



Dancing for a Cause

(Interview with Alex Morel and Desiree Godsell)

Episode 125.

Summary: Nuestros invitados de este episodio son Alex y Desiree, bailarines profesionales especializados en baile de estilo latino. Se asociaron en 2015 para compartir su pasión con el mundo. Alex y Desiree se han convertido en la pareja líder que representa a la Bachata Clásica también conocida como Bachata Tradicional o Estilo Dominicano. Además de entrenar y formar a bailarines e instructores de baile de todo el mundo, Alex y Desiree también forman parte del jurado oficial de dos de los campeonatos de baile más prestigiosos del mundo. En nuestra conversación, hablamos de cómo empezaron a bailar, qué les unió y cómo han conseguido mantener su energía y motivación para difundir su pasión por el baile durante la pandemia. También hablamos de su iniciativa *Baile por una causa*.

Our guests this week are Alex and Desiree, professional dancers specializing in Latin style dance who teamed up in 2015 to share their passion with the world. Alex and Desiree have become the leading couple representing Bachata Classical also known as Traditional Bachata or Dominican Style. In addition to coaching and training dancers and dance instructors around the world, Alex and Desiree are also on the official jury of two of the most prestigious dance championships in the world. In our conversation we talk about how they started dancing, what brought them together and how they have managed to maintain their energy and motivation to spread their passion for dance during the pandemic. We also talk about their initiative *Dance for a Cause*.

Time	Speaker	Transcript
00:32 – 03:36	Tamara	<p><i>Hola, queridos oyentes, bienvenidos al episodio 125.</i> Welcome to episode 125 of the Learn Spanish con Salsa podcast. In this episode I am super excited to bring to you my conversation with Alex Morel and Desiree Godsell.</p> <p>Alex and Desiree are professional dancers who specialize in latin style dancing, they bring their passion and energy for dance to their teaching and their performances, and if you haven't seen them perform before you are in for a treat, make sure you go to our show notes page at learnspaceconsalsa.com/125 and you'll see links to</p>

		<p>some of their performances, they are just a phenomenal couple to watch. They have undoubtedly become the leading couple representing <i>bachata clásica</i> which is also known as traditional or Dominican style bachata, which I always think it's funny because bachata comes from the Dominican Republic so calling it Dominican style bachata is a little redundant, but there is more than one style or flavor to how not only Bachata music is performed but also how it is dance, so to make the distinction sometimes you'll hear classic or traditional or Dominican style bachata which really means it's more authentic to the bachata that originally came from the island versus the more modern forms that we may hear today, but that's a whole other story.</p> <p>Apart from coaching and training dancers and dancer instructors across the globe Alex and Desiree are also part of the official judging panel at some of the world's most prestigious dance championships. In our conversation we talk all about how they got started dancing, what brought them together as dance partners and ultimately led them to form a dance company, and how they manage to keep up their energy and motivation for spreading their passion for dance throughout the pandemic and beyond. And in particular we talk about their dance for a cause initiative which I have to admit I signed up for but I completely punked out and didn't make it through the entire choreography but it was some much fun nevertheless just to start dancing again, and of course It was for a good cause.</p> <p>Now this episode is in English and Spanish and if you want to join our community of podcast supporters go to learnspanishconsalsa.com/support and you will be able to access the transcript and translation for this episode and all episode of the podcast, and this is a great way to test out your listening comprehension skills especially for all our interviews that are in Spanish or both English and Spanish, we can hear people speaking Spanish in a conversation, so if you like to access to the show transcripts, discount on private lesson and priority for your show topic request sign up at learnspanishconsalsa.com/support</p>
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		Now make sure you stick around until the end of this episode to find out how you can get a special discount if you want to learn how to dance from Alex and Desiree.
03:39 – 03:44	Tamara	<i>Hola bienvenidos</i> , welcome to the Learn Spanish con Salsa podcast Alex and Desiree.
03:45 – 03:46	Alex and Desiree	- <i>Hola</i> . - <i>Hola</i> . - Hi.
03:47 – 04:17	Tamara	Thank you guys so much for making the time to join us on the show and I do have to say you guys are some of my favorite dancers to watch, I loves of your energy, the way your work together so I'm excited to get to talk to you about... a little bit more about what you do as dancers and then how you sort of got started with Alex and Desiree. So I want to start with you Desiree, just tell us a little bit about you for our audience that may not know you guys yet although I can't imagine, but just tell us a little bit about you, where are you from and what you do?
04:18 – 04:30	Desiree	Yes, Hello everybody. <i>Hola, ¿cómo están?</i> Hi, how are you? I am Desiree Godsell, I was born and raised in Houston Texas, I'm not Dominican...
04:30 – 04:43	Tamara	Contrary to popular belief, right?
04:44 – 06:33	Desiree	Yes. That is like the first and only thing that everybody always wants to know, it's like "hey, you know", anyway; but I am of the world, I did my recent... I did my ancestry and it looks like I'm 2% of everything so, I might be the thing that makes up the Dominican but anyway. I grew up in Houston Texas, I've been dancing all my life, you know, my mom put me in dance at a young age in middle school – high school college for dance, I have a BFA in education and I am... I moved to New York after I started dancing and... Actually before

		<p>when my mom kind of introduce me to more like partner dances to like Cumbia and Merengue and, you know, I continue to do those when I moved to Philly, and then when I went to move to New York I really like did a deep dive into the scene and I didn't realize I could dance professionally as a Latin dancer, so I was like "oh wow this is crazy", and then I started doing that and I was also on tour with this singing recording artist Santigold and I toured with her for like 10 years, so in between tour with her I come back and then do some Latin gigs and Alex needed a substitute for his dance company with Caribbean soul, the bachata company, so I was like "Yeah, I'll be the substitute" be the alternate and then his partner never came back so then there went that.</p> <p>Then I just kind of stayed and then later on joined the salsa division of Caribbean soul, and then we've been dancing together since... like a partnership since 2015, right Alex, 2017?</p>
06:34 – 06:41	Alex	Yes, 2015, It's always blurred...
06:42 – 06:51	Desiree	...And I have a son who is two, he's amazing and an amazing husband and yeah that's a little bit about me.
06:52 – 07:04	Tamara	So you've been dancing your whole life, you like been doing this professionally which I know is hard for a lot people to do because a lot of people like to dance, right? but then being able to make a career out of it is like a whole nother level, so I will talk a little bit about that as we go on.
07:05 – 07:06	Desiree	It's a whole different situation.
07:07 – 07:15	Tamara	<p><i>Yeah.</i> Entonces, Alex bienvenido al podcast y cuéntanos un poquito de ti, ¿de dónde eres? y ¿cómo empezaste a bailar?</p> <p>Yeah. So, Alex, welcome to the podcast and tell us a little bit about yourself, where are you from and how did you start dancing?</p>
07:16 – 10:02	Alex	Saludos a todos, soy Alex Morel, originalmente nacido en República Dominicana en Santo Domingo y criado en New Jersey; y bueno, la historia mía parecida a muchos inmigrantes que vienen de República Dominicana, mis padres son de comienzos humildes y entonces

	<p>vinieron a los Estados Unidos para tener una mejor vida, para mí, para mis 6 hermanos. Y yo siempre me crié escuchando música salsa, merengue, bachata; a mi papá le encantaba el merengue típico que es de casualidad mi música favorita del bailar, el merengue típico. Entonces, escuchar música me ayudó a apreciar la cultura, a apreciar la música y también a observar el baile; no puedo decir que desde un comienzo me encantaba bailar, pero sí me escuchaba... sí me gustaban diferentes tipos de música el R & B, el Hip Hop, el reggae creado en bares en New Jersey.</p> <p>Hi everyone. I am I am Alex Morel, originally born in Dominican Republic in Santo Domingo and raised in New Jersey; and well, my story is similar to many immigrants coming from the Dominican Republic, my parents are from low income background and so they came to the United States to have a better life for me, for my 6 siblings. And I always grew up listening to salsa music, merengue, bachata; my dad loved classic merengue which happens to be my favorite music to dance to, classic Merengue. So, listening to the music helped me to appreciate the culture, to appreciate the music and also to observe the dance; I can't say that from the beginning I loved to dance, but I did listen to... I did like different types of music R&B, Hip Hop, and reggae created in bars in New Jersey.</p> <p>Y bueno, conocí a una sobrina mía que llegó de República Dominicana, cuando tenía cómo 12 o 13 años, y a ella le encantaba bailar; y ahí cuando habían reuniones familiares nosotros siempre nos juntábamos, mi sobrina me agarraba a bailar, "Mira, así se baila el merengue" "Mira, estos son los pasitos de bachata" "La salsa se baila así" y entonces ahí coincidimos, hicimos como una pequeña pareja, como quien dice; en las fiestas familiares siempre éramos nosotros 2 bailando la noche entera.</p> <p>Well, I met a niece of mine who came from the Dominican Republic, when she was about 12 or 13 years old and she loved to dance; and when there were family gatherings we always got together, my niece would grab me to dance, "Look, this is how merengue is danced" "Look, these are the bachata steps" "Salsa is danced like this" and</p>
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then we coincided, we became like a couple; at family parties it was always the two of us dancing the whole night.

Luego cuando entré a la universidad, mientras más... Me conecté más con los latinos, especialmente los dominicanos, me conecté más a mi cultura, a mis raíces. Y luego ahí comencé a salir a diferentes discotecas, me encantaba la música más y más, no podía estudiar sin escuchar merengue, bachata, salsa; y lo mío era la salsa. Cuando comencé, me acuerdo, yendo a las discotecas y mirando los tremendos bailadores de bachata en las discotecas, tirando sus pasitos, dando figuras de salsa y me encantó; y me quedé con los ojos abiertos y dije "Un día me gustaría bailar así". En ese entonces pensé que solamente se podía... como que uno nacía con eso de bailar, no sabía que yo podía bailar así también. Hasta que un día una amiga mía me presentó una pareja de baile que trabaja en la empresa de ella y me dijo "Mira, estas personas saben bailar el estilo de salsa que tu viste en la discoteca y ellos van a venir aquí a la universidad y nos van a dar una clase de salsa"; y la verdad no me gustó, la primera vez no me gustó porque los movimientos, no se sentían natural.

Then when I went to college, I connected more with the Latinos, especially the Dominicans, I connected more to my culture, to my roots. And then I started going out to different clubs, I loved music more and more, I couldn't study without listening to merengue, bachata, salsa; and my thing was salsa. At the beginning I remember going to the discotheques and watching the tremendous bachata dancers in the discotheques, throwing their steps, showing salsa figures and I loved it; and I kept my eyes open and said "one day I would like to dance like that". At that time I thought that you could only... like... you were born with that ability, I didn't know that I could learn to dance like that too; until one day a friend of mine introduced me to a couple of dancers who work in her company and she told me "Look, these people know how to dance the style of salsa that you saw in the discotheque and they are going to come here to the university and give us a salsa class"; and I really didn't like it, the first time, and I didn't like it because the movements didn't feel natural.

10:03– 11:52	Alex	<p>Entonces, luego volví y veía personas en las discotecas bailando y yo dije “Yo creo que un día, ya que sé que puedo aprender a través de una academia, cuando me gradúe de la universidad voy a aprender a bailar salsa”. Y así fue, me gradué de la universidad y luego fui a caribbean soul, lo encontré en el internet a Ismael Otero y él fue quien me enseñó mis primeros pasos de salsa; y desde la primera clase me enamoré. Aprendí mis pasos básicos, luego de ahí fue un proceso de entrenar, aprender pasos, aprender técnica, aprender como bailar en tarima, entrar el grupo semi- profesional también.</p> <p>So, then I came back and I saw people in the clubs dancing and I said "I think that one day, since I know that I can learn through an academy, when I graduate from college I will learn to dance salsa" and so I did, I graduated from college and then I went to Caribbean soul, I found Ismael Otero on the internet and he was the one who taught me my first salsa steps; and from the first class I fell in love. I learned my basic steps, then from there it was a process of training, learning steps, learning technique, learning how to dance on stage, entering the semi-professional group as well.</p> <p>Y duramos años bailando salsa y bachata hasta que ya cuando empezó... antes de que se popularizara la bachata, ahí fue que Ismael me dijo “Mira, tu eres tremendo salsero, pero tú también bailas la bachata muy bien, y la bachata un día será más grande que la salsa, entonces, yo quiero que tu estés en frente de todo eso”; y él tuvo la visión, antes de que yo la tuviera. Y un día él me dice “¿Tú conoces la muchacha Desiree Godsell, la que baila con Griselle Ponce?” y yo “Sí” “Ah, ella va a ser la pareja tuya porque ustedes tienen tremenda química” y ahí fue que coincidimos yo y Desiree; incluso... it was actually before 2015, en el 2015 nosotros empezamos a bailar como Alex y Desiree, pero antes de eso Desiree, como había mencionado, entrenó con nosotros en bachata y en salsa, y entonces eso fue como 3 años antes, nos conocimos como en el 2012 o 2013 y ahí fue que empezó todo.</p> <p>We lasted years dancing salsa and bachata until when it started... before bachata became popular, that's when Ismael told me "Look, you are a great salsa dancer, but you also dance bachata very well,</p>
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		and bachata one day will be bigger than salsa, so I want you to be in front of all that"; and he had that vision, before I had it. And one day he says to me "Do you know the girl Desiree Godsell, the one who dances with Griselle Ponce? " and I said "Yes" "Ah, she is going to be your partner because you two have tremendous chemistry" and that's when me and Desiree met; even... it was actually before 2015, in 2015 we started dancing as Alex and Desiree, but before that Desiree, as she mentioned, trained with us in bachata and salsa, and that was like 3 years before so we met in 2012 or 2013 and that's when it all started.
11:53 – 12:16	Desiree	The first time we did our first routine we had, it was a salsa routine, and I think we've only performed that maybe one or two times and I think we also did it... I made two episodes of Made and it was on one episode of Made that... on MTV that I think we performed that.
12:17 – 12:40	Tamara	Wow. Entonces, es interesante porque yo sé que la música latina es parte de la cultura, ¿no?, pero una cosa diferente es bailar como merengue, bachata, porque son más fáciles que la salsa, ¿no?, es algo diferente que tienen que aprender los pasos; y también es algo diferente bailar como en la discoteca y bailar como profesional... Wow. So, it's interesting because I know that Latin music is part of the culture, right, but it's different to dance like merengue, bachata, because those are easier than salsa, right? it's something different that you have to learn the steps; and it's also something different to dance like in the disco and dance like a professional...
12:41 – 12:41	Alex	Exactamente. Exactly.
12:42 – 13:04	Tamara	Entonces, ¿fue difícil cómo convertirse en un bailarín profesional o cómo fue ese proceso? ¿fue difícil? ¿fue algo que pensaste "yo no quiero hacer eso, solo voy a bailar en la discoteca"? y tener otra cosa como trabajo, ¿no?, porque es difícil ganar dinero bailando solamente.

		So, was it hard like becoming a professional dancer or how was that process? Was it hard? was it something that you thought "I don't want to do that; I'm just going to dance at the disco"? and have something else as a job, right? because it's hard to make money just dancing.
13:05 – 13:13	Desiree	I think to me it's what kind of professional dancer, is it in the Latin dancing? Is it in the afro-vibe dancing? Or you are talking about this in general, because...
13:14 – 13:14	Tamara	In general.
13:14 – 13:18	Desiree	Because that's training with different things but.
13:18 – 15:35	Alex	<p><i>It 's actually the first time that someone asked me this, which is... or ask and observe because... Bueno, en español y en inglés. Cuando comencé a bailar salsa yo me consideraba bailarín, bailador de calle, entonces, no tenía técnica de baile, nunca había visto un ballet, no sabía lo que era un... no sabía nada de técnica de danza en general, pero me gustaba la música. Yo a veces veo mis videos cuando estoy bailando bachata y bailaba en diferentes tiempos, pero siempre tuve como que mucho movimiento y mucho interés y mucha energía.</i></p> <p><i>It's actually the first time that someone asked me this which is... or ask and observe because... Well, in Spanish and in English. When I started dancing salsa I considered myself a dancer, a street dancer, so I had no dance technique, I had never seen a ballet, I didn't know what a... I didn't know anything about dance technique in general, but I liked the music. I sometimes watch my videos when I'm dancing bachata and I dance in different tempos, but I always have a lot of movement and a lot of interest and a lot of energy.</i></p> <p>Entonces, al principio sí, cuando Ismael me propuso bailar en el equipo semi-profesional, yo le dije que no porque para mí yo lo que quería era bailar social, me gustaba ir a las discotecas, bailar mucho en los sociales, pero no... en verdad nunca me interesó ser un bailarín de tarima; incluso, no sabía que habían esas oportunidades.</p>

So, at the beginning yes, when Ismael proposed to me to dance in the semi-professional team, I said no because for me what I wanted was to dance socially, I used to like going to discos, dancing a lot in the socials, but no... I was never really interested in being a stage dancer; I didn't even know that there were those opportunities.

Entonces, siendo un bailarín de calle no me llamó mucho la atención, porque tampoco vi donde me podía llevar en cuanto a mi carrera; incluso no pensaba... Yo tenía otra carrera, totalmente diferente, *I was in "Corporate America" for a really long time, for about 10 years, so that's was never really a vision*; pero luego me gustó, *you know*, Ismael kept trying, Ismael me dijo "Tienes que meterte al grupo porque tú eres muy bueno" y "Tu eres el que aprende más rápido en mis clases", entonces, *I took a leap of faith I guess*; me entregué por total.

So, being a street dancer it didn't really catch my attention, because I also didn't see where it could take me in terms of my career; I didn't even think... I had another career, totally different, I was in "Corporate America" for a really long time, for about 10 years, so that's was never really a vision; but then I liked it, you know, Ismael kept trying, Ismael told me "You have to join the group because you are very good" and "You are the fastest learner in my classes", then, I took a leap of faith I guess; I gave myself totally.

Pero el proceso es continuo, *I feel like I'm still trying to be a professional dancer because you never stop learning, it's like you still... you continue to learn new things and you learn from your colleagues, and your peers, and your dance partners, and it's always, you know, I'm always still learning like new things, so I don't think I'm done in the process of learning or converting to a profession dancer; but is also like Desiree said, it's like I would though a professional dancer is someone who gets paid for the craft that they do, so in that sense, ya llevo tiempo con esto.*

But the process is continuous, I feel like I'm still trying to be a professional dancer because you never stop learning, it's like you still.... you're still learning new things and you learn from your

		colleagues, and your partners, and your dance partners, and it's always, you know, I'm always learning new things, so I don't think I'm done in the process of learning or becoming a professional dancer; but it's also like Desiree said, it's like I think of a professional dancer as someone who gets paid for the craft that they do, so in that sense, I've been at this for a while now.
15:37 – 16:25	Desiree	I was just gonna say that everybody's definition of professional dancer is very different and, you know, I also think of what we do as... well, educators, you know, because we're dance teachers but also entertainers more so to certain degree because we are putting on a show for people when we are social dancing, when we are engaging, I mean it's just more so to me and that like I think of us, yeah, as entertainers. And sometimes people at professional dancers it's like "well, what are the training for?" "are they competitive dancers?", so maybe that's like the stereotypes that people have in their hands but when you talk about...
16:25 – 16:30	Tamara	Or just making money, right? making a career out of it versus just dancing for fun or, you know.
16:60 – 16:38	Desiree	Yes, and that comes with a whole onset of responsibilities and yeah...
16:39 – 18:02	Tamara	Yeah. And I have to say it is interesting because something you mentioned Alex. For me, you know, I've been on a few sort of student dance teams and things like that too and I kind of felt like social dancing, right? like that's fun, like I could do whatever I want, like... you know, and I don't have to worry about technique; and when I started doing some of like choreographies even though they were like not very... like difficult or anything like that, I started to feel like a job, and was like "Uh" like that's not funny anymore, like I just finished it. So for me I like choreography. I like to learn techniques because it makes you a better dancer but I like to convert that into more social dancing, because that's to me the fun part.

		<p>So yeah, I think it is interesting like shifting that to be a career. I've always kind of wondered that because I know people who love to dance but when they have to do with the business side of it... like it gets a little bit, you know, it changes things, right?</p> <p>So I do want to ask you guys, I know that you all have done something really awesome called dance for a cause, I'm waiting to talk a little bit about that and where they idea came from; and then just, hasn't been difficult during the pandemic to really maintain your careers as dancer and doing what you love to do when so much has been changing sort of like month by month, right? in the world, in reality and what you can do, because like we can't really... In most places still, you know, at least at the time of this recording, in most places you still can't really safely go out and social dance, so how have you adapted sort of your vision and your company during this time?</p>
18:03 - 19:06	Desiree	<p>Wow. 2020 was a bender, that was a very... I think I'm still very surreal that we are in this but, you now, a lot of people were in need and just seeing the need, being in our houses, because we live in like New Jersey and New York, so the lockdown was serious there; so we're like in our houses by ourselves, like "What are we doing?", people are hungry, people can't get food, so when people were scrounging for toilet paper... you know, so we are like "What can we do?", we still love to dance, we have this platform we want to stay connected with our dance community, we want to help people, okay "boom" this is what we're going to do: Dance for a cause.</p> <p>It was really really awesome our first dance for a cause season, we partnered with Feeding America and I think was like 15.000 meals, well how many was it Alex that we were able to donate?</p>
19:07 - 19:07	Alex	<p>Something like that, yeah.</p>
19:09 - 20:54	Desiree	<p>And so it was... you know, we brought people together to not only have fun but to dance for a cause; and this last season we partnered with Covenant House which is an amazing organization that helps homeless youth and... well, they do actually way more than that, they have a whole list of services for youths that are struggling with different things. So that was really important for us because, you</p>

		<p>know, life is a little bit more than just dance, sometimes you need food to live, sometimes you need a place to live, to be able to do the things that you enjoy to do, so that was really important for us to do, to give back.</p> <p>And, yeah, it was a struggle because we went from legit traveling every weekend to dancing to then staying at home and not traveling at all. And sometimes you don't realize how much you love something until it's taken away from you, so we are like "Man, this is really crazy". So we have time to reflect on that but we definitely missed our dance community, we miss seeing faces and I even missed people sweat, I just am like... engaged with people, you know. Teaching the classes online it's great, that's available to us, right? but it's not the same as when you walk into a room and you can feel everyone's energy, collective energy, everybody's there ready to dance, wanting to dance, listening to the song and just... it is different, but we're keeping it moving with the online classes... something is better than nothing.</p>
20:55 – 20:57	Tamara	<p>Yeah. Alex para ti ha sido difícil?</p> <p>Yeah. Alex has been difficult for you?</p>
20:58 – 25:35	Alex	<p>Sí. Fue difícil al principio porque nosotros teníamos que adaptarnos al nuevo concepto de entrenar online, de dar clases online; que para nosotros todavía es un poco... no complicado, sino que siempre es diferente porque tenemos siempre, por ejemplo, la diferencia de la tecnología, el internet, que Zoom, que si la cámara, que si el ángulo, que grabé y no había audio; entonces, es muy... Y también para los estudiantes nuestros y nuestros seguidores acostumbrarse a entrenar con nosotros online, que es algo diferente para ellos también. Lo bueno de esa oportunidad es que nos dio una oportunidad de trabajar con personas en otros países online que quizás no tenían los recursos para poder tomar clases con Alex y Desiree, entonces eso por un lado fue bueno.</p> <p>Yes. It was difficult at the beginning because we had to adapt to the new concept of training online, of giving online classes; which for us</p>

	<p>is still a little... not complicated, but it is always different; because we always have, for example, the difference at technology, or internet, or Zoom, or the camera, or the angle, or I recorded and there was no audio; And also for our students and our followers to get used to train with us online, which is something different for them too. The good thing about this opportunity is that it gave us the opportunity to work with people in other countries online, who perhaps did not have the resources to be able to take classes with Alex and Desiree, so that on the one hand was good.</p> <p>Pero bailar por una causa fue algo que sentí; bueno, nosotros ahora no estamos ganando dinero, muy poco dinero; no tenemos la libertad de ir a un estudio a dar clases. Quizás, lo primero que la gente pensaría sería “Bueno, tienen que buscar oportunidad de hacer dinero”, pero para nosotros fue importante también, como dijo Desiree, ayudar a las personas que lo tienen peor que nosotros; porque siempre podemos pensar las cosas están malas, pero pueden ser peor; entonces, de ahí surge la idea de bailar por una causa.</p> <p>But dancing for a cause was something I felt. We are not making money now, making very little money; we don't have the freedom to go to a studio to teach. Maybe, the first thought from people would be "Well, you have to look for opportunity to make money", but for us it was important also, as Desiree said, to help people who had been through more difficulties than us; because we can always think things are bad, but they can be worse; so, that's where the idea of dancing for a cause comes from.</p> <p>También, yo siempre he querido hacer algo como organizaciones para ayudar porque creo que es muy importante ser uno generoso con su tiempo y también con sus recursos, no todo tiene que ser económicamente, pero muchas veces podemos usar nuestro talento o nuestras plataformas para poder darle a los demás.</p> <p>Also, I have always wanted to do something for organizations to help because I think it is very important to be generous with your time and also with your resources, not everything has to be money, but</p>
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many times we can use our talent or our platforms to be able to give to others.

Y en cuanto a la pandemia, fue difícil para muchas personas, pero, fíjate, le cuento una historia. Estuve en un supermercado... Bueno, antes de decir esa historia, nosotros decidimos dar las clases online y también queríamos tener... seguir nuestra presencia, como ya no estábamos en festivales y en congresos, que las personas, nuestros seguidores, nos pueden todavía ver un aspecto de entretenimiento de Alex y Desiree y por eso también utilizamos nuestras redes sociales, Instagram, para crear videos que la gente pueda disfrutar, nos pueda ver bailar y para decirle al mundo "Hey, nosotros todavía estamos aquí, no estamos totalmente perdidos". Yo sé que hubieron otros bailarines que tomaron la decisión de tomar su tiempo fuera de las redes querían su tiempo personal y eso también lo respetamos.

And during the pandemic it was difficult for many people, but, I'm telling you a story. I was in a supermarket... Well, before I tell that story... We decided to give the classes online and we also wanted to have... continue our presence, since we were no longer in festivals and in congresses, that people, our followers, can still see us an entertainment aspect of Alex and Desiree, and so we also use our social networks, Instagram, to create videos, that people can enjoy, can watch us dancing, and to tell the world "Hey, we are still here, we are not totally lost". I know there were other dancers who made the decision to take their time away from the networks, they wanted their personal time and we respect that as well.

Entonces, a la historia: Estoy en el supermercado cerca de mi casa y estoy buscando productos y este hombre me topa frente a los plátanos y me dice, "¿Usted es Alex Morel de Alex y Desiree?" "Sabes mi esposa es fanático de ustedes. Yo sé que tiene prisa, pero por favor deme 2 minutos de su tiempo para que ella lo conozca" y llama a su esposa y la mujer está... yo la veo y se le están aguando los ojos, que está bien emocionada y le digo "Bueno, encantado Soy Alex" y ella me dice, "Ustedes no saben el impacto de lo que han hecho con las redes sociales en mi vida, porque nosotros hemos

	<p>estado pasando unos momentos muy... sumamente difícil, y mirándote a ti y a Desiree bailando en las redes sociales, los videos creativos; cada semana yo miraba para ver los videos y la verdad que me levanto los ánimos y el espíritu” y ella dice “La verdad, lo que ustedes están haciendo no tiene precio; y aunque las personas no le digan la verdad que está cambiando... ayudó mucho a las personas durante la pandemia, durante el Covid”.</p> <p>So, going back to the story; I'm in the supermarket near my house and I'm looking for products and this man comes up to me in front of the bananas and he says, "Are you Alex Morel from Alex and Desiree? I know you're in a hurry, but please give me 2 minutes of your time so she can meet you" and he calls his wife and the woman is... I see her and her eyes are watering, she's so excited and I say "Well, nice to meet you I'm Alex" and she says, "You don't know the impact of what you have done with social media in my life, because we have been going through some very... extremely difficult times, and watching you and Desiree dancing on social media, the creative videos; every week I would look to see the videos and the truth is that it raised my energy and spirit" and she says "What you are doing is really priceless; and even if people don't tell you that it is really changing... its helping the people a lot during the pandemic, during Covid".</p> <p>Entonces, cuando yo reflejo y pienso en eso digo, ya entiendo más porque somos lo que somos y hacemos lo que hacemos, porque creo que cuando yo trabaja en la industria, yo era informático en una empresa global, yo no sentía que estaba dejando un impacto; entonces, si tú te levantas todos los días y piensa, Wow el trabajo mío no sé si tiene significado o tiene valor, cuando decidí tomar la carrera de Alex y Desiree, de bailarín, ahora puedo ver directamente el impacto que tenemos en las personas.</p> <p>So, when I reflect and think about that I say, I understand more what we are what we are, and do what we do, because I think, when I worked in the industry, I was an IT guy in a global company, I didn't feel like I was making an impact; so, if you wake up every day and think, wow I don't know if my work has a meaning or has value, so</p>
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		<p>when I decided to take Alex and Desiree's career as a dancer, now I can see directly the impact we have on people.</p> <p>Entonces, por eso nosotros nos sentimos... sentimos un regocijo por lo que nosotros hacemos y estamos bien orgullosos del trabajo que hacemos.</p> <p>So, that's why we feel... we feel a joy for what we do and we are very proud of the work we do.</p>
17:48 – 25:44	Tamara	<p>Wow, Eso es interesante. Bueno, primero tengo que decirte que es una historia buen dominicana, que pasó en frente de los plátanos del supermercado...</p> <p>Wow, that's interesting. Well, first I have to tell you that it's a very Dominican story, that happened in front of the bananas in the supermarket...</p>
25:45 – 25:46	Alex	<p>Siempre Plátanos.</p> <p>Always Banana.</p>
17:48 – 26:55	Tamara	<p><i>Exacto, plátanos.</i></p> <p>Exactly, bananas.</p> <p><i>Pero sí es algo que creo que sí es importante.</i> I think it is great that you guys want to use your platform to help other people and not just think about looking out for yourself and I think that's amazing. And yes, the energy that you bring to help people I think is really important especially during this time when people haven't been able to dance. I know for me, you know, I signed up for a dance for a cause and we're talking before we started the recording, I did not make it to the end and record the video, but I just love being able to have you guy on live to be able to dance again, because I missed social dinging too.</p> <p>I mean, just the energy that you bring, and specially you Desiree I have to said that you are a force of nature and I want to know like,</p>

		<p>where do you guys get the energy from? How would you keep it going when you're just... because like I know a lot of people have Zoom fatigue, right? But I have to say like, with you guys there's no zoom fatigue, like the energy that you bring that's just like "All right, I want to see you smiling, I want to see you dancing" like every week and I was like "How is she doing this?", like what do you guys do to keep yourselves motivated when people are really experiencing a lot of different emotions while trying to manage life right now and everything that's going on?</p>
26:56 – 26:56	Alex	Coffee.
26:59 – 26:59	Desiree	Yes. Well... yes coffee.
27:00 – 27:05	Tamara	<p>¿Mucho café? ¿es el secreto?</p> <p>Too much coffee? Is that the secret?</p>
27:06 – 28:45	Desiree	<p>I would say this, it's tough sometimes to... Well no, actually as it is, it's hard to me sometimes to pick myself up but once I'm there, once I'm "Oh, I'm ready to dance," like I'm about to start my class, or I'm in a dance class, or I'm at a social, or I'm at a party, that's like you don't even have to motivate Alex or I. And I think that's a huge part about why we've been so successful because we innately have that, you know, we're like we love to dance, and it just kind of loses out, you know, and I think that love for dance shows up, in our dance classes it shows up, when we're performing, it shows up when we are social dancing and yeah.</p> <p>And I think... that goes back to the whole professional dancer thing, I think like to be a professional dancer you want... not everybody has that, but you have to just love what you do because you're going to be doing it all the time. So it can't be like: "Oh no, there is another bachata class, uuh!"; it is like... isn't another opportunity for me to do what I love? And to share my passion and my purpose?</p> <p>I think, you know, sometimes it is like... you are like "Uuh! I just want to eat Ice-cream and Netflix" and like, you know, that kind of</p>

		<p>things, but you are like... but then when you are in your class you are like "Wow, I'm glad that I really showed up today, I'm really glad that I was able to like share today with somebody" so Yeah.</p>
28:47 – 30:31	Alex	<p>It may also sound like a little bit cliché, but it's almost like doing it for the greater good or for the higher purpose, because I feel the same way as Desiree, there were times where for... even for the dance classes I'm like "Omg the zoom is starting in 15 minutes" but you know I'm feeling really tired today or really unmotivated and I think it is the same thing once, you know, you turn on the camera, you see the people, the smiling faces you know that you are on, and then, you know just like Desiree I feel like once we are there we are 100% committed to what it is we are doing. And also we always talk about this in our class, and in our courses, how a lot of times what's going on outside of the studios doors has nothing to do with those people who showed up and paid to come see you and come, came to train with you, so it's like you are experienced with a dance instructor, right? whether it be positive or negative is lasting.</p> <p>So I'm grateful that... you know, I always shout out mi sensei, my salsa godfather Ismael Otero because, you know, he was always committed as soon as he... you know, we came into dance class he was always ready to go and he was there for a purpose if he decided to dance, and I think that having that positive attitude and that positive energy, really makes the learning experience a lot more pleasant; heck look at sesame street and all these, you know, colorful happy joyous, you know, training platforms even for kids right, it's like the... when you have that good energy and that very positive vibe it makes it easier for you to learn.</p> <p>So that's kind of the way to look at it and once I'm there I'm there so, let's go.</p>
30:32 – 31:33	Tamara	<p>Yeah, you are right, once you kind of are on the class, it's like when you're there to serve I think it also help shift your energy too because you know... you are not just there for you, it's not just about you showing up, it's about you being there to serve people and to help them learn to dance and just have a little bit of joy in the day, so It definitely shows up and everything that you guys do.</p>

		<p>One question lasts before I let you go, and this is more for Alex.</p> <p>So, Yo sé que ofrecen clases en inglés y también en Español y tienen un sitio web que tiene clases en los 2 idiomas de salsa, de bachata, ¿y para ti ha sido una ventaja ser bilingüe? como tener una compañía de baile o no sé... porque yo sé que muchas bailarinas, muchas compañías de danza, no necesariamente ofrecen clases en los 2 idiomas, entonces, ¿cuál fue el proceso que decidieron hacer eso así y ha sido una ventaja para ti ser bilingüe y poder enseñarles a los estudiantes en los 2 idiomas?</p> <p>So, I know that you offer classes in English and also in Spanish and you have a website that has classes in both languages of salsa, of bachata, and has it been an advantage for you to be bilingual? like having a dance company or I don't know...? because I know that many dancers, many dance companies, don't necessarily offer classes in both languages, so what was the process that you decided to do that way? and has it been an advantage for you to be bilingual and be able to teach the students in both languages?</p>
31:34 – 34:23	Alex	<p>Bueno, primeramente, es un proceso porque no somos totalmente bilingües en las clases, Desiree da sus clases en inglés, yo las doy también en inglés, pero a veces hablo un poco de español. La página la diseñamos para que sea un poquito en los 2 idiomas; y nosotros tenemos un curso de certificación para los maestros, una formación que está disponible en inglés y en español, ¿Por qué la importancia de eso? Porque entendemos que estamos bailando un baile latino, la música es en español normalmente, los seguidores de este género la mayoría hablan español, aunque ahora es más mundial, pero entendemos que hay fuerza en eso.</p> <p>Well, first of all, it is a process because we are not totally bilingual in the classes, Desiree teaches her classes in English, I teach them also in English, but sometimes I speak a little bit of Spanish. We designed the web page to be kind of in both languages; and we have a certification course for the teachers, a training that is available in English and Spanish, why is that important? Because we understand that we are dancing a Latin dance, the music is usually in Spanish,</p>

		<p>the followers of this genre mostly speak Spanish, although now it is more global, but we understand that there is strength in that.</p> <p>Desde que yo era pequeño, cuando entrevistaba para diferentes compañías siempre preguntaban, “¿Habla más de un idioma? ¿eres bilingüe?” Entonces, cuando nos preparaban para las entrevistas siempre nos decían, “Prepárate, educación primero”, pero también cuando 2 personas hacen una entrevista siempre la empresa va a buscar la diferencia “Ok, los 2 son inteligentes, los 2 fueron graduados, los 2 tienen x calidad de calificación”, pero entonces hay cosas que distingue la empresa al adquirir una persona por la otra: “Ah, pero esta persona tiene un poco más de experiencia con clientes” “Esta persona también habla dos idiomas” “Esta persona tiene algo más que aporta fuera del currículum” Entonces, nosotros entendemos que... bueno, yo personalmente entiendo que es muy importante conectar con las personas en su idioma; incluso, hablo 3 idiomas porque también hablo un poco de francés.</p> <p>Since I was growing up, when I interviewed for different companies they would always ask, "Do you speak more than one language? Are you bilingual?" So, when they were preparing us for interviews they always told us, "Prepare yourself, education first", but also when 2 people do an interview always the company is going to look for the difference "Ok, the 2 are smart, the 2 were graduates, the 2 have x quality of qualification", but then there are things that the company distinguish to hire one person or the other: "Ah, but this person has a little bit more experience with clients" "This person also speaks two languages" "This person has something else to bring outside the resume" So, we understand that... Well, I personally understand that it is very important to connect with people in their language; even, I speak 3 languages because I also speak a little bit of French.</p> <p>Y entonces, cuando estuve en Francia estudiando lo primero que me enseñaron fue <i>je m'appelle Alex, où sont les toilettes</i> ¿Dónde está el baño? Entonces, yo me acuerdo que entendía poco, pero cuando empezaba a hablar con las personas de... de Francia y yo le decía <i>Vous parlez Anglais?</i> y todo el mundo: “No”, pero como con una cara</p>
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		<p>como que “No”. “No es posible que tú estés aquí en mi país conectando conmigo, pero espera a que yo hable inglés”.</p> <p>And so, when I was in France studying, the first thing they taught me to say was je m'appelle Alex, où sont les toilettes “Where's the bathroom?” So, I remember I understood little, but when I started talking to people from... from France and I would say Vous parlez Anglai? and everybody: "No", but with a face like "No" “It's not possible for you to be here in my country connecting with me but wait for me to speak English”.</p> <p>Entonces, para mí yo entiendo que cuando uno conecta más con las personas en su idioma, conecta más y hace que la persona se abra un poco más. Y también hay personas que no entienden nada de inglés, entonces tenemos que darle algo de español y creo que es una ventaja. Igual que los franceses, hay franceses que no hablan ni inglés ni español solamente entienden francés, entonces para nosotros ha sido una ventaja poder entender diferentes idiomas.</p> <p>So, for me I understand that you connect more with people in their language, it connects more and makes the person open up a little more. And there are also people who do not understand English at all, so we have to give them some Spanish and I think that is an advantage. Just like the French, there are French people who speak neither English nor Spanish, they only understand French, so for us it has been an advantage to be able to understand different languages.</p>
34:24 – 34:39	Tamara	<p>Ok. Al final, para terminar, ¿Tienen una canción favorita, para bailar o en general?</p> <p>Ok. Finally, to finish, do you have a favorite song, to dance to or in general?</p> <p>So do you have a favorite song to dance to or just a favorite song in general because we always like to ask stuff to our playlist in the podcast?</p> <p>Yo sé que es una pregunta muy difícil.</p>

		I know this is a very difficult question.
30:40 – 35:05	Desiree	I think it's funny that you asked that because I was just listening to this song this morning and Alex and I have a routine to it, it was one of our... Well it was like our first routine coming together as Alex and Desiree and Lucky me, I love that song I could dance to that song for like... definitely it becomes on I'm like "Oh, who I'm dancing with" you now, for salsa and bachata.
35:06 – 36:07	Tamara	Who is the artist?
35:08 – 35:11	Alex	Jayu for Salsa and for bachata is Gen B
35:11– 35:15	Tamara	Y Alex, ¿Tienes una canción favorita para bailar? And Alex, do you have a favorite song to dance to?
35:16– 35:44	Alex	Para bailar uno de mis temas de bachata favorita es de Raulín Rodríguez "Que vuelva"; una de las muchas de Raulín porque me gusta mucho las canciones de Raulín, pero y en salsa una que me gusta mucho también es "Llorando" de Orlando Collado, uno de mis temas favoritos; pero tengo muchos, es difícil, <i>it depends on my mood, sometimes I feel like romantic, big and fancy, and then other time I just want to let down, so it really depends on my mood.</i> To dance one of my favorite bachata songs is by Raulín Rodríguez "Que vuelva"; one of the many of Raulín because I like a lot the songs of Raulín, but in salsa one that I like a lot too is "Llorando" by Orlando Collado, one of my favorite songs; but I have many, it is difficult, it depends on my mood, sometimes I feel like romantic, big and fancy, and then other time I just want to let down, so it really depends on my mood.
35:45 – 35:59	Tamara	Yeah, yeah, very good, great songs. Okay, so Thank you guys <i>gracias por tu tiempo hoy</i> , thank you for taking the time to be on the podcast. Do you have any project coming up that you want folks to know about or whether they can find you on social media?

36:00 – 36:00	Alex and Desiree	Yes.
36:01 – 36:47	Desiree	Yes, yes. You can follow us on social media, we are in all platforms, Facebook /AlexandDesiree, Instagram AlexandDesiree, you could follow our school page Academic network of dance on IG, but we also have another season of our virtual choreography coming up and we are looking for directors for A&D worldwide team, so if you are interest in running one of our choreography or training with us and you have a school and you want to teach A&D techniques, and dance a little bit of A&D style you can reach out to us in any one of those platforms and we can make it happen.
36:47 – 37:16	Alex	Also we have a gift for everyone for everyone that's coming in, we are gonna give everyone an opportunity to train with us at a discounted rate, so we have our online classes, we call them premium and we are going to give you guys 25% off for those who are tuning it, and listening, and part of this organization. This discount count is AND25 and we see 25% off on our online classes.
37:18 – 37:56	Tamara	Wow, thank you for that. Gracias, so everybody definitely I recommend you take advantage of that if you have dance before or if you haven't dance before or you haven't dance in a while Alex and Desiree will definitely get you back dancing again or for the first time, I really do think that they're a good teacher, it is hard to find good teachers, right? There is a lot of great dancers that may not necessarily be great teachers but I think with Alex and Desiree you'll find that they are both so that it's a rare combination, and you also get to practice your Spanish as well with some of the... with some of the classes if you are interested so, definitely check that out and again we will put the links in the show notes and make sure you check it out. And once again, gracias a Alex y Desiree for being in the show
37:57 – 37:58	Desiree	Gracias.

38:00 – 38:42	Tamara	<p>I hope you enjoyed my conversation with Alex and Desiree, and that you definitely take them up on that offer if you want to really learn how to dance for the first time, or maybe you are a little bit rusty because you haven't been dancing a lot in the past year or year and half, or if you just want to step up your game, right? and learn some more skills that you can use to improve your salsa and bachata, definitely check out the website so you can sign up.</p> <p>And don't forget if you want to join us live on Tuesday June 8th for a special Spanish Immersion Dance Class make sure you check out spanishconsalsa.com/dance and if you're thinking that me and I'm not sure if I'll be able to make it on June 8th I definitely recommend that you sign up anyway because you will be able to get the recording from the class if you have any questions you I'm in advance after you register if you want them to address something specifically but it is going to be a fun opportunity for you to get off your butt and start dancing and practicing your Spanish at the same time so once again you can join us on June 8th by going to spanishconsalsa.com/dance</p> <p>As always I hope something you heard in today's episode has helped you go at least one step closer even if it's just a small step, one step closer from the Spanish beginner to bilingual. <i>Hasta la próxima.</i></p>
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Show Notes: <https://www.learnspanishconsalsa.com/125>

Links and Resources

- [Academic Network of Dance](#) (Discount code AND25 for 25% off)
- Live Dance Class (in Spanish) on Tuesday, June 8, 2021 with Alex and Desiree [Click here to Register](#)

Guest Information

Alex and Desiree, Academic Network of Dance

Website: academicnetworkofdance.com

Instagram: [@academicnetworkofdance](#)

Facebook: [@academicnetworkofdance](#)

YouTube: [AlexandDesiree](#)