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**BALLET NACIONAL
DE ESPAÑA**

Ballet Nacional de España encourages people with Parkinson's to dance

- 11th April, World Parkinson's Day. Parkinson's is a chronic, disabling neurodegenerative disease that affects 160,000 people in Spain and more than seven million people worldwide
- The Ballet Nacional de España is collaborating with the Dance for Parkinson's programme in its initiative to promote social interaction and raise awareness of the disease

Madrid, 8th April 2022. Dance helps people living with Parkinson's disease gradually develop motor skills such as flexibility, stamina and balance. At the same time, it stimulates the mind and helps participants form social connections. This is the principle behind the **Dance for Parkinson's** programme, which dance professionals have been running in 25 countries for the past 20 years.

To support the programme and raise awareness of this neurodegenerative disease, which affects 160,000 people across Spain, members of the Ballet Nacional de España, directed by **Rubén Olmo**, have taught a dance class to a group of participants from **Asociación Párkinson Móstoles, Madrid**, and **APARKAM**.

"I was moved to see how these people with Parkinson's wanted to be strong and follow the steps, despite the tremendous effort it required of them," says Rubén Olmo. He adds that dance helps them gain greater control over their movements and feel freer and happier. "Dance brings peace to their lives."

Together with principal dancer **Inmaculada Salomón** and Ballet Nacional de España dancer Alfredo Mérida, the director guided participants through a series of choreographic steps created by Salomón. The initiative was organised to mark **World Parkinson's Day**, which is observed every year on **11th April**.

They were joined by **Guillermina de Bedoya, Paloma Alfonsel** and **Concha Mora**, teachers from the **Association of Dance Professionals in the Community of Madrid (APDCM)**, which promotes the programme.

"Dance helps us to keep moving," explains one participant with Parkinson's, describing one of the reasons why he takes part in the activity regularly. In people living with the disease, whose cause has yet to be discovered, the brain does not transmit nerve signals correctly, making it difficult for them to control their movements.

Exploring movement with the help of music, both standing and seated, provides physical and emotional benefits. It also encourages social connections and a sense of belonging to a group. "You leave each session feeling different. It takes away your sadness and gives you a renewed desire to live," he says.

As **César Casares**, president of the APDCM, summarises: "Dance is not merely entertainment. It makes an essential contribution to both social and individual well-being." Inmaculada Salomón adds: "I am very proud that what I do every day can help other people."



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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 to 2013, 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, Rafaela Carrasco and Aída Gómez.

Download high-resolution images:

<https://balletnacional.mcu.es/es/sala-de-prensa/temporada-21-22/>

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