

The Casa de Velázquez and the Ballet Nacional de España celebrate the legacy of Miguel de Molina

The Ballet Nacional de España paid tribute to the Málaga-born artist with a performance held in collaboration with the Casa de Velázquez, which is hosting the exhibition *Embrujo: Los mundos de Miguel de Molina* until 27th October

The programme concluded with the timeless *Ojos verdes*, performed by Martirio and choreographed especially for the occasion by the Ballet's director, Rubén Olmo

Madrid, 25th October 2024. The Ballet Nacional de España, directed by Rubén Olmo, has paid tribute to the Málaga-born artist with a **programme specially created for the occasion**. Audiences enjoyed two choreographies from the company's repertoire, *Martinete* and *Caracoles*, together with a third work set to Molina's timeless copla, ***Ojos verdes***. The voice of **Martirio** and the performance of **Raúl Rodríguez** accompanied the dancers, bringing the event to a deeply moving close.

For **Alejandro Salade, director of the Miguel de Molina Foundation** and the artist's great-nephew, this tribute represents another milestone in the process of fully restoring the reputation of a universal artist who transformed the world of the stage and left behind an important artistic legacy.

The event was organised by the **Ballet Nacional de España** and the **Casa de Velázquez**, which is hosting the exhibition *Embrujo: Los mundos de Miguel de Molina* until 27th October. The exhibition forms part of an international research project supported by the Casa de Velázquez, which examines the work of the Málaga-born artist through his personal archive.

Nancy Berthier, director of the Casa de Velázquez, highlighted the need to promote this kind of interdisciplinary initiative, at the crossroads of artistic creation and research, in order to achieve a better understanding of contemporary issues, such as the restoration of Miguel de Molina's legacy to collective memory.

The Legacy of the Versatile "King of Copla"

Featuring part of the Miguel de Molina Foundation Archive, the exhibition brings lesser-known aspects of the popular singer's career to light through previously unseen material. Molina was far more than an outstanding performer of copla. He began his career as a "Gypsy art dancer" with Soledad Miralles without ever having attended a dance academy. Even so, **Antonia Mercé "La Argentina"** engaged him to perform the role of "The Spectre" in her 1934 version of ***El amor brujo***. Shortly afterwards, he was already creating his own productions alongside comic actress Amalia de Isaura. It was then that Molina began to display the full extent of his talent: he not only designed and made the avant-garde costumes for his performances, but also created the choreography and set designs, directed the staging and even arranged the musical numbers.

In this regard, **Rubén Olmo, director of the BNE**, highlighted Molina's influence on the aesthetic renewal of Spanish copla through his introduction of avant-garde elements and his conception of stage production as an integrated combination of all the disciplines involved. This is the legacy that the Ballet Nacional de España sought to honour: a legacy that goes beyond the public persona and reveals a creator who undoubtedly left his mark on Spain's performing arts.

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.

About the Casa de Velázquez

Inaugurated in Madrid in 1928, the Casa de Velázquez is a French institution whose aim is to foster artistic, cultural and academic cooperation and exchange at both bilateral and international level. Today, the Casa de Velázquez operates under the authority of the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research.

Since its foundation, it has developed its activities around a unique model, supporting both contemporary artistic creation and academic research in the humanities and social sciences. Each year, the Casa de Velázquez hosts and supports around one hundred researchers and creators through a wide range of residency programmes lasting from several months to three years.

The exhibition ***Embrujo. Los mundos de Miguel de Molina*** marks the beginning of a multi-year research project linked to the opening of the Miguel de Molina Foundation Archive. The project is supported by the Institut Universitaire de France, the Casa de Velázquez, Sorbonne University and the University of Toulon, in collaboration with the École Normale Supérieure de Lyon and Grenoble Alpes University.

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