

Ballet Nacional de España closes the Festival de Jerez with two world premieres and a tribute to Mario Maya

Invocación will subsequently travel to Terrassa (Barcelona), St. Petersburg (Russia), Águilas (Murcia) and Madrid

This programme brings together choreographies by Rubén Olmo, Mario Maya, Antonio Najarro, Manolo Marín, Isabel Bayón and Rafaela Carrasco

Jerez, March 6th, 2020. **On March 7th, the Ballet Nacional de España will close the Festival de Jerez with the premiere of *Invocación* at the Teatro Villamarta** in the Andalusian city. The first programme devised by Rubén Olmo as director of the national company **offers a comprehensive overview of Spanish dance, encompassing most of its styles**. Rubén Olmo has chosen to pay special **tribute to flamenco dancer and choreographer Mario Maya** (1937–2008) with a revival of *De lo flamenco*. The programme includes two world premieres, Rubén Olmo's choreographies *Jauleña* and *Invocación bolera*, and is completed by Antonio Najarro's *Eterna Iberia*.

"The BNE was missing a flamenco suite that would allow audiences simply to enjoy the dancing," explains Rubén Olmo. The director selected *De lo flamenco*, a work premiered by Mario Maya in 1994 with the Compañía Andaluza de Danza, now the Ballet Flamenco de Andalucía, because the style of this flamenco choreography for a group of dancers, full of movement and freshness, is particularly well suited to the BNE. **"The programme Mario Maya premiered that year was a breath of fresh air and something completely different from the flamenco being performed at the time. Even today, it remains innovative and entirely unlike anything else,"** he adds. Despite being a leading figure in Andalusian dance and flamenco theatre, and the creator of a unique and highly personal style, the Ballet Nacional de España's repertoire did not include any of his choreographies. "I believe Mario Maya would be very pleased with the work we have done and to see his work performed by the Ballet Nacional de España," says Rubén Olmo.

The BNE's director has sought to reproduce Mario Maya's flamenco suite in the finest possible detail. To do so, he has worked with Mariana Ovalle, the choreographer's widow, who allowed him to consult the artist's personal archives, stored in boxes in his study. "Mariana is very protective of Mario's legacy, but although we had not met before, she understood that I would take great care over every small detail," explains the BNE's director. **"Rubén Olmo's decision to revive Mario's choreographies has been a great success. Mario was, is and always will be a benchmark in flamenco.** *De lo flamenco* is a production that brings together flamenco pieces in



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different styles, all sharing a rigorous discipline that is joyful and full of life, just like flamenco itself," says Mariana Ovalle.

For this production, Rubén Olmo has consulted Mario Maya's closest collaborators, from Rafaela Carrasco and Manuel Betanzos, the rehearsal directors for *De lo flamenco*, to musician Diego Carrasco and painter Patricio Hidalgo. "I wanted to create a faithful replica, respecting every last step exactly as Mario conceived it," he adds. The costumes have also been hand-painted, just like the originals. Artist Juan Andrés Maya was responsible for reproducing those used in Mario Maya's production. In addition, dancers **Isabel Bayón** and **Rafaela Carrasco**, who worked under the direction of the choreographer and flamenco dancer, have created **two new choreographies for the BNE's production of *De lo flamenco: Taranto and Romance del emplazado***, respectively. The programme also includes Manolo Marín's choreography *Los cinco toreros*. **"It is a very complete programme in which we will be able to enjoy flamenco filled with life and strength on stage," concludes Rubén Olmo.**

Two further world premieres

Invocación also encompasses two other new choreographies created by Rubén Olmo. ***Invocación bolera* updates the essence of traditional escuela bolera**, characterised by its distinctive use of castanets. This style, mastered by great dancers such as Mariemma, Ángel Pericet and Antonio "el Bailarín", is one of the most complex and distinctive forms of Spanish dance. Musician and conductor Manuel Busto has composed an original score for the piece, recorded with the Orchestra of Extremadura. Busto also composed the music for ***Jauleña*, a solo performed by Rubén Olmo that interweaves three disciplines of Spanish dance: escuela bolera, stylised dance and flamenco.**

Completing the programme is *Eterna Iberia*, choreographed by Antonio Najarro to music by Manuel Moreno Buendía. Premiered by the Ballet Nacional de España in May 2019, Rubén Olmo chose to include it because it represents the classical Spanish style with which the Ballet Nacional de España is identified. "It is one of Antonio Najarro's choreographies, bearing his own distinctive signature, in which he has achieved a greater purity of Spanish stylised dance, inspired by great masters such as Pilar López," says the BNE's director.

Following its premiere in Jerez de la Frontera, the Ballet Nacional de España will take this programme on its **first international tour of 2020**. The BNE will perform on April 16th at the **Alexandrinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, Russia**, as part of the Dance Open Festival. *Invocación* will also be performed at the Centre Cultural de **Terrassa in Barcelona** on March 28th and 29th; the Teatro Infanta Elena in **Águilas, Murcia**, on May 16th; and **Madrid's** Teatro de la Zarzuela from June 27th to July 12th.



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Director
Rubén Olmo

Rubén Olmo, director of the BNE

Rubén Olmo, winner of the 2015 National Dance Award, joined the Ballet Nacional de España in September 2019 with the aim of working to preserve, promote and expand the reach of the traditional Spanish Dance repertoire, while also incorporating new creations and opening the doors to the avant-garde and experimentation. This marks his second period with the BNE, a company of which he was a member as a dancer between 1998 and 2002.

From 2011, he served as director of the Ballet Flamenco de Andalucía, an institution belonging to the Regional Government of Andalusia, where he premiered his own productions such as *Llanto por Ignacio Sánchez Mejías* and *La muerte de un minotauro*. Previously, he founded his own company, for which he created shows including *Érase una vez*, *Belmonte*, *Las tentaciones de Poe*, *Horas contigo*, *Naturalmente Flamenco* and *Diálogo de Navegante*. He has also collaborated as a choreographer or dancer with leading figures in Spanish Dance such as Aída Gómez, Antonio Najarro, Eva Yerbabuena, Víctor Ullate, Antonio Canales, Rafael Amargo, Isabel Bayón and Rafaela Carrasco.

About the BNE

The Ballet Nacional de España is Spain's leading public company for Spanish dance. It was founded in 1978 under the name Ballet Nacional Español, with Antonio Gades as its first director. It forms part of the production units of the National Institute for the Performing Arts and Music (INAEM), which belongs to the Ministry of Culture and Sport. The BNE's mission focuses on preserving, promoting and transmitting Spain's rich choreographic heritage, embracing its stylistic diversity and traditions, represented through its various forms: academic, stylized, folklore, escuela bolera and flamenco. It also works to bring dance closer to new audiences and to promote its national and international profile within a framework of full artistic and creative autonomy.

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