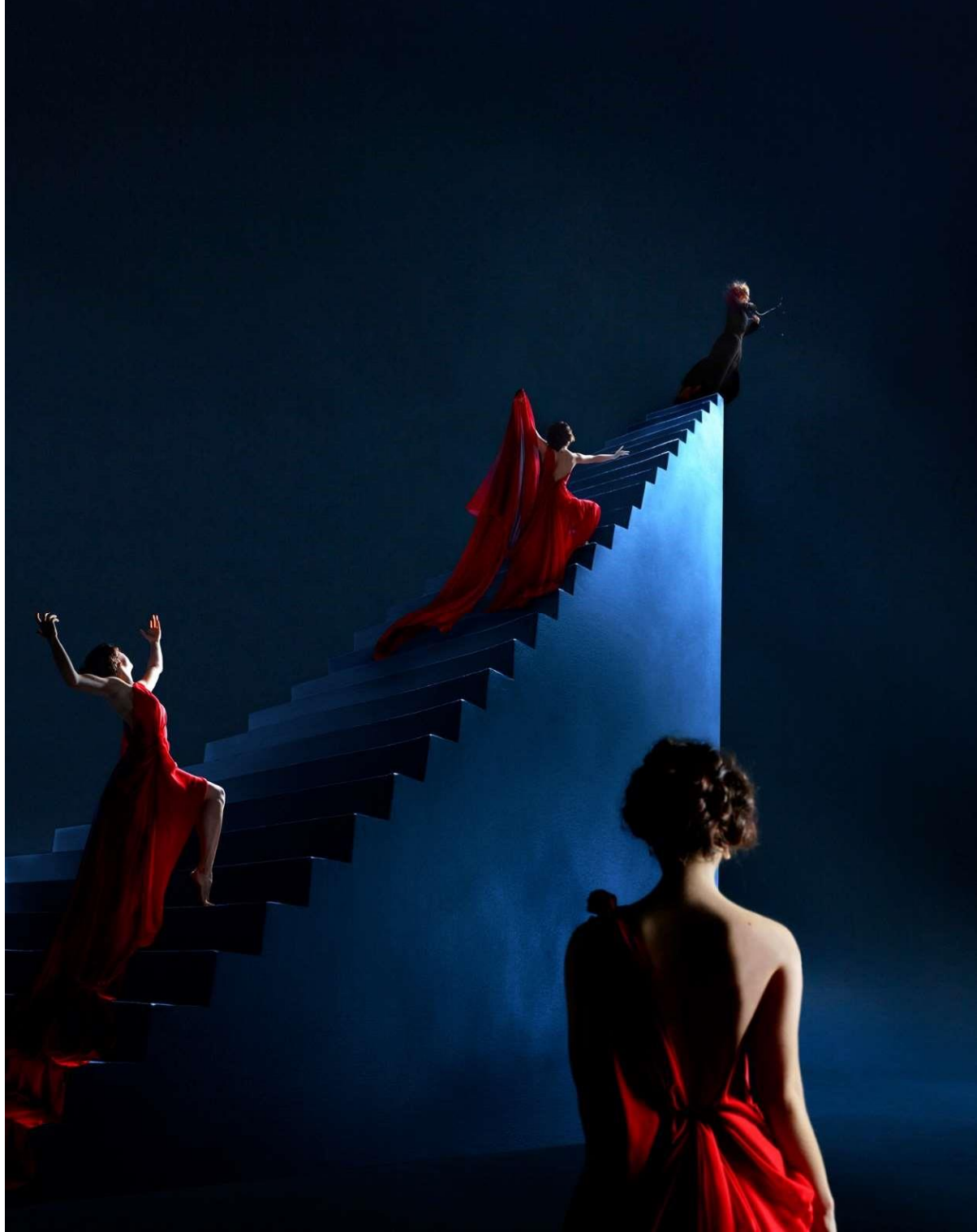


**BALLET
NACIONAL
DE ESPAÑA**
Director **Rubén Olmo**



LA BELLA OTERO

TEATRO CALDERÓN. VALLADOLID. 7TH–9TH FEBRUARY



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LA BELLA OTERO

TEATRO CALDERÓN · VALLADOLID

7TH-9TH FEBRUARY 2025

ARTISTIC CREDITS

Direction and choreography: Rubén Olmo

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

Music recording: Barenboim-Said Foundation, conducted by Manuel Busto

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

BNE flamenco musicians

Special collaboration: Maribel Gallardo

Acknowledgements: Carmen Solís



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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 richness of its costumes, which faithfully recreate the world of the Parisian *Belle Époque*, as well as in the dramaturgical development of its story.

It recounts the intense life of one of the most famous and influential dancers of the late nineteenth century, Carolina Otero. A woman from a small 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, yet the only love to which she truly surrendered was gambling.

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



La Bella Otero. Public domain (second photograph, by Léopold-Emile Reutlinger).

“My life has been a long succession of adventures, between rehearsals, performances, tours, dinners, parties, tributes and the pleas of admirers of every kind. How many men I have seen sigh, weep, demand...! They all wore that mask of desire that transforms their faces, with furrows on their foreheads and that grimace upon their lips... Seducers, whether forceful or tender; ironic satyrs; some shy and awkward, others bold and playful; rich and self-satisfied men who could afford their every whim and would not accept refusal; eager old men clinging to the deceptive hope of feeling once again the passion of their youth... All of them sick children who attached too much importance to what they could not obtain and became so consumed by it that they would rather die than endure the suffering caused by an unfulfilled desire. I saw them all as selfish pleasure-seekers, willing to make any sacrifice in order to satisfy their desire, yet incapable of offering a gesture of true kindness and love.”

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



© Maria Alperi

PLOT

An elderly Carolina Otero, alone, ruined and forgotten by the world, looks back on her life and her successes. She remembers being raped as a child in a Galician village in the mid-nineteenth century, and how she later ran away with a group of travelling performers, with whom she began her career as a dancer and met her first lover. When he sells her to a Portuguese nobleman, Carolina learns that love can be a bargaining chip in the pursuit of luxury and fame.

Inspired by the heroine of Bizet's opera *Carmen*, she reinvents herself as an exotic gypsy and, passing from one patron to another — men who educate her, dress her and teach her the art of seduction — she achieves success in theatres around the world, leaving behind a succession of men who take their own lives when they realise 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 the royal houses of Europe. The wealth they bestow upon her is squandered at the roulette tables of the casinos of Nice and Monte Carlo. Trusting 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 in ruin, 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 disappear into obscurity, accompanied only by the spectres of her past.



CAST

(In order of appearance)

MADAME OTERO	Maribel Gallardo
CAROLINA OTERO	Noelia Ruiz
PRIEST	Francisco Velasco
PAQUITO	José Manuel Benítez
DUKE	Sergio García
CARMEN	Inmaculada Salomón
DON JOSÉ	Matías López
TORERO ESCAMILLO	Carlos Sánchez
EMILIENNE D'ALENÇON	Inmaculada Salomón
ALBERT I	Eduardo Martínez
MANUELA	Débora Martínez (7 th and 9 th February) and Miriam Mendoza (8 th February)
ERNEST A. JURGENS	Francisco Velasco
BELLINI	Eduardo Martínez
EDWARD VII	Sergio García
LEOPOLD II	Matías López
WILHELM II	Cristian García
NICHOLAS II	José Manuel Benítez
GRIGORI RASPUTIN	Rubén Olmo
LOÏE FULLER	Miriam Mendoza (7 th and 9 th February) and Débora Martínez (8 th February)
CLÉO DE MÉRODE	Miriam Mendoza
RAYEN	Axel Galán
ALFONSO XIII	Manuel del Río



PRESENTATION

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 forms. This time, however, I have placed dance at the service of the story in order to recount the life of an extraordinary woman, using styles ranging from folklore to contemporary dance.

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 searched for portraits in order to study her poses, as very little filmed footage of her dancing survives.

The music conveys the life of La Bella Otero and the period in which she lived extremely well and is, above all, highly emotional and passionate. Manuel Busto, Agustín Diassera, Alejandro Cruz Benavides, Rarefolk, Diego Losada, Víctor Márquez, Enrique Bermúdez and Pau Vallet have composed the original score for the choreography. It incorporates different dance styles, from stylised dance to flamenco, contemporary dance and folklore, creating a fusion that allows us to tell 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 dress in different periods, recreating everything from the clothes worn by Galician peasants to the style of the *Belle Époque* and the spectacular world of the Folies-Bergère in Paris. As the story unfolds across so many different locations, from the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona to the casino in Monte Carlo 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 principal role, I chose Patricia Guerrero because she is a bailaora with tremendous stage presence. She possesses the same magnetism that made La Bella Otero so remarkable. 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 I am proud to have her with us. The same is true of Rehearsal Director and former Principal Dancer of the Ballet Nacional de España Maribel Gallardo, who portrays the protagonist after she has retired 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 key moments in the work belong to her. As with every project I have proposed to her, she has immersed herself completely in this character.

Why La Bella Otero

What first drew me to La Bella Otero's story was the fact that one of the most famous women of her time came from a village in Pontevedra. I first encountered this character many years ago, before I began my career as a choreographer. I had long wanted to create a choreography about her, but I knew it had to be made with a major ballet company. Directing the Ballet Nacional de España has given me that opportunity, and I believe it will become a very important work.

Rubén Olmo
Director of the Ballet Nacional de España



CHOREOGRAPHY

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

As the story unfolds across such a variety of settings and countries, the work paints a rich historical panorama of the dance styles prevalent at the end of the nineteenth century.

Rubén Olmo offers his own 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 sensual dance with Arab and Indian influences with which she enchanted 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*.

The actor and theatre director, who had previously collaborated with choreographers such as Johan Inger, sought to distil the essence of the historical figure as fully as possible without losing the most significant elements of her biography, leaving aside the more anecdotal details: "The most important thing for me was to portray someone with tremendous magnetism, charisma and strength."

Gregor Acuña-Pohl carried out his research by reading every biography written about her, as well as her memoirs, a highly imaginative version of her life published in 1926. He also visited the museum dedicated to her in the village of Valga, Pontevedra — where the pilgrimage festival takes place. He retraced the diva's footsteps through Paris and explored contemporary newspaper archives.

"As I read her biographies again and again, I looked for the moments that were most representative and that could be expressed through dance."

Among the settings he selected are a Galician pilgrimage festival; the opera house in Barcelona, where she attends a performance of Bizet's *Carmen*; a café cantante, the equivalent of what today would be a flamenco tablao; the Folies-Bergère, Paris's most famous cabaret; Maxim's restaurant; and the casino in Monte Carlo.

The story follows the classic pattern of the protagonist's rise and fall, from her escape from her native Galician village to the process through which she becomes a star. The tragedy of her life is that she never found happiness: after retiring from 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.

"When writing a story about such a complex life, we obviously have to simplify. But we are not making a value judgement about what is right or wrong; we are simply trying to remain faithful to reality while 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 compelling for the audience. Afterwards, everyone can draw their own conclusions about the character."



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MUSIC

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

This diversity has been addressed through the creation of a collective work involving three composers for the symphonic section: Manuel Busto, Alejandro Cruz and Agustín Diassera. The guitarists Diego Losada, Víctor Márquez, Enrique Bermúdez and Pau Vallet have also contributed flamenco compositions, while the group *Rarefolk* provides the musical setting 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 has been responsible for the musical direction of the symphonic section. The composer and conductor had previously created the scores for Rubén Olmo's *Jauleña* and *Invocación bolera* for the Ballet Nacional de España.

"In any collective work, total freedom does not exist; it must always go hand in hand with a plurality of perspectives, because that is its very essence.

Rubén knows how to find the perfect balance between the overarching concept that brings us all together — in this case, expressed in Gregor Acuña-Pohl's libretto — while at the same time allowing each artist to feel free to give full expression to their own creative personality."

According to Manuel Busto, the added complexity of *La Bella Otero* lies in having to incorporate themes into the score that are not his own 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 an ounce of their original freshness and personality, while at the same time becoming an organic part of the work."

With this in mind, he also conceived an orchestra in which the flamenco musicians, guitars, piano and percussionists form a natural part of an 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 traditional classical orchestra while remaining its heir. "It is music conceived without prejudice and unwilling to renounce anything."

For his part, Alejandro Cruz Benavides also emphasises the coordination between the composers in order to bring together different styles and forms, as well as the sensations and climaxes they wanted to create at each moment, seeking the contrasts the work required as a whole.

The pianist and composer, whose work moves across a range of musical styles including flamenco, classical music, jazz and pop, created the music for the scenes in *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 became a journey, a gift for the senses and the discovery of a figure I had heard of 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 work for ballet, I have tried to make the music as descriptive as possible, so that the audience can not only be moved by it, but also follow the course of her life."

Rubén Olmo commissioned percussionist Agustín Diassera to compose three pieces: a highly rhythmic work with a gypsy atmosphere; the zambra danced by *La Bella Otero* at the Folies-Bergère, a melodic piece in which she takes centre stage; and the complex number depicting her world tour. This final piece condenses the artist's successful journey through several countries and lovers within a frivolous atmosphere that ultimately takes a tragic turn. "It was quite a challenge, and I chose 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 both from the character and her period and from Rubén Olmo's choreographic style, having 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 put the pieces of the puzzle together and ensure that it had musical, harmonic and melodic coherence. Thanks to 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 am very pleased with what I contributed and with the work as a whole."



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Rubén Díez de la Cortina, a member of the group Rarefolk, had also worked with Rubén Olmo previously, but was surprised by his commission for the opening scene of the work, which takes place during a pilgrimage festival in a Galician village. "I could not imagine our Rarefolk music, with electric guitar and drums, integrated into a symphony orchestra within a performing arts context. But he convinced us by explaining that although the scene begins in a bucolic and festive atmosphere, it ends in a dramatic and violent way, which is why he wanted a rock band," he admits. The score, with a strongly marked lively tempo and energetic rhythm, begins with a traditional muñeira before evolving into the psychedelic Celtic rock that characterises 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 that was played and danced at the end of the nineteenth century. Guitarists Víctor Márquez, Enrique Bermúdez and Pau Vallet therefore studied the style of earlier masters and reinterpreted compositions by guitarists Rafael 'el Tomate', Sabicas and Julián Arcas. The result is a collection 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 number she performed dressed as a bullfighter and surrounded by guitarists. For this scene, Diego Losada, also one of the Ballet Nacional de España's musicians, composed a bulería that begins with a slow, emotional introduction before building towards an almost frenetic rhythm.



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COSTUMES

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

The Canary Islands-born designer drew on numerous sources for inspiration and research, ranging from photographs taken in the late nineteenth century by travellers such as Ruth Matilda Anderson and José Ortiz Echagüe to paintings by artists contemporary with *La Bella Otero*, including Zuloaga, Manet, Ramón Casas, Boldini and José Cardona. These artists portrayed a Spanish woman imbued with an exoticism that exerted a powerful fascination in Europe at the time. The designs also include reinterpretations of creations by Jacques Doucet and Balenciaga, as well as contemporary fashion designers such as Issey Miyake, Roberto Capucci and Alexander McQueen, which, filtered through the aesthetics of the *Belle Époque*, produce striking results.

One of the designer's main aims was to create continuity between the characters through costume. The designs reflect the passage of time and changing circumstances while ensuring that the audience can easily identify each character throughout the production.

For the character of Carolina Otero, red and black, together with velvet, are the defining features of costumes that provide narrative unity across the different settings while also reflecting the character's evolution. The designs also accommodate the precisely timed costume changes required for a character who appears in every scene.



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The centrepiece of her costumes is the Byzantine-style jewelled outfit worn by La Bella Otero in one of her most iconic portraits, taken by Reutlinger. Yaiza Pinillos did not want to reproduce that image down to the smallest detail, but rather to capture its essence and, inspired by Gustave Moreau's paintings of Salome, create a design that would shimmer beneath the stage lights.

"I am particularly proud of that design because it is a reinterpretation of such a well-known image of Otero which, I believe, we have been able to enrich through an approach that evokes rather than imitates it, adding effects that enhance the staging and reflect the Symbolist aesthetic, subtly transporting us back to the essence of an era."

As well as serving a narrative function, the costumes are adapted to the colour palette of each scene. While the colours in the scene set in rural Galicia evoke Goya's Black Paintings, the scene at the Folies-Bergère is characterised by great chromatic intensity, and the walk through the Bois de Boulogne is defined by an elegant black-and-white palette.

Although the descriptive and narrative nature of the costumes for *La Bella Otero* brings them close to theatrical costume design, the work becomes more complex because each piece must also allow complete freedom of movement for dancing. Another element that adds complexity both to the dancing and to the changes between scenes is the characterisation of the roles, with wigs, beards, moustaches and hats required to recreate faithfully the period in which the story takes place.

"The Director, the technical team and I all agreed to take on the challenge of recreating the period, an effort also shared by the dancers, who have to manage highly complex changes of appearance involving not only costumes but also characterisation, while at the same time performing the choreography wearing all these costume and wig elements."



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SET DESIGN AND LIGHTING

The challenge for Eduardo Moreno, winner of the 2012 Max Award for Best Set Design for *De ratones y hombres*, was to enhance the pace of the transitions between scenes, as the dramaturgy of the work demands great fluidity in moving through the many different moments in La Bella Otero's life.

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

Eduardo Moreno has structured the space around one major architectural element, a dome, which frames the entire production and accommodates the different scenes. Simple elements are used in each tableau to evoke the period and setting in which the story unfolds, from a throne to a casino table, an opera box or an Art Nouveau-style screen.

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

Juan Gómez-Cornejo, winner of the National Theatre Award, was entrusted with the difficult task of enveloping La Bella Otero in light. "The light must accompany, embrace, support and, if possible, caress these dancers, 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 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 a full moon, and on to the dazzling lights of theatres and casinos, all within the aesthetic world of the *Belle Époque*.

RUBÉN OLMO

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. His teachers there included Marisol Delgado, José Manuel Moreno and Pepa Coral, among others. 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, 'Manolete', '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 (Farruca)*, by Israel Galván; and *Grito (Alegrías)*, 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 BNE 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 2019 and Director of the Ballet Flamenco de Andalucía (BFA) from 2011 to 2013. 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 Giralddillo 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 Giralddillo Ciudad de Sevilla (2016) for *Toda la vida bailando*.

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

MARIBEL GALLARDO

She began studying dance at the age of six, continued her training with maestro Jareño and later furthered her studies 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 Bosh, Granero, Fernando Bujones and Rosella Hightower, among others. She holds a Master's Degree in Performing Arts from Rey Juan Carlos University 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, then directed by Antonio, and was promoted to Principal Dancer in 1985 under the direction of María de Ávila. Throughout her career, she performed the leading roles in the company's repertoire and premiered works 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, directed for the stage by Adolfo Marsillach, and also took part in the premiere of the emblematic *Medea* by maestro Granero. She performed *Bodas de sangre* alongside Antonio Gades to mark the 10th anniversary of the creation of the BNE. She worked as Rehearsal Director for the Ballet Nacional de España's training workshop under the direction of José Antonio and has been Rehearsal Director of the Ballet Nacional de España since 2002.

As a guest artist with Adrián Galia's company in the production *En clave flamenca*, she took part in *Homenaje a 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.



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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 *Homenaje al Maestro Granero*, directed by José Antonio. Together with Currillo and Antonio Canales, she choreographed *Los flamencos bailan ópera*, premiered at the Tokyo Opera Theatre in 2013.

The Professional Dance Conservatoire of Cádiz has borne the name Maribel Gallardo since 2007 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 distinctions include the Cultura Viva National Dance Award (2011), the APDE Award (2013) and the AISGE Actúa Award (2017). In 2021, she received the Medal of Merit in the Fine Arts.



BALLET NACIONAL DE ESPAÑA

The Ballet Nacional de España (BNE), directed by Rubén Olmo since September 2019, 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.

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 guiding principles 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. Within this context of learning and development, the BNE also organises workshops aimed at encouraging the specialisation and professional development of dance practitioners in both performance and creation.

To promote Spanish Dance, the BNE encourages both national and international touring, alternating large-scale productions with more compact formats open to experimentation. It promotes the sustainable financial management of all its productions and fosters cooperation between the different INAEM production units and other public institutions across Spain's autonomous communities, as well as public-private collaboration at national and international level.

In recent years, the BNE has developed initiatives and collaborations within the world of fashion and increased visits by conservatoires and dance schools from across Spain to its rehearsals. As part of its educational programme, it has organised various masterclasses for groups of children with different abilities and published the first Spanish Dance book and video game for children, entitled *Bailando un Tesoro*. As part of this commitment to outreach, the BNE has created its Friends' Circle and a merchandising product line.

Throughout its history, the BNE has received numerous national and international awards, including the New York Metropolitan Critics' Award for Best Foreign Production (1988); the Japanese Critics' Award (1991); the Critics' Award for Best Production (1994) at the Teatro Bellas Artes in Mexico; the El País newspaper Award (1999) for the production *Poeta*; the Critics' and Audience Awards (2002) for Antonio Gades's choreography *Fuenteovejuna* at the 6th Festival de Jerez; the Audience Award (2018) at the Festival de Jerez; the Cerinos Award (2018) at the Mérida International Classical Theatre Festival; the Teatro de Rojas Audience Awards in Toledo for Best Dance Production in 2008, 2010, 2012 and 2014; and, in 2010, the Festival Internacional del Cante de las Minas presented the company with its Extraordinary Performing Arts Award for its "magnificent contribution to the preservation and promotion of the finest flamenco".



BALLET NACIONAL DE ESPAÑA TEAM

Director Rubén Olmo

Assistant Director Miguel Ángel Corbacho; Guest Principal Dancers Esther Jurado, Francisco Velasco; Principal Dancers Aloña Alonso, Inmaculada Salomón, José Manuel Benítez, Sergio García, Eduardo Martínez; Soloists Estela Alonso, Débora Martínez, Miriam Mendoza, Cristian García, Matías López, Carlos Sánchez; Corps de Ballet Ana Agraz, Cristina Aguilera, Ana Almagro, Sara Arévalo, Pilar Arteseros, Marina Bravo, Mercedes Burgos, Irene Correa, Patricia Fernández, Yu-Hsien Hsueh, Nerea Lobes, María Martín, Sara Nieto, Celia Ñacle, Laura Vargas, Noelia Ruiz, Vanesa Vento, Sou Jung Youn, Diego Aguilar, Juan Berlanga, Axel Galán, Alejandro García, Álvaro Gordillo, Antonio Jiménez, Adrián Maqueda, Álvaro Marbán, Víctor Martín, Alfredo Mérida, Javier Polonio, Manuel del Río, Pedro Ramírez, Juan Tierno, Sergio Valverde; Rehearsal Director Maribel Gallardo; Rehearsal Assistant Cristina Visús; Dance Instructor Diana Noriega; Ballet Masters Elna Matamoros, Tino Morán, Raúl Tino; Cantora Saray Muñoz; Cantaores Gabriel de la Tomasa, Juan José Amador 'El Perre'; Guitarists Enrique Bermúdez, Jonathan Bermúdez, Diego Losada, Víctor Márquez; Percussionist Roberto Vozmediano; Pianists José Luis Franco, Juan Antonio Mata.

Deputy Director Guiomar Fernández Troncoso; General Manager Pablo Gauna; Production Director Sarah Bonaldo; Technical Director Tomás Pérez; Communications Director Eduardo Villar; Director's Secretary, Sponsorship and Educational Activities Jesús Florencio; Production Department Manuel Balaguer, María Fernández, Luis Tello; Communications Department Ana Gallego; Wardrobe Supervisor Javier Caraballo; Human Resources Samantha Hilario; Administration Belén Moreno, Ángela Santana; Maintenance Manager José Ramón Gómez; Deputy Technical Director Pedro Muñoz; Assistant to the Technical Director José Román; Stage Management Elena Sanz; Stage Machinery Ismael Martínez, Juan Ramón Pérez Aguilar; Lighting Asier Bastera, Javier Hernández, Arturo Dosal, Arturo Sánchez; Props Juan M^a Arguedas, Pilar López; Audiovisuals Jesús Ávila, Luis M. Castro, Mercedes Martín; Wardrobe Department Cristina Catoya, Mónica Ramos, Teresa Rodrigo, Isabel Fernández; Physiotherapists Juan Pedro Barranco, Ángel Pérez, Daniel Albarrán; Massage Therapist Julián Mínguez; Usher José Manuel Ollero; Warehouse Manager Vicente Antonio Gómez; Cleaning Staff Dolores Escrivá, Antolina Pequeño.

Acknowledgements: BNE Friends' Circle



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CONTACT INFORMATION

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