

Ballet Nacional de España pays tribute to Mario Maya at the Granada Festival with the revival of *De lo flamenco*

- 'De lo flamenco. Homenaje a Mario Maya' is one of the works included in *Invocación*, a programme that will be performed on 17th and 18th June at the Teatro del Generalife
- The programme is completed by three choreographies showcasing the richness of Spanish dance styles: Rubén Olmo's *Invocación bolera* and *Jauleña*, and Antonio Najarro's *Eterna Iberia*

Madrid, 8th June 2022. The Ballet Nacional de España will perform on **17th and 18th June at the Granada Festival**, which this year commemorates the centenary of the First Cante Jondo Competition held in Granada. "A profound and deeply flamenco dancer" was how theatre critic Lorenzo López Sancho described Mario Maya, whose choreography *De lo flamenco* is included in the programme *Invocación* as a tribute to the artist.

Mario Maya (Córdoba, 1937–Seville, 2008) began dancing as a child in the caves of Granada's Sacromonte district while studying at the Padre Majón school. A British tourist won a painting competition with a portrait of him and donated the prize money so that he could train as a dancer, first with Manolo Caracol and later with the Ballet de Pilar López. After travelling to New York in the 1960s, where he absorbed new trends and contemporary theatre, he focused on exploring new forms of expression in flamenco. Starting from tradition, he became the artist who transformed the aesthetics and concept of flamenco. His creativity and working methods inspired a generation of flamenco artists who are now among the leading figures in the art form. Granada has commemorated Mario Maya since 2014 with a statue located on the Paseo de los Tristes.

The Compañía Andaluza de Danza, now the Ballet Flamenco de Andalucía, premiered ***De lo flamenco*** in 1994 under the direction of Mario Maya. **Rubén Olmo**, director of the Ballet Nacional de España, decided to restage the work as faithfully as possible to the original. "I chose the suite *De lo flamenco* for this tribute because I believe it is one of the freshest ballets Mario Maya created. It presents a very broad range of flamenco styles, from classicism and baroque exuberance to the avant-garde, and reflects his knowledge, the originality of his choreography and his great musical instinct," explains the director. "I believe Mario Maya would be very pleased to see his work included in the Ballet Nacional de España, a company he dreamed of directing, because his style of choreography for large groups of dancers is particularly well suited to the BNE," he adds.

The production now presented by the Ballet Nacional de España differs from the original, choreographed by Mario Maya, Dolores Menjíbar, Manolo Marín and A. Rueda "Toná", through the inclusion of two new pieces commissioned from Mario Maya's collaborators **Isabel Bayón** and **Rafaela Carrasco**. Bayón, who was a principal dancer in Mario Maya's company, created *Taranto*

especially for principal dancer **Esther Jurado**. Manuela Carrasco, meanwhile, is responsible for *Romance del emplazado*, set to verses by García Lorca. Inspired by the soleá of the same title that Mario Maya choreographed especially for Israel Galván, she sought to preserve the master's essence and style, recovering his steps while giving the piece a more contemporary atmosphere.

The Ballet's flamenco ensemble, accompanied by three guest cantaores, will perform live the music composed by **Diego Carrasco, Jesús Torres, Moraíto Chico** and **Los del Río**. The Orchestra of Extremadura has recorded the music for the programme's other three choreographies: **Manuel Moreno-Buendía's Eterna Iberia**, conducted by Manuel Coves; and *Jauleña* and *Invocación bolera*, conducted by their composer, **Manuel Busto**.

The first is a work of pure stylised dance created by **Antonio Najarro** for the Ballet Nacional de España in 2019, in which the cape and Cordoban hat, two distinctive elements of Spanish dance, take centre stage. Escuela bolera is another of the most distinctive styles of Spanish dance, and in ***Invocación bolera* Rubén Olmo** pays tribute to the classical masters of the genre while updating its steps in one of the few recent ensemble choreographies in this style. **Maribel Gallardo**, recipient of the 2021 Gold Medal of Merit in the Fine Arts, created the castanet choreography for the piece. The programme is completed by *Jauleña*, another solo by Rubén Olmo that combines several styles of Spanish dance, including zapateado and granaína, with contemporary movement.

Ultimately, *Invocación* is a comprehensive programme in which audiences can enjoy flamenco filled with life and energy on stage, a ballet representing the purest form of stylised dance and one of the few recent escuela bolera choreographies.

Educational workshops and masterclasses

The Ballet Nacional de España will also take part in the activities organised as part of the Manuel de Falla Courses and the Festival Extensión FEX programme of the Granada International Festival of Music and Dance. This year, first dancer **Sergio García** and **Belén Moreno**, coordinator of the Ballet Nacional de España's Educational Project, will lead three introductory Spanish dance workshops on **13th, 14th and 15th June** in the Aula Magna of the Faculty of Education Sciences. More than 200 primary and secondary school pupils from Aldeas Infantiles SOS programmes and other organisations supported by the "la Caixa" Foundation will attend the workshops on the first two days. The final session will be inclusive and aimed at children and young people with disabilities or special educational needs.

On 19th June, **Rubén Olmo**, director of the Ballet Nacional de España, will give a masterclass in Spanish dance technique and performance at the Reina Sofía Professional Dance Conservatory. The activity is intended for twenty intermediate-to-advanced dance students and professionals from any discipline.

Invocación
Ballet Nacional de España

Programme:

Invocación bolera, by Rubén Olmo

Jauleña, by Rubén Olmo

Eterna Iberia, by Antonio Najarro

De lo flamenco. Homenaje a Mario Maya, by Mario Maya, Milagros Menjíbar, A.
Rueda "Toná", Manolo Marín, Isabel Bayón and Rafaela Carrasco

Teatro del Generalife, Granada
17th and 18th June, 10:30 p.m.

Tickets: <https://www.bacantix.com/entradas/?id=FestivalGranada>

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 and Rafaela Carrasco.

Further information and interview requests:

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