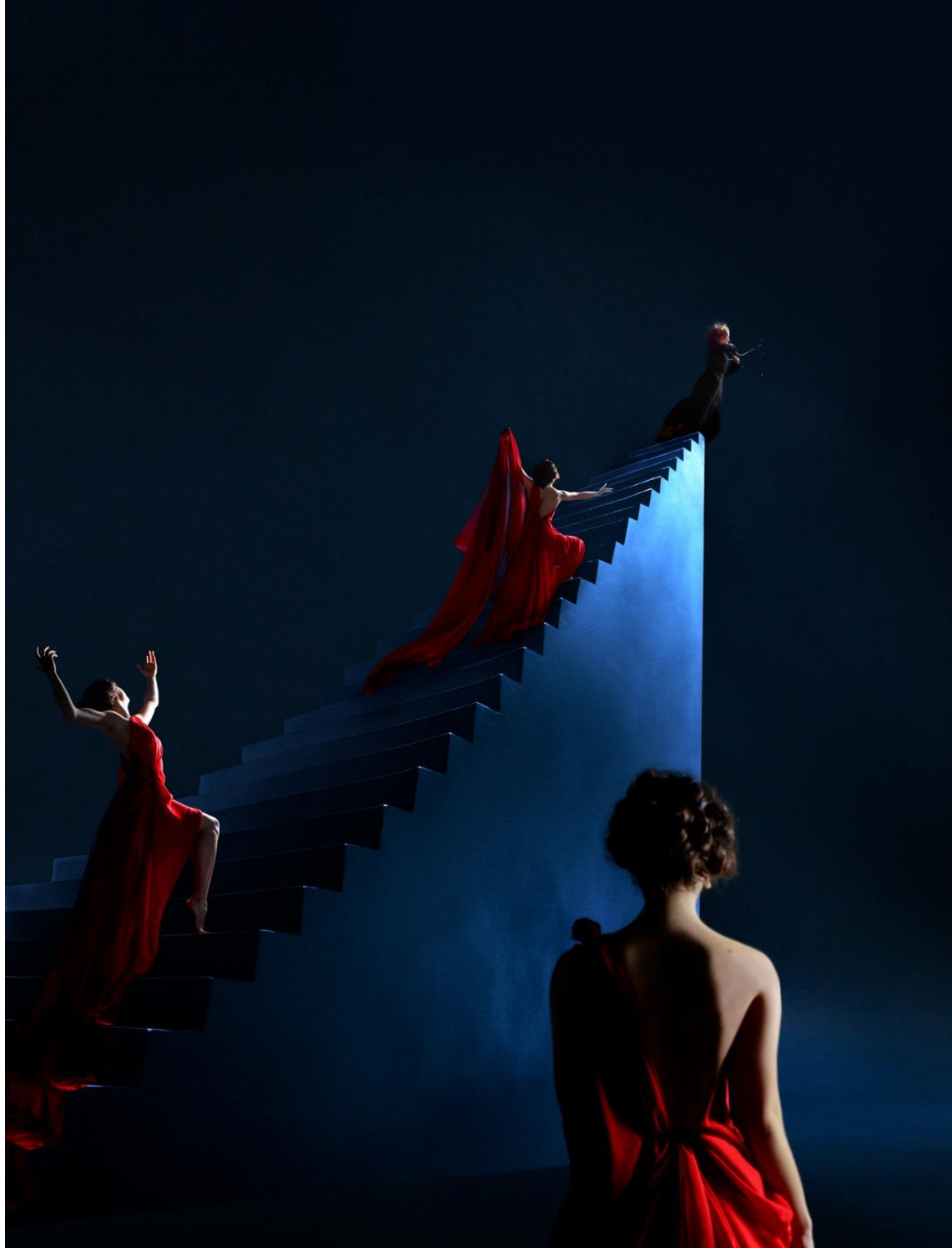


**BALLET
NACIONAL
DE ESPAÑA**
Director **Rubén Olmo**



LA BELLA OTERO

Ballet Nacional de España
Director Rubén Olmo



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INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE
LAS ARTES ESCÉNICAS Y DE LA MÚSICA

**BALLET NACIONAL
DE ESPAÑA**

La Bella Otero

Teatro de la Zarzuela (Madrid) From 7th to 18th July 2021

Artistic Credits:

Direction and choreography: Rubén Olmo

Musical direction: Manuel Busto

Music: Manuel Busto, Alejandro Cruz, Agustín Diassera, Rarefolk, Diego Losada, Víctor Márquez, Enrique Bermúdez and Pau Vallet

Dramaturgy: Gregor Acuña-Pohl

Set design: Eduardo Moreno

Costume design: Yaiza Pinillos

Lighting design: Juan Gómez-Cornejo

Imagery: Manuel Martín Nieto

Sound design: Luis Castro

Poster design: Manu Toro

Costume production: Cornejo

Footwear: Gallardo

Props: Beatriz Nieto

Hair and wigs: Carmela Cristóbal

Make-up design: Otilia Ortiz

Orchestra of the Community of Madrid (ORCAM) and BNE flamenco musicians

Guest musicians: David 'Chupete', Alejandro Cruz and Agustín Diassera

Guest artist: Patricia Guerrero

Special appearance: Maribel Gallardo

Acknowledgements: Carmen Solís.

SYNOPSIS:

La Bella Otero can be considered an “operatic ballet” in the broadest sense of the term. It is a large-scale production, both in terms of the number of dancers and the extensive costumes, which meticulously recreate the world of the *Parisian Belle Époque*, as well as in the dramaturgical development of the story.

It tells the intense life story of one of the most famous and influential dancers of the late nineteenth century, Carolina Otero. A woman from a Galician village who reinvented herself following a tragic event in her childhood. She used men to advance her artistic career and was admired by kings throughout Europe, but the only love into whose arms she ultimately fell was gambling.

La Bella Otero is a reflection on abuse, ambition, success, the inability to love and loneliness.

"My life has been a long succession of adventures, between rehearsals, performances, tours, dinners, parties, tributes and the pleas of lovers of every kind. How many men I have seen sigh, cry, demand...! They all wore that mask of desire that transforms their faces, with wrinkles on their foreheads and that grimace around their mouths... Seducers, brusque or tender; ironic satyrs; some shy and awkward, others bold and playful; rich and satisfied men who could afford their whims and would not take no for an answer; eager old men with the false hope of once again experiencing the passion of their youth... All sick children who attached too much importance to what they could not obtain and became so consumed by it that they preferred death to the suffering caused by an unfulfilled desire. I saw them all as selfish pleasure-seekers, willing to make any sacrifice to satisfy their desire, yet incapable of offering a gesture of true kindness or love."

Les Souvenirs et la Vie Intime de la Belle Otero (Memoirs of La Bella Otero),
Carolina Otero and Claude Valmont, 1926.



PLOT

An elderly Carolina Otero, alone, ruined and forgotten by the world, looks back on her life and her triumphs. From her rape as a child in a Galician village in the mid-nineteenth century, and her escape with a group of travelling performers, with whom she began her career as a dancer and met her first lover, her life becomes a relentless pursuit of success. When her lover sells her to a Portuguese nobleman, Carolina learns that love can be used as currency to attain luxury and fame. Inspired by the protagonist of Bizet's opera *Carmen*, she reinvents herself as an exotic gypsy and, moving from one patron to another—men who educate her, dress her and teach her the art of seduction—she eventually achieves success in theatres around the world, leaving behind a succession of men who take their own lives because they cannot have her. When she becomes the leading star of the Folies-Bergère in Paris, where she dances dressed as a bullfighter or wearing nothing but jewels, her list of lovers extends to members of royal families throughout Europe. The riches she receives from them are squandered at the roulette tables of the casinos in Nice and Monte Carlo. Confident in her good fortune, she attempts to seduce Rasputin, the monk and adviser to Tsar Nicholas II of Russia. He judges her and condemns her to live alone and destitute, stripped of the beauty and stage talent that had kept her among the most desired women of her time. After singing the *Habanera* from *Carmen*, her swan song as La Bella Otero, she is forced to abandon her only true love, gambling, and retreat into oblivion, accompanied only by the ghosts of her past.

CHARACTERS:

(In order of appearance)

MADAME Otero	Maribel Gallardo
CAROLINA OTERO	Patricia Guerrero
	Understudy: Aitana Rousseau
PRIEST	Antonio Correderas
PAQUITO	José Manuel Benítez
DUKE	Sergio García
CARMEN	Inmaculada Salomón
DON JOSÉ	Antonio Correderas
TORERO ESCAMILLO	Carlos Sánchez
EMILIENNE D'ALENÇON	Inmaculada Salomón
ALBERT I	Eduardo Martínez
MANUELA	Miriam Mendoza
ERNEST A. JURGENS	Francisco Velasco
BELLINI	Eduardo Martínez
EDWARD VII	Sergio García
LEOPOLD II	Antonio Correderas
WILHELM II	Cristian García
NICHOLAS II	José Manuel Benítez
GRIGORI RASPUTIN	Rubén Olmo
LOÏE FULLER	Sara Arévalo
CLÉO DE MÉRODE	Miriam Mendoza
RAYEN	Albert Hernández
ALFONSO XIII	Axel Galán

INTRODUCTION

La Bella Otero is the first narrative work I have created and directed for the Spanish National Ballet since my appointment as Director in 2019. The spirit of the two previous programmes, *Invocación* and *Centenario Antonio Ruiz Soler*, was to celebrate Spanish Dance in all its styles. This time, however, I have placed dance at the service of the story in order to tell the life of an extraordinary woman, using everything from folklore to contemporary dance. The premiere also marks my debut as Director of the company in Madrid, following the cancellation of the performances scheduled at the Teatro de la Zarzuela in the summer of 2020.

It is a highly emotional and also dramatic production, because it tells the story of a woman who reinvented her origins in order to reach the very top, only to end her life alone and forgotten. Dramaturg Gregor Acuña-Pohl and I have read and researched everything that has been written about her, including her memoirs. We also studied portraits in order to learn her poses, as very little filmed evidence of her dancing survives.

The music conveys the life of La Bella Otero and her era extremely well and is, above all, deeply emotional and passionate. Manuel Busto, Agustín Diassera, Alejandro Cruz Benavides, Rarefolk, Diego Losada, Víctor Márquez, Enrique Bermúdez and Pau Vallet composed the original score for the choreography. The work incorporates different dance styles, from stylised dance and flamenco to contemporary dance and folklore, creating a fusion capable of telling the story of La Bella Otero.

The costumes are another of the outstanding elements of *La Bella Otero*. Designer Yaiza Pinillos carried out extensive research into the history of clothing across different periods, recreating everything from the garments worn by Galician peasants to the style of the Belle Époque and the spectacular productions of the Folies Bergère in Paris. As the story takes place in so many different locations, from Barcelona's Liceu to the Monte Carlo casino and the court of the Russian Tsar, Eduardo Moreno had to design a versatile set capable of accommodating both exterior and interior scenes.

For the leading role, I chose Patricia Guerrero because she is a bailaora who radiates tremendous power on stage. She possesses the same magnetism that made La Bella Otero so extraordinary. I have known her since she was my student in Seville; she later joined my company, and I also directed her at the Ballet Flamenco de Andalucía.

Today, she is one of the leading figures in the most avant-garde flamenco, and it is a privilege to have her with us. The same is true of Maribel Gallardo, Rehearsal Director and former Principal Dancer of the Ballet Nacional de España, who portrays the protagonist after her retirement from the stage. As well as being a dancer, she is a wonderful actress who has brought countless characters to life on stage. Some of the work's key moments belong to her. As with every project I have proposed to her, she has devoted herself completely to this role.

Why La Bella Otero?

What first drew me to the story of La Bella Otero was the fact that one of the most famous women of her time came from a small village in Pontevedra. I first came across this extraordinary figure many years ago, before beginning my career as a choreographer. I had long wanted to create a choreography about her, but I knew it had to be made for a major ballet company. Directing the Spanish National Ballet has given me that opportunity, and I believe this will be a very important work.

Rubén Olmo
Director of the Ballet Nacional de España



OUR LA BELLA OTEROS

The story of *La Bella Otero* spans different periods in Carolina Otero's life, which meant that Rubén Olmo faced the challenge of finding not just one dancer who could master several dance styles, act and also sing, but two. Fortunately, he did not have to look far. **Maribel Gallardo**, former Principal Dancer with the Ballet Nacional de España, continues to work with the company as Rehearsal Director and, in 2013, performed the title role in José Granero's *Medea*, premiered at the Mérida Festival. Rubén Olmo has entrusted her with some of the production's most dramatically intense scenes, portraying Carolina Otero in her later years.

The dancer who portrays the young Carolina Otero is **Patricia Guerrero**, former Principal Dancer with the Ballet Flamenco de Andalucía under the direction of Rubén Olmo. She began dancing at the age of 15 with Mario Maya's company and later worked as a soloist in *Flamenco hoy*, directed by Carlos Saura.

For Patricia Guerrero, taking on this character is a great responsibility: **"As a dancer, simply stepping into the home of the Ballet Nacional de España is already a huge milestone and something that will stay with me for life, but to arrive as the leading performer, and under the direction of Rubén Olmo, I could say it feels like a dream. I am very aware of where I am and of the enormous responsibility that comes with my role. Having this challenge in my hands is bringing out 100% of me. There are no surviving filmed images of her movement or artistic expression, so Otero's dance in this production will be my dance."**

According to the dancer, La Bella Otero is a complex character because she experiences a range of conflicts that make her something of a dramatic enigma. **"She was a woman with a very strong character, enormous self-confidence and a fierce instinct for survival. She knew better than anyone how to harness her charisma and sensuality in order to achieve success."** Patricia Guerrero aims to translate every detail into dance so that audiences can understand this woman whom she admires. Above all, she has drawn on Otero's self-assurance and her extraordinary ability to captivate others in order to step into the character. **"La Bella Otero is a hard-hitting work at its core, but it is also dynamic, entertaining and fresh, with a colour and energy that will allow all of us, both on and off stage, to enjoy it."**

Maribel Gallardo, who portrays La Bella Otero in her later years, describes the character as a transgressive woman confronting a male-dominated society, and acknowledges that there is something of La Bella Otero in every woman.

For the Rehearsal Director and choreographer, who has been part of the Ballet Nacional de España since 1981 and has danced as a Principal Dancer in roles such as *La Celestina*, this character represents both a major source of motivation and a significant challenge within the wide range of roles she has performed throughout her long career. This is partly because she must engage with the choreographic language of Rubén Olmo, with whom she had not previously worked as a dancer, and partly because of the physical demands she places on herself in order to return to the stage.

CHOREOGRAPHY

The choreography **Rubén Olmo** has created for *La Bella Otero* draws on a range of dance styles, filtered through his own personal movement language, in order to bring each scene of the story closer to the audience. The production includes everything from a muñeira rooted in Galician folklore in the pilgrimage scene, to contemporary and conceptual dance in Rasputin's trial; a zapateado reminiscent of the musicals of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers during Otero's successful world tour; and traditional Spanish Dance in the staging of Bizet's opera *Carmen*, which marks a turning point in the protagonist's destiny.

As the story unfolds across such a wide variety of settings and countries, the work paints a rich historical panorama of the dance styles in vogue at the end of the nineteenth century. Rubén Olmo offers a personal interpretation of dances contemporary with the protagonist, such as the cancan of Parisian cabarets, the dancing of Loïe Fuller, the ethereal pioneer of modern dance, and the flamenco performed in the cafés cantantes of the period, the forerunners of today's flamenco tablaos.

The production also recreates two of the numbers that made La Bella Otero famous: the bulería she danced dressed as a bullfighter and surrounded by guitarists, and the erotic dance with Arab and Indian influences with which she bewitched audiences while wearing the jewels given to her by her lovers.

DRAMATURGY

In 2019, when he was appointed Director, Rubén Olmo commissioned **Gregor Acuña-Pohl** to write the script for the dramatic ballet he wanted to create for the Ballet Nacional de España about La Bella Otero. A world-famous Spanish artist who forms part of our cultural heritage, her name is known around the world, although her story remains unfamiliar to many.

The actor and theatre director, who has previously collaborated with choreographers such as Johan Inger, sought to distil the essence of the historical figure as much as possible without losing the most significant episodes of her biography, leaving anecdotal details aside. **"The most important thing for me was to portray a person with enormous magnetism, charisma and strength."**

Gregor Acuña-Pohl carried out extensive research, reading every biography written about her as well as her memoirs, a highly fictionalised version of her life published in 1926. He also visited the museum dedicated to her in the village of Valga, Pontevedra, and the site where the local pilgrimage takes place. He followed the diva's footsteps through Paris and delved into contemporary newspapers in the archives.

"As I read her biographies again and again, I looked for those moments that were most representative and that could be expressed through dance." Among the settings he selected are a Galician pilgrimage; the Barcelona opera house, where she attends Bizet's Carmen; a café cantante, the equivalent of a modern-day flamenco tablao; the Folies Bergère, Paris's most famous cabaret; Maxim's restaurant; and the Monte Carlo casino.

The story follows the classic rise-and-fall arc of its protagonist, from her escape from her native Galician village to the process of becoming a star, achieving success on stages around the world and accumulating jewels, lovers and wealth. The tragedy of her life is that she never found happiness because of her inability to love. Her greatest passions were winning and losing at roulette. After leaving the stage in 1910, when she was just over 40, she lived for more than 50 years in solitude, isolated from the world and accompanied only by her memories.

The script leaves out details such as the poem dedicated to her by José Martí, musical numbers that were highly popular in cabarets at the time, and the many suicides of abandoned lovers. It does, however, include a reference to the fact that she financed her own production of Bizet's opera *Carmen* in order to perform the character who inspired the yearning for freedom that became the driving force of her life.

"When writing a story about such a complex life, we obviously have to simplify. But we are not passing judgement on what is right or wrong; we are simply trying to remain faithful to reality while also making it engaging for the audience. Dance should move people before it passes judgement. I have tried to remain true to the historical figure and turn her story into a ballet that is interesting for audiences. After that, everyone can draw their own conclusions about the character."

MUSIC

The music of *La Bella Otero* is notable for the wide variety of aesthetics that make up the score, while still being conceived as a unified composition. It brings together everything from Galician folklore to experimental and avant-garde approaches, from flamenco to contemporary reinterpretations of styles and forms used during the Belle Époque.

This diversity has been brought together through the creation of a collective work involving three composers for the symphonic sections: Manuel Busto, Alejandro Cruz and Agustín Diassera. In addition, guitarists Diego Losada, Víctor Márquez, Enrique Bermúdez and Pau Vallet have contributed flamenco compositions, while the group Rarefolk provides the atmosphere for the scene set in Galicia with its distinctive psychedelic Celtic rock. The work also incorporates excerpts from Bizet's opera *Carmen* and from the zarzuela *El año pasado por agua* by Chueca and Valverde.

Manuel Busto was responsible for the musical direction of the symphonic sections. The composer and conductor had previously created the scores for Rubén Olmo's *Jauleña* and *Invocación bolera* for the Ballet Nacional de España. **"In every collective work, total freedom does not exist; it must always go hand in hand with a plural vision—that is its essence. Rubén knows how to find the perfect balance between the overall concept that brings us all together, in this case set out in Gregor Acuña-Pohl's libretto, while at the same time allowing each artist to feel free to give full expression to their creative personality."**

According to Manuel Busto, the additional complexity of *La Bella Otero* lies in having to incorporate pre-existing themes into the score and make them feel completely natural within it. **"My main challenge when developing the arrangements and orchestrations was to ensure that they did not lose a single trace of their original freshness and personality, while still becoming an organic part of the work."**

With this in mind, he also conceived an orchestra in which flamenco musicians, guitars, piano and percussionists form a natural part of an orchestral ensemble already rich in colour and timbre thanks to the development of instrumental techniques from the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It moves away from the classical orchestra while remaining its heir. **"It is music conceived without prejudice, and it gives nothing up."**

For his part, **Alejandro Cruz Benavides** also highlights the coordination between the composers in bringing together styles and forms, as well as the sensations and climaxes they wanted to create at each point, seeking the contrasts the work required as a whole.

The pianist and composer, whose work spans a wide range of musical styles including flamenco, classical music, jazz and pop, created the music for the scenes of *La Bella Otero* set in the casino, Maxim's restaurant, the court of Nicholas II of Russia and Loïe Fuller's number at the Folies Bergère.

"For me, immersing myself in the world of La Bella Otero has been fascinating. It has become a journey, a gift for the senses and the discovery of a figure I had heard about but knew very little about. In my music, I have tried to capture the sensations and emotions of La Bella Otero that Rubén Olmo conveyed to me. As this is a ballet, I have tried to make the music as descriptive as possible so that, in addition to being moved, the audience can follow the course of her life."

Rubén Olmo commissioned percussionist **Agustín Diassera** to compose three pieces: one with a strongly rhythmic, gypsy-inspired atmosphere; the zambra danced by La Bella Otero at the Folies Bergère, a melodic piece in which she takes centre stage; and the complex world-tour number. This final piece condenses the artist's successful journey through several countries and lovers into a frivolous atmosphere that ultimately takes a tragic turn. **"It was a real challenge, and I opted for a middle ground between silent cinema and Hollywood musicals, with small variations on the national anthem of each country. What helped me conceive it was the image Rubén suggested to me of a hotel revolving door through which the protagonist enters and exits, each time accompanied by a different partner."**

In his search for textures, the composer drew inspiration from both the character and her era, as well as from Rubén Olmo's choreographic style. He had previously composed the music for Olmo's production *La muerte de un minotauro*, among others. **"Rubén Olmo gives you the freedom to do whatever you want, but he makes it very clear what he expects in terms of sensations. With his description of what he wanted to evoke and with the libretto, all that remained was to fit the pieces of the puzzle together so that everything had musical, harmonic and melodic coherence. Thanks to the constant communication with Rubén and Manuel Busto, I was never working blindly. When I finally heard the result, it was better than I had expected. I was very pleased with what I delivered and with the work as a whole."**

Rubén Díez de la Cortina, a member of the group Rarefolk, had also worked previously with Rubén Olmo, but was surprised by the commission for the opening scene of the work, which takes place at a pilgrimage festival in a Galician village. **"I couldn't imagine Rarefolk's electric guitar and drum sound integrated into a symphony orchestra in the context of the performing arts. But he convinced us by explaining that although the scene begins in a bucolic and festive way, it ends dramatically and violently, so he wanted a rock band,"** he admits. The score, with a clearly defined lively tempo and energetic rhythm, begins with a traditional muñeira and gradually evolves into the psychedelic Celtic rock characteristic of the group, featuring bass, violin, flute, mandolin, concertina and bodhrán.

Flamenco could not be absent from *La Bella Otero*. In the scene set in the café cantante, the music needed to come as close as possible to the flamenco played and danced at the end of the nineteenth century.

For this reason, guitarists **Víctor Márquez**, **Enrique Bermúdez** and **Pau Vallet** studied the style of earlier masters and reinterpreted compositions by guitarists Rafael "El Tomate", Sabicas and Julián Arcas. The result is a combination of soleás, verdiales, bulerías, zambras and alegrías intended to evoke those early popular flamenco tablaos.

One of La Bella Otero's most iconic dances was the one she performed dressed as a bullfighter, surrounded by guitarists. For this scene, **Diego Losada**, also one of the musicians of the Ballet Nacional de España, composed a bulería that begins with a slow, emotional introduction before building into an almost frenetic rhythm.



COSTUME DESIGN

Designer **Yaiza Pinillos**, who had previously created the costumes for *Eterna Iberia* and *Zaguán* for the Ballet Nacional de España, produced nearly 200 designs for the 14 scenes of *La Bella Otero*, set in a wide variety of places and situations.

The Canarian designer drew on multiple sources of inspiration and research, ranging from photographs taken at the end of the 19th century by travellers such as Ruth Matilda Anderson and José Ortiz Echagüe to paintings by contemporaries of La Bella Otero, such as Zuloaga, Manet, Ramón Casas, Boldini and José Cardona. These artists portrayed a Spanish woman charged with the exoticism that so strongly fascinated Europe at the time. There are also reinterpretations of designs by Jacques Doucet and Balenciaga, and even by contemporary fashion designers such as Issey Miyake, Roberto Capucci and Alexander McQueen, which, when filtered through the aesthetics of the Belle Époque, produce striking results.

One of the designer's aims was to give continuity to the characters through the costume design, reflecting the passage of time and changing circumstances while ensuring that the audience could easily recognise them throughout the work.

The costume for the character of Carolina Otero uses red and black, together with velvet, as the hallmarks of designs that give narrative unity to the different settings while also showing the character's evolution, adapting as well to the meticulously timed changes of a character who appears in every scene.

The central piece of her wardrobe is the bejewelled Byzantine-style costume that La Bella Otero wears in one of her most iconic portraits, photographed by Reutlinger. Yaiza Pinillos did not want to reproduce that postcard image exactly, but rather to extract its essence and, inspired by Gustave Moreau's paintings of Salome, create a design that would shine under the stage lights.

"I am especially proud of that design because it is a reworking of that well-known image of Otero, which I think we have managed to enrich through an approach that, rather than imitating it, evokes it, adding effects that enhance the staging and reflect that Symbolist aesthetic which subtly takes us back to the essence of an era."



In addition to being narrative in function, the designs are also adapted to the chromatic palette of each scene. While the colours in the scene set in rural Galicia evoke Goya's Black Paintings, the scene in the Folies Bergère has great chromatic intensity, and the walk through the Bois de Boulogne is defined by an elegant black-and-white bichromy.

Although the descriptive and narrative nature of the costumes in *La Bella Otero* brings them close to theatrical costume design, the task becomes more complex because each piece must also allow freedom of movement for dance. Another element that complicates both the dancing and the transitions between scenes is the characterisation of the performers, who must wear wigs, beards, moustaches and hats in order to recreate the period faithfully.

“The director, the technical team and I all agreed to take on the challenge of representing the period accurately. That effort is also shared by the dancers, who have to cope with very complex changes of look involving not only costume but also characterisation, while at the same time performing the choreography with all those costume and wig elements.”

SET DESIGN

For **Eduardo Moreno**, winner of the 2012 Max Award for Best Set Design for *De ratones y hombres*, the main challenge has been to enhance the rhythm of the succession of scenes, since the dramaturgy of the work requires great agility as it moves through many different moments in La Bella Otero's life.

This is the set designer's first collaboration with the Spanish National Ballet. Throughout his career, he has taken part in numerous productions: in dance, with María Pagés; in theatre, with Kamikaze; as well as in the musical *Cruz de navajas*.

Eduardo Moreno has structured the stage space around a large architectural element, a dome, which frames the entire production and accommodates the different scenes. Simple elements are used in each tableau to establish the period and setting of the story, from a throne to a casino table, an opera box or an *art nouveau* screen.

The design also responds to the need for the production to tour easily between different theatres, in keeping with the BNE's touring vocation.

LIGHTING

Juan Gómez-Cornejo, winner of the National Theatre Award, faced the challenging task of enveloping *La Bella Otero* in light. **"The lighting must accompany, embrace and support the dancers and, if possible, caress them, so that the story reaches the audience with the greatest possible clarity and with the same emotion with which it was created."** The lighting designer has previously worked with the Ballet Nacional de España on the productions *Negro Goya*, *El corazón de piedra verde* and the BNE's 40th Anniversary.

Inspired by the energy conveyed by the dancers, he has devised a lighting design that travels through the character's story, helping to recreate the places and situations she experienced: from rural Galicia, evoking Goya's Black Paintings, to the Portuguese countryside illuminated by the full moon, and on to the dazzling lights of theatres and casinos, always framed by the aesthetics of the Belle Époque.

BIOGRAPHIES

Rubén Olmo, Director of the Ballet Nacional de España

Rubén Olmo (Seville, 1980) discovered his love of dance at an early age. At the age of nine, he entered the Seville Conservatoire, where he graduated in Spanish Dance and Classical Dance in 1996. During his training, he also attended classes at the schools of Manolo Marín, Carmen Montiel and José Galván, and took courses with Pedro Azorín, Juanjo Linares, Victoria Eugenia, "Manolote", "Güito", Mario Maya, José Granero, Javier Latorre, Aída Gómez, Nadín Astor, Antonio Canales, Teresa Nieto, Rosa Naranjo and Carmina Ocaña. His professional career as a dancer began at the age of 16, when he joined Javier Barón's company and took part in the production *El pájaro negro*, with Belén Maya as principal bailaora. A year later, he joined Aída Gómez's Spanish Dance Company, where he performed as a soloist in *Estamos solos*, choreographed by José Antonio, Javier Latorre and Aída Gómez. He also took part in the Teatro de la Zarzuela production *El barberillo de Lavapiés*, choreographed by Ramón Oller.

In 1998, at the age of 18, he joined the corps de ballet of the Ballet Nacional de España (BNE) under the direction of Aída Gómez and was promoted to soloist one year later. During his time with the BNE, he performed as a principal dancer in productions including *Luz de alma*, choreographed by Javier Latorre; *La Celestina*, choreographed by Ramón Oller and directed for the stage by Adolfo Marsillach; *Poeta*, by Javier Latorre; *Carmen*, by José Antonio Ruiz; *Ritmos*, by Alberto Lorca; *Oripandó*, by Israel Galván; and *Grito*, by Antonio Canales. In 2002, he decided to leave the BNE and join Eva Yerbabuena's company. He has nevertheless continued to collaborate with the company subsequently as a choreographer and guest dancer, including in the production *Ángeles caídos*. Before fulfilling his dream of forming his own company in 2006, he danced in *Carmen* and *Dalí* with Compañía Metros, directed by Ramón Oller, and in *Los Tarantos (Flamenco Musical)*, choreographed by Javier Latorre and directed by Emilio Hernández. He also worked as principal dancer, choreographer and assistant director with Rafael Amargo's company.

For the company that bears his name, Rubén Olmo has created productions including *Érase una vez que era*, premiered at the Teatro Albéniz in Madrid (2003); *Belmonte* (Teatro Albéniz, Madrid, 2006); *Pinocchio* (Teatros de la Villa, Madrid, 2007); *Tranquilo alboroto* (Teatro Central, Seville, 2010); *Las tentaciones de Poe* (Teatro Central, Seville, 2012); *Horas contigo* (Teatro Fernán Gómez, 2018); *La muerte de un minotauro* (Itálica International Dance Festival, 2019); *Naturalmente flamenco* (Festival de Jerez, 2019); and *Diálogo de navegante* (Málaga Biennial, 2019).

He was a teacher at the Centro Andaluz de Danza (CAD) from 2008 to 2018 and Director of the Ballet Flamenco de Andalucía (BFA) from 2011 to 2019. At the head of the Andalusian public company, he premiered the productions *Metáfora* (2012) and *Llanto por Ignacio Sánchez Mejías* (Gardens of the Generalife at the Alhambra, 2012).

He has also collaborated, as a guest dancer or choreographer, with some of Spain's leading dance companies and artists. He took part in productions including *Permíteme bailar* by Aída Gómez; *Jazzing flamenco* by Antonio Najarro; *La horma de su zapato* by Isabel Bayón; and *El amor brujo* by Víctor Ullate. He also appeared in the opera *El público* by Federico García Lorca, composed by Mauricio Sotelo (Teatro Real, 2015).

Winner of the National Dance Award in 2015, Rubén Olmo has received numerous accolades throughout his career, including a Max Award (2014), the Indanza Silver Slipper Award (2012), the Golden Giraldivillo at the Seville Flamenco Biennial (2010) and the Pilar López Dance Performance Award (2007). His productions have also received awards, including the Critics' Award at the Festival de Jerez (2019) for *Horas contigo* and the Giraldivillo Ciudad de Sevilla (2016) for *Toda la vida bailando*.

Rubén Olmo has been Director of the Ballet Nacional de España since September 2019.

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.

Maintaining a programme that combines new creation with the preservation of the traditional Spanish Dance repertoire and the ongoing incorporation of new works is one of the priorities of the current Strategic Plan. In this regard, the BNE has launched a new creative direction open to avant-garde approaches and emerging trends, inviting international choreographers and new creators to collaborate with the company.

To broaden the reach of Spanish Dance, the BNE promotes touring by alternating large-scale productions with more compact formats and encourages the sustainable financial management of all its productions, fostering cooperation with other public institutions and private companies.

Patricia Guerrero

Patricia Guerrero (Granada, 1990) has deep flamenco roots, while also consistently exploring other styles of music and dance. She began taking classes at the age of three at her mother's academy. Her training included teachers such as Mario Maya and Rubén Olmo, with influences from Spanish classical and contemporary dance.

In 2010, she premiered her first solo work, *Desde el Albayzín*, which toured throughout Europe. She was also invited by Carlos Saura to appear as a soloist on the world tour of *Flamenco Hoy* and in his film *Flamenco, Flamenco*. In 2011, Patricia was appointed Principal Dancer of the Ballet Flamenco de Andalucía.

Productions by her own company include *Latidos del agua* (2013) and *Touché*. In 2016, she premiered *Catedral* at the 19th Seville Biennial, where it received the Giraldillo Award for Best Production and was nominated for two 2017 Max Awards, including Best Female Dance Performer. In 2018, she took another major step forward with *Distopía*, also premiered at the Biennial and this time nominated for three Max Awards. In 2019, she premiered *Pies de Barro* at Córdoba's Noche Blanca del Flamenco. In 2020, she presented *Paraíso Perdido* at the Seville Biennial, a production with viola da gamba player Fahmi Alqhai in which she dances to Baroque repertoire, as well as *Proceso Eterno*, a flamenco recital with Dani de Morón, Sergio el Colorao and Agustín Diassera.

She has performed at some of the world's most prestigious theatres and festivals, including New York City Center, Théâtre National de Chaillot in Paris, Teatros del Canal in Madrid, Teatro Central and Teatro Lope de Vega in Seville, Piccolo Teatro di Milano, BOZAR in Brussels, Grand Théâtre de Luxembourg and the Moscow International House of Music, among others.

Maribel Gallardo

She began her dance studies at the age of six, continued her training with Maestro Jareño and further developed her technique with Victoria Eugenia. She graduated in Dance at the age of 14 with Honours and subsequently studied with María Magdalena, Ciro, Juana Taft, Pedro Azorín, Juanjo Linares, Aurora Pons, Ana Baselga, Aurora Bosch, Granero, Fernando Bujones and Rosella Hightower, among others. She holds a Master's Degree in Performing Arts from Universidad Rey Juan Carlos in Madrid (2008).

In 1975, she took part in the creation of the Ballet Folclórico Nacional under the direction of Pilar López. She later danced as a soloist with Los Goyescos, Alberto Lorca's Ballet Antología, Ballet Siluetas, directed by José Antonio and Luisa Aranda, and the companies of María Rosa, Rafael de Córdova and Luisillo.

She joined the Ballet Nacional de España in 1981, under the direction of Antonio, and was promoted to Principal Dancer in 1985 under María de Ávila. Throughout her career, she performed leading roles in works from the company's repertoire and premiered pieces created especially for her, including *Chacona* and *Goyescas*, both by Victoria Eugenia. At the Teatro Real in Madrid, she premiered the role of Celestina in Ramón Oller's work of the same name, with stage direction by Adolfo Marsillach, and also took part in the premiere of Maestro Granero's emblematic *Medea*. She performed *Bodas de sangre* alongside Antonio Gades to mark the 10th anniversary of the creation of the BNE. She worked as Rehearsal Director of the BNE's school workshop under the direction of José Antonio and, since 2002, has been Rehearsal Director of the Ballet Nacional de España.

As a guest artist with Adrián Galia's company in *En clave flamenca*, she took part in the Tribute to Margarita Xirgu, directed by Miguel Narros at the Teatro Español in Madrid. Under Granero's direction, she danced in *A mi manera* at the Festival de Jerez; performed *El sur* alongside its composer Dorantes at the Tokyo Opera; and portrayed Medea for the BNE's 25th anniversary. She starred in *Lisístrata*, with music by Dorantes and a script by Miguel Narros, and appeared as a guest artist at the Seville Biennial in the Tribute to Maestro Granero, directed by José Antonio. Together with Currillo and Antonio Canales, she choreographed *Los flamencos bailan ópera*, premiered at the Tokyo Opera in 2013.

In 2007, the Cádiz Professional Dance Conservatoire was named Maribel Gallardo in her honour. She chaired the jury of the 9th Madrid Spanish Dance and Flamenco Choreography Competition (2000) and was a member of the Artistic Committee of the Ballet Flamenco de Andalucía from 2011 to 2019. Her awards include the Cultura Viva National Dance Award (2011), the APDE Award (2013) and the AISGE Actúa Award (2017).

Gregor Acuña-Pohl

Actor, stage director and dramaturg for dance, he trained at the Instituto del Teatro de Sevilla, the École Philippe Gaulier in London and the Teatro de La Abadía in Madrid. After working with companies including La Cuadra de Sevilla, Comediantes, Teatro Eliseo di Roma, La Abadía and the Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico, he joined Tricicle, taking part in revivals of *Exit*, *Slastic*, *Tricicle 20* and *Sit*.

In 2004, he founded the Centro de Artes Escénicas de Sevilla, the first musical theatre school in Andalusia, together with Ignasi Vidal, Marietta Calderón and Isabel Vázquez. In 2007, he created Excéntrica Producciones, with which he premiered the productions *Restaurant tú* *Three* and *Esperando a Godot*, directed by Joan Font, in Spain, Italy, Germany, France and Hong Kong.

As a director, he has staged several musicals and, as a dramaturg, he has collaborated for several years with Swedish choreographer Johan Inger. Together they have premiered *Brisa* for Nederlands Dans Theater; *Carmen* for the Compañía Nacional de Danza; *Peer Gynt* for Ballet Basel in Switzerland; *Petroushka* for Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo; and *Don Juan* for Aterballetto. He has also created the dramaturgy for several works by choreographer Isabel Vázquez, including *La maldición de los hombres Malboro*, as well as *Comedy of ErrorZ*, *Gloria* and *Empty Thrones*, choreographies by Richard Wherlock, Director of Ballet Basel. More recently, he directed *Castigo de Dios*, by Uruguayan playwright Joaquín D'Holdan, for Compañía Danza Mobile.

Manuel Busto

Conductor and composer from Los Palacios y Villafranca (Seville), Manuel Busto is regarded as one of the young Spanish artists with the greatest national and international potential, distinguished by his remarkable versatility across symphonic music, opera, dance and flamenco.

Following extensive experience as assistant conductor to renowned maestros including Carlo Rizzi, Corrado Rovaris and Maurizio Benini, he is currently one of the principal guest conductors of the Spanish National Ballet. He has also worked as a conductor with Dutch National Opera & Ballet, Orchestra I Pomeriggi Musicali di Milano, Teatro Lirico Giuseppe Verdi di Trieste, Teatro de la Maestranza in Seville, the Royal Seville Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the Spanish National Youth Orchestra, the Orchestra of Extremadura, the Barenboim-Said Academy Orchestra, Moldova National Opera and Ballet and Albania National Opera and Ballet.

More recently, he conducted the National Taiwan Symphony Orchestra in the double production of Manuel de Falla's *La vida breve* and *El amor brujo*, presented in Asia for the first time.

As a composer, his recent works include *Invocación Bolera*, *Jauleña* and *La Bella Otero* for the Ballet Nacional de España, as well as the chamber opera *Monólogo a 2: Existencia*, premiered in 2019 at the Córdoba Contemporary Music Festival, and *Jaleo's Bright* for Solar Dúo. His work for dance includes collaborations with leading figures and institutions such as Johan Inger, Manuela Nogales's Contemporary Dance Company, Rubén Olmo's company, the Seville Biennial and the Itálica Festival. He has also worked with flamenco artists including Rafaela Carrasco and guitar maestro Rafael Riqueni. In the audiovisual field, he took part in Antonio Jesús Busto's short film *The Day I Killed My Best Friend*, which received an award at the British Animation Awards.

His compositions have been performed by ensembles including the Orchestra of the Community of Madrid, the Royal Seville Symphony Orchestra, the Andalusian Youth Orchestra and Choir, the Extremadura Symphony Orchestra, the Barenboim-Said Academy Orchestra, the Ensemble of the Conservatoire de Boulogne-Billancourt in Paris, the Orquesta Bética de Cámara and the Navarra Symphony Orchestra.

He has also published the poetry collections *Cuaderno Sonoro* (Ediciones Pangea, 2019) and *Sombras en la Luz* (2021).

Alejandro Cruz Benavides

Pianist, composer and musical director. His passion for the profession began in childhood. From an early age, both he and his siblings were encouraged by their family to develop a love of theatre, music and the arts in general. He has received several national awards throughout his career, including the Max Award for Best Musical Director for *La barraca del zurdo*.

A versatile and multifaceted artist, his experience and career have enabled him to develop a command of numerous musical styles, ranging from flamenco, classical music and jazz to musical theatre and pop. This has led him to accompany artists both live and on television, including Raphael, José Mercé, Estrella Morente, Antonio Orozco, Rubén Olmo, Rosario Flores, Nacha Guevara, Rosa López, Mayte Martín, Pasión Vega, Ainhoa Arteta, Esperanza Fernández, Falete and Lole Montoya.

He has worked on commissions for major theatre and dance companies in Spain and abroad; is a regular musician on television programmes for broadcasters including TVE1, Antena 3, Telecinco and Canal Sur; and composes soundtracks for film, television, theatre and dance productions. He also occasionally teaches Musical Resources for Performance to musicians, directors and actors on master's programmes and intensive courses, where he seeks to pass on the experience he has gained throughout his extensive career.

Agustín Diassera

Born in Huelva in 1977, he began his training as a self-taught musician, which enabled him to perform with local groups from an early age. His musical curiosity led him to explore different timbres and musical styles as a percussionist, while at the same time studying flute and harmony at Antonio Mesa's musicians' workshop.

In 1999, he began a degree in Primary Education, specialising in Music Education, at the University of Huelva (1999–2002). After completing his studies, he became the only non-Indian student to receive a scholarship from the Indian Institute of Art & Culture in London for the 2002–2003 academic year. During his stay in London, he accompanied his teacher Shiv Shankar in various concerts. Since returning to Spain in 2003, he has worked with producers and artists including Jesús Bola, Isidro Muñoz, Jesús Cayuela, Joaquín Cortés, Manolo Sanlúcar, José Antonio Rodríguez, Juan Carlos Romero, Enrique Heredia 'Negri', Falete, Arcángel, Esperanza Fernández, Miguel Poveda, Pepe Roca, Matt Bianco and Mauricio Sotelo, among others. He also appeared as a soloist in the premiere of Mauricio Sotelo's opera *El público*, alongside Klangforum Wien, at the Teatro Real in Madrid.

His work as a composer includes *Metáfora*, a symphonic work created for the Ballet Flamenco de Andalucía under the direction of Rubén Olmo; *Arquitectura de luz y sombras*, premiered by Rubén Olmo at the Centre Pompidou Málaga; and *Catedral*, for Patricia Guerrero's company.

Rarefolk

Rarefolk has established itself as one of the most creative and difficult-to-classify instrumental music groups on the Spanish scene, with a style described by the specialist press as "free-style folk". More than 20 years and five albums attest to the career of the Seville-based band, which has continually reinvented itself through constant evolution and the search for a distinctive musical language of its own. Its singular vision brings Celtic music together with rock and electronic avant-garde influences, resulting in a sophisticated and highly energetic sound. Appearances at major international festivals such as the Sai Festival in Ireland, Ollin Kan in Mexico, Montelago Celtic Festival in Italy, Ortigueira and Etnosur in Spain, together with collaborations with Cathy Jordan of Dervish and Dee Armstrong, as well as the addition of violinist Leslie Jordan to the project, have positioned the group as one of the leading international exponents of new music.

Diego Losada

He began his artistic career at the age of six, taking part in various television competitions and other performances. At the age of 18, he joined Manolo Caracol's tablao Los Canasteros, accompanying artists including Chato de la Isla, Gabriel Moreno, La Paquera de Jerez, Juan Ramírez, La Chana, Cristóbal Reyes, Manolete and La Tati. In 1987, he founded Grupo Makande at Madrid's Alcalá Palace with Niño Cigala and Víctor Merlo.

He has taken part in numerous flamenco productions, including *Cumbre Flamenca*, *Misa Flamenca* and *Flamenco Fusión*. He has performed at the Istanbul International Festival, the Córdoba Guitar Festival, the Bustese Guitar Festival in Italy, the Zagreb Festival, in the opera *Carmen* at Tokyo's Yoyogi Stadium, with Japanese jazz musician Hino Terumasa, and in a concert for the British Royal Family at Kensington Palace.

In 2000, he joined Joaquín Cortés's company, with whom he collaborated on the soundtrack for the film *Gitano*. Together with his brothers, he has recorded the albums *Pa' llorar*, *Losadas*, *Corazones*, *On the Road*, with Hino Terumasa, and *Arte y Pasión*. Since 2006, he has been part of the BNE's ensemble of musicians as a guitarist.

Enrique Bermúdez

Enrique Bermúdez (Gran Canaria, 1974) began playing the guitar at the age of eight, taught by his father. His first professional engagement was at the tablao La Zambra in Madrid. He later joined the dance companies of Luisillo and Juan Ramírez. He has collaborated with cantaores including Indio Gitano, Dieguito 'El Cigala' and Niña Pastori, as well as with Nati Mistral for several years, and also worked as second guitarist alongside Gerardo Núñez. Since 1999, he has been part of the BNE's ensemble of musicians as a guitarist, with his performance in *Oripandó* among his most notable contributions.

Víctor Márquez

Víctor Márquez 'Tomate' is a guitarist from Córdoba who comes from a family of flamenco guitarists known as 'Los Tomates de Córdoba'. He began learning at the age of nine under the guidance of his cousin Juan Manuel Muñoz 'El Tomate'. His training continued with his uncle Juan 'El Tomate', who taught him the art of accompanying flamenco singing. Professionally, he has performed in numerous productions as both composer and performer in cities around the world. Among the companies and artists he has worked with are Rafael Amargo, José Porcel, Manuel Liñán, Rafael Martos, Antonio Canales, Cecilia Gómez, Olga Pericet, Marcos Flores, Jesús Carmona, Miguel Marín's Flamenco Festival, Pitingo and La Moneta. He is a regular musician at tablaos including El Flamenco in Tokyo, Las Carboneras, Villa Rosa, Corral de la Pacheca, Casa Patas, Corral de la Morería and Las Tablas, among others. Since 2019, he has been part of the Ballet Nacional de España's guitar ensemble under the direction of Rubén Olmo.

Pau Vallet

Pau Vallet (Barcelona, 1986) began studying guitar at the age of 11. At 19, he entered the Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya, where he studied with maestro Juan Manuel Cañizares, while also beginning to work in various tablaos in Barcelona.

In 2007, he won the Injuve Young Creation Award. In Barcelona, he has worked alongside Montse Cortés, Chano Domínguez, Juan Gómez 'Chicuelo' and Juan Ramón Caro, among others. In 2014, he worked with Antonio Canales and Kiki Morente on *Romance de Curro el palmo*. In 2019, he joined the Spanish National Ballet's ensemble of guitarists under the direction of Rubén Olmo. He has since returned to the Ballet Flamenco de Andalucía, where he had previously worked from 2017 to 2019.

Yaiza Pinillos

A graduate in Art History from the University of La Laguna, she has completed several international postgraduate courses specialising in textile manipulation at Central Saint Martins in London and the Fondazione Roberto Capucci in Florence.

As a costume designer, she has created costumes for theatre productions at the Centro Dramático Nacional, the Mérida Festival and major Spanish productions such as *La Venus de las pieles*, Mary Zimmerman's *Metamorfosis* and *Amadís de Gaula*, as well as for performers from a wide range of performing arts disciplines, including cabaret, acrobatics, musicians and singers. She received the María Casares Performing Arts Award for *Perplexo* and the Réplica Performing Arts Award for *Dulces bestias*.

She has focused much of her career on dance, designing costumes for Olga Pericet, Manuel Liñán, Blanca del Rey, Marco Flores, Belén Maya and Daniel Doña, among others. For the Ballet Nacional de España, she previously designed the costumes for *Eterna Iberia* and *Zaguán*.

She combines her work as a designer with teaching, giving courses and master's classes at various universities and educational institutions.

Eduardo Moreno

He has developed his entire career in the technical side of theatre, working in a range of roles in stage machinery, stage management and technical coordination across numerous productions. In 2005, he joined 3DScenica S.L., where he headed the technical direction and set design department and collaborated on productions including *La Celestina*, directed by Robert Lepage; *Il tutore Burlato*, Martín y Soler's opera for the Teatro Real; *Las Troyanas*, directed by Mario Gas for the Teatro Español; *Fama, el musical*; and *Elisabet, the Last Dance* by the Lindsay Kemp Company at Tokyo's Bunkamura theatres.

After this period, he began working in the field of set and video design on projects including *Noches frías en Oslo* by Christian Vázquez at the R.E.S.A.D.; *El Evangelio según Pilatos* and *Macbeth* by Ur Teatro, alongside Emilio Valenzuela; and *Dunas* and *Utopía* by María Pagés.

In 2011, he met Miguel del Arco, with whom he went on to collaborate closely within the Kamikaze company on productions including *Veraneantes*, *De ratones y hombres* (2012 Max Award for Best Set Design), *El inspector* (2012 Ceres Award), *Deseo*, *Misántropo*, *Un Enemigo del Poble*, *Antígona*, *Hamlet*, the zarzuela *Cómo está Madrid!* and, most recently, *Ilusiones*. He has also worked with directors including Tazmin Townsend, Adolfo Fernández, Juan Carlos Rubio, Luis Olmos, Paco Montes, Salva Bolta, Pascal Rambert, José Padilla, Denise Despeyroux, Carl Fillion and Israel Elejalde.

At the same time, he has worked as technical director on various projects, including the technical outfitting and launch of Teatro Pavón Kamikaze, the opening of the Auditorio de El Escorial, the technical coordination of venues for several editions of the Madrid Autumn Festival and, more recently, the production *Cruz de navajas*, for which he also created the set design.

In 2018, he founded the scenic design studio Príamo Estudio, through which he continues to expand his work in design and production, including the recent celebration of the 150th anniversary of Joselito and the musical production *Cruz de navajas*.

Juan Gómez-Cornejo

He has worked professionally in theatre since 1980, combining roles as a lighting designer and technical director. He now works exclusively in lighting design, a field in which he has received numerous accolades, including several Max Awards, several ADE Awards, the Ceres Award and the Castilla-La Mancha Medal of Fine Arts. In 2011, he received the National Theatre Award.

He has collaborated, and continues to collaborate, as a lighting designer across a wide range of artistic disciplines with leading directors and choreographers. His work spans theatre, dance, opera, zarzuela and musical theatre, in prestigious public and private venues.

He represented Spain in the exhibition *Fragments* at the 2019 Prague Quadrennial with the piece *Lighting for Pandur. Fragmentos del Alma*.

His most recent work includes *Billy Elliot*, *West Side Story*, *Jauría*, *Tres sombreros de copa*, *Agua*, *azucarillos y aguardiente*, *Diálogo del Amargo*, *El vergonzoso en palacio*, *El príncipe constante*, *Troyanas*, *La máquina de Turing*, *Macbeth* for the Centro Dramático Nacional, *Los asquerosos* for the Teatro Español and *El hombre almohada* for Teatros del Canal.

He has collaborated with the Ballet Nacional de España on several occasions, designing the lighting for works including the *BNE's 40th Anniversary*, *El corazón de piedra verde*, *Negro Goya*, *El sombrero de tres picos* and *Carmen*, among others.

Orchestra and Choir of the Community of Madrid

The Orchestra and Choir of the Community of Madrid (ORCAM) were founded in 1987 and 1984 respectively, with the support of the Regional Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Sport of the Community of Madrid. Among the key figures in their history are Miguel Groba and José Ramón Encinar, who served as artistic directors of ORCAM until Víctor Pablo Pérez joined as Principal and Artistic Director in September 2013. Jordi Casas Bayer, meanwhile, was Director of the Choir of the Community of Madrid from 2000 to 2011, followed by Pedro Teixeira from December 2012 to July 2017.

The many guest conductors who have worked with ORCAM include Michel Corboz, Lorin Maazel, Paul McCreech, Shlomo Mintz, Leopold Hager, Krzysztof Penderecki, Alberto Zedda, Antoni Ros Marbà, Enrique García Asensio, Cristóbal Halffter, Jesús López Cobos, Josep Pons, Pablo González and Juanjo Mena. Soloists who have performed with the ensemble include Aldo Ciccolini, Shlomo Mintz, Jennifer Larmore, Hansjörg Schellenberger, Michael Volle, Nikolai Lugansky, Benjamin Schmid, Barry Douglas, Asier Polo, Joaquín Achúcarro and Dietrich Henschel.

Among its many musical milestones, and without attempting to provide an exhaustive list, ORCAM has recorded for some of the world's leading record labels, including EMI, Deutsche Grammophon, Verso, Stradivarius, Decca and Naxos.

For more than 20 years, it has also been the resident orchestra of the Teatro de la Zarzuela, making zarzuela one of the defining elements of its identity alongside other types of repertoire. It is a regular presence at Madrid's Auditorio Nacional, the Teatro Real, Teatros del Canal and the Teatro Auditorio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial. The orchestra and choir have also performed at some of the world's most prestigious classical music venues, including Carnegie Hall in New York, Teatro La Fenice in Venice, Lingotto in Turin, Arsenal in Metz and the Konzerthaus Berlin, as well as at festivals in Latin America and Asia.

The Orchestra of the Community of Madrid is a member of the Spanish Association of Symphony Orchestras (A.E.O.S.).

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