

Bruges, the next stop for *Afanador*

- The Europalia Festival will host the Ballet Nacional de España production on 5th November at the Concertgebouw Brugge.
- *Afanador* will conclude the year with three further tours in France.

Bruges, 5th November 2025. Following the highly successful premiere of *Medea* at the Teatro Real, with every performance sold out, the Ballet Nacional de España is once again packing its bags to continue its European tour with *Afanador*. The Europalia Festival in the Belgian city of Bruges will be the BNE's next stop.

The 30th edition of Europalia will be devoted exclusively to Spain. With Francisco de Goya as its central figure, the festival celebrates the richness of Spanish culture through the arts. One of the greatest expressions of Spanish art could therefore not be absent: dance.

According to Rubén Olmo, Director of the Ballet Nacional de España, the great success of *Afanador* lies in its originality. "Until now, audiences had never seen this kind of production in Spanish Dance or at the Ballet Nacional de España," the Seville-born artist has said.

"The success of *Afanador* lies in its inspiration. We are always inspired by writers, poets and so on, but never by a photographer, by a photo shoot. It is something innovative in the world of dance," Olmo explained.

Afanador conveys photographer Ruven Afanador's surrealist vision of flamenco through the language of dance, enticing audiences to discover a universe shaped by fascination and desire. The acclaimed works of the Colombian artist, *Ángel Gitano* and *Mil Besos*, provided the starting point for this production, in which Spanish dance merges with contemporary dance to "see the world of flamenco through a distorting lens, one shaped by dreams, desire and memory", as Marcos Morau, creator of the concept and artistic director of *Afanador*, has explained.

Where the photographer freezes movement, Morau allows those same bodies to move again. Not to reconstruct the image, but to reveal the tension between vitality and stillness, between gaze and desire. In this way, the paradox of

photography becomes tangible: a medium that freezes movement and, in that stillness, reveals a different kind of life.

In *Afanador*, Morau reverses that movement: he explores the moment when the photographic image emerges from its stillness and becomes dance. In his own words: "Photography stops movement; I try to give it back. The bodies move again, not to imitate the photograph, but to understand what lies within that stillness."

The journey of *Afanador* since its premiere in 2023 at the Teatro de la Maestranza in Seville has been both extensive and rewarding. It has not only filled major Spanish venues such as the Teatro Real and Teatro de la Zarzuela in Madrid, Teatro MIRA in Pozuelo de Alarcón, Teatros del Canal in Madrid, Les Arts in Valencia and the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, but also international stages including Yeulmaru Theatre in Yeosu, South Korea, the GS Arts Center in Seoul, South Korea, and the Teatro dell'Opera di Roma.

Afanador has received widespread acclaim from both audiences and critics, as reflected in the numerous awards it has received throughout 2025: five Max Awards, two Talía Awards and the Catalan Critics' Awards, among others. All of them are a clear reflection of the admiration this ballet has inspired among audiences and critics alike.

With just two months remaining until the end of 2025, *Afanador* will still be performed in three more French cities.

Continuing its mission to promote Spanish Dance, the Ballet Nacional de España has recently published the booklet "*Afanador para jóvenes*", written by Elna Matamoros. Its pages invite younger audiences to embark on a journey through and enjoy the ballet alongside Ruven Afanador, Marcos Morau and the artists of the Ballet Nacional de España. "We have attracted many young people with this production, and I am very pleased about that," explained the BNE's Director.

Programme

AFANADOR
Ballet Nacional de España

Europalia, Bruges
Wednesday, 5th November 2025, 8:00 p.m.

Sold out

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.

About de Rubén Olmo

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.