

Ballet Nacional de España revives *El loco* from its historic repertoire

Madrid, 1st December 2022. Eighteen years after its original premiere, the Ballet Nacional de España, under the direction of Rubén Olmo, is presenting *El loco* once again. The work premiered at Madrid's Teatro Real in 2004 and toured Barcelona, Jerez de la Frontera, Madrid and Seville over the following two years. It now returns in a more complete version that celebrates dance, devotion to art and the artist's madness.

El loco is a ballet inspired by the artistic and personal journey of flamenco dancer Félix Fernández, known as "El Loco", and the inner anguish he experienced after following Diaghilev, Massine and the Ballets Russes to London for the premiere of *El sombrero de tres picos*. **It is a dance production about dance itself:** a contemporary reflection on the artist and his demons.

For this new season at the Teatro de la Zarzuela, **Rubén Olmo**, director of the Ballet Nacional de España, explained that he was certain he wanted to revive a work from the company's historic repertoire such as *El loco*: "It is extremely important in the history of Spanish dance. The ballet's plot tells a true story: the creation of *El sombrero de tres picos* for the Ballets Russes. Manuel de Falla, Pablo Picasso and **Félix Fernández** were all involved. Fernández was a flamenco dancer who played an essential role in the new production, bringing the style and character of Spanish dance and flamenco to the ballet."

El loco was created by an outstanding artistic team whose collective work made its revival a landmark event on the Spanish dance scene. The original concept, libretto and stage direction were by **Paco López**; the choreography by **Javier Latorre**; the music by **Mauricio Sotelo** and **Juan Manuel Cañizares**; the set and costume design by **Jesús Ruiz**; and the lighting design by **Nicolás Fischtel**. They have all come together once again to restore the brilliance of this work from the Ballet's repertoire.

Rubén Olmo also emphasised the importance of reviving a narrative ballet with a leading role for a male principal dancer. "The Ballet Nacional de España has many narrative ballets, but almost all of them have female protagonists. *El loco* brings a male character to the forefront."

Paco López expressed his gratitude to Rubén Olmo for reviving the work, which "has allowed us to explore the way the story is told in

greater depth and, above all, to create richer and more satisfying characters for everyone involved”.

According to choreographer **Javier Latorre**, certain aspects of the work have changed: “The experience we have gained over the past eighteen years has given both Paco López and me a much clearer and richer vision than we had before. There is some new music, new choreography and a thorough update of the dance and choreographic language. I believe this is a far more complete 2.0 version than the original.”

By reviving *El loco*, Rubén Olmo has also paid tribute to Javier Latorre, a choreographer who has created major works for the Ballet Nacional de España.

El loco will premiere on **9th December 2022** at the Teatro de la Zarzuela, where a total of ten performances will be given. Musical director **Manuel Coves** will once again conduct the **Orchestra of the Community of Madrid (ORCAM)**, alongside the Ballet’s flamenco musicians and guest artists **Juan M. Jiménez** on saxophone, **Agustín Diassera** on percussion and cantaor **Juan José Amador “El Perre”**.

Programme

El loco
Ballet Nacional de España
Teatro de la Zarzuela, Madrid
9th–22nd December, 8:00 p.m.

Sunday performances at 6:00 p.m.
No performances on Mondays or Tuesdays.

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.

Further information and interview requests:

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