

**THE
KENNEDY
CENTER**

Press Release

FOR RELEASE:

April 18, 2018

**The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
presents**

Ballet Nacional de Cuba

Alicia Alonso, Artistic Director

in

Don Quixote

and

Giselle

**Performances mark the 40th Anniversary of the Company's
historic first tour to the United States**

**Part of the Kennedy Center's
*Artes de Cuba: From the Island to the World***

**May 29–June 3, 2018 in the Kennedy Center Opera House
With the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra**

(WASHINGTON)—Internationally renowned Ballet Nacional de Cuba returns to the Opera House stage showcasing their extraordinary talent in two ballets, May 29–June 3. Artistic Director Alicia Alonso's definitive staging of the romantic classic *Giselle* anchors the engagement, May 31–June 3, and its acclaimed version of *Don Quixote* is performed May 29–30. The performances mark the 40th Anniversary of the company's landmark U.S. debut at the Kennedy Center. All performances will be accompanied by the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra.

Last seen at the Kennedy Center in 2011, the company is known famously for its uniquely Cuban style and is admired for their beautiful footwork, strong dancers, and impeccable technique including passing on Alonso's trademarks of lingering balances en pointe and never-ending turns. Alonso is one of the most revered dancers within ballet. Born and trained in Havana, she studied with the School of American Ballet and later joined the American Ballet Caravan (predecessor of the New York City Ballet) and then American Ballet Theatre. Throughout her storied career, she has worked with choreographers Mikhail Fokine, George Balanchine, Anthony Tudor among others and performed leading roles in classical and contemporary work.

Don Quixote

Inspired by an episode of the sweeping tale of romance and chivalry by Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote* is a three act ballet featuring the misadventures of a knight-errant of La Mancha and his devoted squire, Sancho Panza. With the original literary work deeply linked to the Cuban national culture, Alonso has remarked that "It was based on our culture, on the language in which we express ourselves, and it was very difficult to reconcile the depth of the Cervantes creation with the traditional ballet..." In restaging the production, Alonso focused on bringing more authentic folkloric references into the choreography; a clearer dynamic and quality within the narrative story; and a musical balance between the Spanish folkloric dances and the score composed by Ludwig Minkus. In particular, Alonso aimed to give more of a major presence and respect for the character of Don Quixote, an icon of the Castilian language and of Hispanic-rooted culture. Alonso's full-length production, with choreography after Marius Petipa, premiered in 1988.

Giselle

Among Alonso's many leading roles, the portrayal of the title character of Giselle is one she is famous for interpreting. One of the Romantic era's most enduring ballets, *Giselle* is a tale of betrayal, remorse, forgiveness, and redemption. A ballet in two acts, the story follows its heroine, a peasant girl named Giselle, who dies after discovering her lover is betrothed to another. Alonso's production, with choreography after Jean Coralli

and Jules Perrot, was first staged for the Sociedad Pro-Arte Musicale in Havana in 1945. Restaging included bringing a further humanistic interpretation to the story which included updating pantomime passages and details within the choreography. In speaking about Act II, Alonso has said “my goal always has been to bring together the surreal and evanescent nature of the spirits that come alive onstage with the very real, earthly reality of human love.”

About Ballet Nacional de Cuba

The Ballet Nacional de Cuba is one of the most prestigious dance companies in the world and occupies a prominent place in the contemporary Hispano-American culture. Founded in 1948 by Alicia Alonso, Fernando Alonso, and Alberto Alonso (the first professional dancer in Cuba), the company has established itself as the highest expression of the Cuban school of ballet. The company and school are based on a cultural legacy that spans several centuries of tradition in theatrical dance combined with an infusion of essential elements of the national culture and its deep tradition of romantic and classical excellence, which is rooted in the Russian style. In addition to the company’s performances in Cuba, where the art form of dance has become ingrained at a societal and national level, Ballet Nacional de Cuba tours internationally to theaters in Europe, Asia, and American countries.

About *Artes de Cuba: From the Island to the World*

Sound. Movement. Magic. Brilliance. Taste. *Calor*. Experience all the exuberance of Cuban arts and culture on the stages of the Kennedy Center. This unprecedented gathering brings some of the world’s greatest artists from the Island and the Diaspora for a two-week celebration, May 8–20, 2018, featuring 400-plus artists in more than 50 events. Our festival features music, dance, theater, film, fashion, design, and cuisine. From traditional to contemporary, Cuba is bound to dazzle and delight with the vividness of its artists’ imaginations. Showcasing many of Cuba’s finest artists and leading Cuban American creators, *Artes de Cuba* encompasses the breadth and vibrancy of one of the most dynamic cultures in the world. Indulge yourself in its abundant pleasures—you will be inspired!

FUNDING CREDITS

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TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets start at \$29. Tickets can be purchased at the Kennedy Center Box Office, [online](#), or by calling Instant-Charge at (202) 467-4600. Patrons living outside the Washington metropolitan area may dial toll-free at (800) 444-1324. For all other ticket-related customer service inquiries, call the Advance Sales Box Office at (202) 416-8540.

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Ballet Nacional de Cuba

Alicia Alonso, Artistic Director

with the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra

Part of [Artes de Cuba: From the Island to the World](#)

DON QUIXOTE (Minkus/Alonso after Petipa)

Tuesday, May 29 at 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 30 at 7:30 p.m.

GISELLE (Adam/Alonso, based on Coralli and Perrot)

Thursday, May 31 at 7:30 p.m.

Friday, June 1 at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, June 2 at 1:30 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, June 3 at 1:30 p.m.

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