

The Ballet Nacional de España premieres *La Bella Otero* in Valladolid

*Teatro Calderón will host this production about the legendary dancer
from 7th to 9th February, with tickets almost sold out*

*Choreographed by Rubén Olmo and premiered in 2021, the work takes
audiences on a journey through the key settings of her eventful life*

Valladolid, 6th February 2025. *La Bella Otero* premieres tomorrow, Friday, at the Teatro Calderón in Valladolid, following a highly successful tour of several cities in Spain and abroad. **Noelia Ruiz**, a dancer with the **Ballet Nacional de España**, will portray the young Otero, while special guest **Maribel Gallardo** will play the protagonist in her later years. The company, which last visited Valladolid in 2019, has almost sold out all three performances.

La Bella Otero is a large-scale production that transports audiences back in time to discover the eventful life of the most desired dancer of the *Belle Époque*. **Rubén Olmo**, choreographer and current director of the company, has placed dance at the service of the story to recount the life of **Carolina Otero**, a woman who reinvented herself following a traumatic event in her childhood, achieved success as an artist and courtesan, and ultimately ended her life alone and ruined by gambling.

"Many years ago, before I had even begun my career as a choreographer, I found some postcards of La Bella Otero in a second-hand shop. When I discovered that one of the most famous women of her time came from a village in Pontevedra, I immediately knew that I had to create a ballet about her life. However, I also knew that I would need the support of a major company to realise it as I had imagined it: as a large-scale production. Directing the Ballet Nacional de España has enabled me to make it a reality," explains Rubén Olmo of the origins of his choreography.

A major production featuring prestigious collaborators

To meet the demands of this complex large-scale production, the Ballet Nacional de España has worked with highly respected professionals from the Spanish and European performing arts.

Actor and stage director **Gregor Acuña-Pohl** was responsible for dramatising the narrative, selecting those moments from the artist's life that could best be expressed through dance, without attempting to provide an exhaustive account. *"I have tried to remain faithful to the historical figure and create a ballet that moves audiences*

without judging her. The most important thing for me was to portray someone with tremendous magnetism, charisma and strength."

The music for *La Bella Otero* is distinguished by the great diversity of styles that make up the score, although it has been conceived as a single, unified composition. It encompasses everything from Galician folklore to experimental and avant-garde aesthetics, from flamenco to contemporary reinterpretations of styles and forms associated with the *Belle Époque*. This diversity has been resolved through the creation of a collective work involving three composers for the symphonic sections: **Manuel Busto, Alejandro Cruz and Agustín Diassera**. Flamenco guitarists **Diego Losada, Víctor Márquez, Enrique Bermúdez and Pau Vallet** also contributed original compositions, while the group **Rarefolk** created the atmosphere for the scene set in Galicia with its distinctive psychedelic Celtic rock. Conductor and composer Manuel Busto was responsible for bringing coherence to the entire score: *"My main challenge when developing the arrangements and orchestrations was to ensure that they retained every ounce of their original freshness and personality, while also being integrated as a natural part of the work."*

Alongside the creation of such a complex and varied score, another of the challenges posed by this dramatic ballet was designing the nearly 200 costumes required to dress the dancers for periods and settings as diverse as a Galician village, *Belle Époque* Paris and a café cantante. The centrepiece of the costumes, designed by **Yaiza Pinillos**, is the Byzantine-style jewelled dress worn by La Bella Otero in one of her most iconic portraits, taken by Reutlinger. In addition to the challenge of designing costumes that evoke a historical period while still allowing the dancers to move and change quickly between scenes, the characterisation also required the use of wigs, beards, moustaches and hats. *"The director, the technical team and I all agreed to take on the considerable effort required to recreate the period. That effort is also shared by the dancers, who must undergo highly complex changes of appearance involving not only costumes but also hair and make-up, while performing the choreography in these garments and prosthetic pieces."*

Eduardo Moreno, winner of the 2012 Max Award for Best Set Design for *De ratones y hombres*, faced the challenge of creating a single architectural element that, with just a few additions, would establish the time and location of each scene. He devised a dome that frames the entire production and houses its different settings. The lighting design by **Juan Gómez-Cornejo**, winner of the National Theatre Award, envelops the dancers and brings an emotional dimension to each setting: *"The light must accompany, surround, support and, if possible, caress the dancers so that the story reaches the audience with the greatest possible clarity and with the same emotion with which it was created."*

La Bella Otero
BALLET NACIONAL DE ESPAÑA

Programme:

LA BELLA OTERO
Teatro Calderón
Valladolid

Friday, 7th February 2025, 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, 8th February 2025, 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, 9th February 2025, 7:30 p.m.

Tickets:

<https://www.mgticket.com/tcalderon/public/janto/main.php?Nivel=Evento&idEvento=24PBELLAOTERO>

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. 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.

Download high-resolution images:

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

Further information and interview requests:

Eduardo Villar de Cantos
Communications Director
Ballet Nacional de España
Tel. 91 05 05 052 / 611 60 92 44
eduardo.villar@inaem.cultura.gob.es