dancing. The music and the dancing was a norm, and I knew young that I wanted to be a performer,” says Maria Torres of her early years.

From the age of thirteen, Maria was dancing professionally and earning an expert reputation in dance that has propelled her prosperous career in theater, film, television, video and commercial industries performing with celebrities like Jennifer Lopez, Chayanne, Vanessa Williams, Patrick Dempsey, Mario Lopez, LaChanze, Amy Adams, Enrique Iglesias, Martin Lawrence, and Raven-Symoné, among others. Maria has built an award-winning reputation as a director, choreographer, dancer, actor, and master teacher.

As a performer, Maria starred in the Broadway Musical *Swing!* One of her first jobs was performing with the legendary Cuban singer Celia Cruz at Madison Square Garden. After being named World Hustle Champion in 1994, she founded the Hustle USA Dance Championship, an event of which format has been widely copied since.

Off-Broadway, Maria has choreographed the shows *Celia* (about Cuban singer Celia Cruz), *The Donkey Show*, *4 Guys Named Jose*, *Latin Heat*, *Best of Both Worlds*, and Disney's *Golden Mickeys*. In the commercial industry, she choreographed the national campaigns for Stayfree and Burger King and is currently the spokesperson for PepsiCo's Moms on the Move campaign along with Mario Lopez and LaChanze.

Maria's feature film credits include working with John O'Connell on Disney's *College Road Trip* with Roger Kumble and starring Martin Lawrence and Raven-Symoné, Disney's *Enchanted* starring Patrick Dempsey and Susan Sarandon, *Dance With Me* starring Vanessa Williams, Chayanne and Kris Kristofferson, *El Cantante* starring Jennifer Lopez and Marc Anthony, *Sueño* starring John Leguizamo and Elizabeth Peña (premiered at The Latino Film Festival), Universal/HBO's *Idlewild* with Hilton Battle and starring Outkast and Terrence Howard, and *The Six Wives of Henry Le Fay* due out Fall 2008.

In the music industry, Maria choreographed the music video for Enrique Iglesias' hit single *Bailamos*, the concert tour “King of Kings” for hailed Reggaeton artist Don Omar, *Salio el Sol*'s video, and Jennifer Lopez's special performance in Portugal.

Maria studied dance throughout the tri-state area at the Alvin Ailey School as well as the studios of Phil Black and Frank Hatchet among others. She received a scholarship from the Manhattan Fred Astaire Dance studios who sponsored her to represent them in national competitions, winning numerous titles in the ballroom, Hustle and Swing circuits.

Maria is actively involved in her community, serving as the Co-Chairperson of Lincoln Center's Midsummer Night Swing, and as Co Producer and President of Hustle USA Dance Championships.

As a master teacher, Maria has taught all over the world at prestigious dance institutions including Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, Dance Theatre of Harlem and Broadway Dance Center. Most recently she is featured on PodcastGO.com with her with her globally broadcast World of Dance lessons.

Her future projects include directing and choreographing her brainchild musical *Latin Heat*, and choreographing *Cheer*, a new theatre piece being produced by Marc Routh, Richard Frankel, Tom Viertel, Steve Baruch and Broadway Asia.

