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**Lesson Name:** Pre-Lesson for the Limón Dance Company

**Intended Audience:** Gr. 5 - 12

**MN ELA Anchor Standard Addressed**

* **Listening, Speaking, Viewing, and Exchanging Ideas 2:** Communicate with others, applying knowledge of vocabulary, language, structure, and features of spoken language, considering audience and context**.**

**Aligned Instructional Learning Targets:** The students will know who J[osé Limón](https://vimeo.com/limondance) was, how he developed his art, and why his work is notable.

**Introduction:** Slides 1 - 4:The instructor states that students will be introduced to [José Limón](https://www.biography.com/performer/jose-limon) a famous dancer and choreographer who helped create the modern dance movement in the United States. Students will know who J[osé Limón](https://vimeo.com/limondance) was, how he developed his art, and why his work is so notable.

**Body of the Lesson:** Slides 5 - 6: The instructor explains who J[osé Limón](https://vimeo.com/limondance):

* Founded in 1946 by José Limón and Doris Humphrey, the Limón Dance Company has been at the **vanguard** of American Modern dance since its inception and is considered one of the world’s greatest dance companies.
* Acclaimed for its **dramatic expression, technical mastery and expansive, yet nuanced movement**, the Limón Dance Company illustrates the timelessness of José Limón’s work and vision.
* Choreographer and dancer José Limón is credited with creating one of the world’s most important and enduring dance legacies— an **art form responsible for the creation, growth, and support of modern dance in this country.**

Slide 7: The instructor then details what José Limón’s early life was like:

* José Arcadia Limón was **born** on January 12, 1908, in Culiacán, Mexico. His father was a musician and conductor. His mother was the daughter of a schoolteacher. Limón was the oldest of eleven children, four of whom died in infancy.
* When the Mexican Revolution of 1910 **threatened their safety**, the Limón family left Culiacán and took up residence in other cities, including Hermosillo and Nogales.
* In 1915, the Limóns **emigrated** from Mexico to Tucson, Arizona. They later moved to Los Angeles, California.

Slide 8: The instructor then describes how José Limón’s was educated:

* José Limón graduated from **Los Angeles**' Lincoln High School in 1926 and enrolled at the University of California, Los Angeles, to study art. In 1928, however, he left his program and moved to **New York**.
* In New York, Limón attended a dance performance by Harald Kreutzberg and Yvonne Georgi and was inspired to begin **training as a dancer**. He studied with Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman at the Humphrey-Weidman Studio and then danced **professionally** with their company.

Slide 9: Next, the instructor outlines José Limón’s early career:

* In addition to performing with the Humphrey-Weidman Company through 1940, Limón also **danced** in a number of **Broadway** productions, including the musical revues *Americana* and *As Thousands Cheer* in 1932 and 1933, respectively.
* In the '30s, Limón also developed his skills as a **choreographer**. In 1937, he created his first important work, ***Danzas Mexicanas***.
* He also **taught** dance at a half-dozen colleges around the country.

Slide 10: The instructor shares details of José Limón’s contributions during World War 2:

* In 1943, Limón was **drafted** into the United States Army. He initially served as a truck driver in the quartermaster corps, then was transferred to the Special Services Division, where he **directed** dance performances.
* Limón was discharged at the end of 1945 and became a United States **citizen** in 1946.

Slide 11: The instructor explains what happened to José Limón’s career after World War 2:

* He established his own dance **company** in New York in 1947, hiring Doris Humphrey as his artistic director. He continued to choreograph for himself and his company; his best-known work is *The Moor's Pavane* of 1949, a dance inspired by Shakespeare's *Othello*. Other important works were *The Traitor* (1954) and *The Emperor Jones* (1956).
* In 1951, Limón began to work with **Juilliard** **School** in New York, where he would **teach** for the rest of his career.

Slide 12: The instructor identifies some of José Limón’s awards and honors:

* José Limón and Company was the first dance company to travel abroad on a cultural mission under the United States **State Department** when they were sent to South America to perform in 1954.
* There were other firsts for Limón and his troupe: They opened the first dance performance at the New York **Shakespeare Festival Theatre** in Central Park in 1962, and they gave the first dance performance at New York's **Lincoln Center** in 1963.
* Limón received such honors as the **Dance Magazine Award**, the **Capezio Dance Award** and **four honorary doctorates**.

Slide 13: The instructor outlines what the end of José Limón’s life was like:

* Limón **choreographed until the end of his life**, creating at least one new piece every year. His final composition, *Carlota*, premiered in 1972.
* Limón died in 1972.

Slides 14 - 15: Then, the instructor describes José Limón’s legacy:

* His dance company continues to thrive as the **Limón Dance Company**; it is part of the José Limón Dance Foundation, a larger entity that oversees Limón's legacy and perpetuates his teaching methods.
* Limón is a **role model** for Latinx communities throughout the United States.
* José Limón was one of the most **prominent** American choreographers in modern dance.
* Limón’s powerful choreography often focused on **human drama**, incorporating themes from literature, history or religion.
* Throughout his career, Limón worked to **change the image of the male in dance** and bring it to a new stature and recognition.

Slide 16: Next, the instructor shows students a [video](https://vimeo.com/553522015/11142146) that provides an overview of José Limón:

Slide 17: Upon conclusion of the video, the instructor asks students to think about what they have learned about José Limón thus far, and to share ideas about what kinds of themes and imagery they might expect to see in the dance performance at Northrop.

Slide 18: After students have shared their ideas, the instructor suggests that the following themes and imagery may appear in the dance performance they will see:

* American modern dance
* Universal challenges of assimilation
* Deep emotions, perhaps of loss and exclusion
* Statements of hope for all humankind
* Expressions of common humanity and compassion

**Lesson Closure:** Slide 19: The instructor concludes the lesson by stating that the University of Minnesota welcomes all students to campus and looks forward to each of them being a college student one day soon!