

Ballet Nacional de España premieres *Capricho español* at the Dance Open Ballet Festival Gala in St. Petersburg, Russia

The stylised Spanish dance choreography with flamenco touches, created by Miguel Ángel Corbacho to music by Rimsky-Korsakov, will become part of the BNE's repertoire

Madrid, December 14th 2020. Last April, the Ballet Nacional de España was forced to cancel its planned participation in the Dance Open Festival in St. Petersburg due to the closure of borders and theatres, as well as the home confinement of artists and audiences caused by the global coronavirus pandemic. Nevertheless, the company's dancers and team continued rehearsing and planning the journey until they were finally able to announce that dance had triumphed over the difficulties that persisted beyond the end of lockdown. **On December 16th, the Ballet Nacional de España will perform at the Dance Open Ballet Festival Gala, to be held at the Oktyabrsky Grand Concert Hall in St. Petersburg, Russia.** Featuring prestigious companies and artists from around the world, this event is eagerly anticipated in the city, with tickets usually selling out within a few hours.

Rubén Olmo, director of the Ballet Nacional de España, commissioned his assistant director, Miguel Ángel Corbacho, to create a choreography for the gala that would symbolise cultural exchange without losing sight of its Spanish roots. The dancer and choreographer selected the final two movements of *Capricho español*, Op. 34: *Escena y canto gitano* and *Fandango asturiano*. Russian composer Rimsky-Korsakov, who was born not far from St. Petersburg, composed this score after drawing inspiration from Spanish melodies he discovered during his travels as an officer in the Imperial Russian Navy in the nineteenth century.

The result is a **powerful, dynamic and complex choreography that reflects Miguel Ángel Corbacho's distinctive vision of stylised dance with flamenco influences, while also embodying the Ballet Nacional de España's signature on stage.** The resulting suite is divided into four sections, combining stylised dance with castanets, flamenco touches and the richness of Spanish dance with the bata de cola.

The fluid performances of the Ballet Nacional de España's principal dancers, first dancers and soloists bring the choreographer's complex group movements and symmetries to life, thrilling audiences with their breakneck pace. **"It is a spectacular and highly energetic piece that reflects both the purity of Spanish dance and its new directions.** The selected cast will represent the Ballet Nacional de España magnificently in St. Petersburg," says Rubén Olmo.

The recording of Rimsky-Korsakov's music used for this gala was made by the Spanish National Youth Orchestra, conducted by Josep Vicent, at the Zaragoza Auditorium and Conference Centre in 2005. The female dancers' costumes were designed by Yaiza Pinillos for the ballet *Zaguán*, while the men's costumes come from the Ballet Nacional de España's costume archive. The lighting design is by Eduardo Solís. *Capricho español* will become part of the Ballet Nacional de España's repertoire and will be performed on future tours.

As the festival organisers conclude: "Winter stars shine more brightly than spring stars and are more clearly visible against a cold sky. We decided to overcome the difficulties of the post-lockdown period that we have all faced—organisers, artists and audiences—and give ourselves a celebration of dance. This Dance Open Gala will be especially unexpected and welcome."

About the Ballet Nacional de España

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

Rubén Olmo, Director of the Ballet Nacional de España

Rubén Olmo, winner of the 2015 National Dance Award, joined the Ballet Nacional de España in September 2019 with the aim of preserving, promoting and expanding the reach of the traditional Spanish Dance repertoire, while also incorporating new creations and opening the company to avant-garde approaches and experimentation. This marks his second period with the BNE, having previously danced with the company from 1998 to 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, including *Llanto por Ignacio Sánchez Mejías* and *La muerte de un minotauro*. Before that, he founded his own company, for which he created productions such as *Érase una vez, Belmonte*, *Las tentaciones de Poe*, *Horas contigo*, *Naturalmente Flamenco* and *Diálogo de Navegante*. He has also worked as a choreographer and dancer with leading figures in Spanish Dance, including Aída Gómez, Antonio Najarro, Eva Yerbabuena, Víctor Ullate, Antonio Canales, Rafael Amargo, Isabel Bayón and Rafaela Carrasco.

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