

The Ballet Nacional de España closes the London Flamenco Festival with *Invocación*

London, 12th June 2024. The **Ballet Nacional de España** returns to London on an international tour from 12th to 15th June to perform at **Sadler's Wells** and bring the 2024 **London Flamenco Festival** to a close.

On this occasion, the Ballet Nacional de España will present *Invocación* at the Flamenco Festival, a programme devised by **Rubén Olmo** that showcases the dancers' versatility and technical command of three Spanish dance disciplines: flamenco, stylised dance and escuela bolera. The production also includes a tribute to dancer and choreographer **Mario Maya**, one of the great masters of Spanish dance.

In Rubén Olmo's words, it is a highly comprehensive programme "in which audiences can enjoy flamenco brimming with life and power on stage, a ballet rooted in the purest form of stylised dance and one of the few recent choreographies created in the escuela bolera tradition".

The programme opens with *Invocación bolera*, choreographed by Olmo himself. The work brings the essence of traditional escuela bolera into the present day and pays tribute to the great masters who shaped the discipline. Escuela bolera is one of the most demanding forms of Spanish dance, requiring mastery of classical ballet, and is also one of the most spectacular due to the speed of its steps and jumps. The contemporary score was composed especially for the work by the young Seville-born composer and conductor Manuel Busto. The costumes, designed by Pedro Moreno, were recovered from the Ballet's archives and adapted for this work by the designer himself.

Jauleña, meanwhile, was conceived by Rubén Olmo as a transitional solo that blends stylised dance, escuela bolera and flamenco, with a particular emphasis on the granaína and zapateado. The music is also by Manuel Busto.

The first half of the programme concludes with Antonio Najarro's *Eterna Iberia*, a choreography that brings together the use of castanets, the Spanish cape and the Cordoban hat, alongside the technique and expressive power so characteristic of Spanish stylised dance. For the work, the company wears costumes in the colours of earth and sea designed by Yaiza Pinillos.

The second half of the programme is devoted to *De lo flamenco. Homenaje a Mario Maya*, through which the Ballet Nacional de España pays tribute to dancer and choreographer Mario Maya (1937–2008), a flamenco legend whose work had not previously featured in the company's repertoire.

Comprising seven movements, the work is conceived as a flamenco suite that reflects Mario Maya's distinctive and innovative style. In 1994, he founded the Compañía Andaluza de Danza, now known as the Ballet Flamenco de Andalucía.

Invocación premiered in 2020 at the Teatro Villamarta in Jerez de la Frontera, Cádiz. Since then, the Ballet Nacional de España has performed it throughout Spain in cities including Madrid, Valencia, Santander and Granada, as well as internationally in Saint Petersburg, Dubai, Athens, Mexico City, Tel Aviv, Miami and New York.

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

Sadler's Wells Theatre, London

12th, 13th and 14th June 2024, 7:30 p.m.

15th June 2024, 3:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Tickets:

<https://www.sadlerswells.com/whats-on/ballet-nacional-de-espana-invocacion/>

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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