

Hong Kong: first international tour of the year with *La Bella Otero* and *Invocación*

The Ballet Nacional de España returns to Hong Kong for the 54th
Hong Kong Arts Festival with a total of five performances

Hong Kong, 26th February 2026. On Friday, 27th February, the Ballet Nacional de España begins its first international tour of the year in Hong Kong. The Grand Theatre at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre will host *La Bella Otero* and *Invocación*, two mixed programmes showcasing the different styles of Spanish Dance through choreographies by a range of creators.

The first programme to be presented will be *La Bella Otero*, choreographed by Rubén Olmo and premiered in 2021. The production takes audiences on a journey through the principal episodes of Otero's eventful life.

Following successful tours to several cities in Spain and abroad, *La Bella Otero* arrives in Hong Kong with Noelia Ruiz, dancer with the Ballet Nacional de España, portraying the young Otero, while Maribel Gallardo, special guest artist, will perform the protagonist in her later years.

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

In *Invocación*, the second programme to be presented in Hong Kong, audiences can, in the words of the BNE's Director, "*enjoy flamenco full of life and energy on stage, a ballet of the purest stylised dance and one of the few recent choreographies in the escuela bolera style.*"

The production opens with *Invocación bolera*, Rubén Olmo's contemporary reworking of the style, featuring original music by Manuel Busto and castanet choreography by Maribel Gallardo. It is followed by *Jauleña*, a solo by Rubén Olmo inspired by Granada, in which the granaína and zapateado take centre stage. The first half closes with *Dualía*, a choreography by Rojas y Rodríguez

that approaches Spanish Dance through the youth and freshness of this highly trained generation of dancers, exploring the complicity of dancing as a couple and the sensuality of gesture.

After the interval, the Ballet's flamenco ensemble of singers and musicians joins the dancers on stage to pay tribute to Mario Maya (1937–2008), one of the bailaores and choreographers who transformed flamenco dance in Andalusia. *De lo flamenco. Homenaje a Mario Maya* is a flamenco suite comprising seven movements that reflects Maya's distinctive and innovative style. The BNE production adds two new choreographies to the original work, created by two of Mario Maya's long-standing collaborators: Rafaela Carrasco and Isabel Bayón, who have created *Romance del emplazado* and *Taranto* respectively.

The company has almost sold out all five performances.

BALLET NACIONAL DE ESPAÑA
Grand Theatre, Hong Kong Cultural Centre

Programme:

LA BELLA OTERO

Friday, 27th February 2026, 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, 28th February 2026, 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, 1st March 2026, 7:30 p.m.

INVOCACIÓN

Tuesday, 3rd March 2026, 7:30 p.m.
Wednesday, 4th March 2026, 7:30 p.m.

Tickets available at:

<https://www.hk.artsfestival.org/en/programme/Ballet-Nacional-de-Espana-La-Bella-Otero>

<https://www.hk.artsfestival.org/en/programme/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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