

# The Maese Pedro puppet show

(by Manuel de Falla)

*The Maese Pedro puppet show (El retablo de Maese Pedro)* is one of the most important reference points for the Spanish puppet theatre of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The premiere of this chamber opera for puppets in Paris in 1923 was the result of the collaboration between Manuel de Falla and a small group of Spanish artists all linked to the artistic vanguards. Creative artists as important as García Lorca and Buñuel participated in both the stage conception and in subsequent versions of the work.

In 1996 there arose the possibility of tackling this piece in collaboration with the Grup Instrumental de Valencia and musical direction by Joan Cerveró. Our version of *El Retablo* has acquired a certain importance on the musical circuits and in collaboration with numerous national and international orchestras for presenting the show in cities such as Valencia, Granada, Córdoba, Santander, Lyon, Montpellier, Arles, Poitiers, etc. A new collaboration route was opened in 2005 with the Institut Valencià de la Música for co-producing an educational version of this same piece.

## **STORY NOTE**

Musical and stage adaptation of *El ingenioso caballero Don Quijote de la Mancha* by Miguel de Cervantes. The libretto was commissioned by the Princess of Polignac and the premiere was in Paris on 25 June 1923.

This is what we would call today a chamber opera with a reduced orchestra and three singers: Trujamán, Maese Pedro and Quijote. It is also an opera that reflects on theatre within theatre as the action is doubled: On the one hand we see the inn in which the *Retablo* is being performed and, on the other, we see the Maese Pedro puppet show itself in which the Carolingian narrative relates the loves of Melisendra, who has been captured by the Moors.

### **Structure:**

**1. Educational section (optional):** first part performed by the actor Juanfran Aznar and aimed at introducing the audience to Falla's musical richness and Cervantes' literary universe. Intended for students in Primary Third Cycle (**Primary 5th and 6th**), **Obligatory Secondary Education and Baccalaureat level. Educational documents** available for teachers with the possibility of adapting the level of difficulty to the class.

### **2. Concert**

Scene 1: The opening speech.

Scene 2: The Maese Pedro symphony.

Scene 3: Charlemagne's court.

Scene 4: Melisendra captured by the Moors.

Scene 5: The Moor's punishment in the public square

Scene 6: Don Gwyferos approaches the Pyrenees and frees Melisendra

Scene 7: Final intervention by Don Quijote

## ARTISTIC | TEAM

Performers	<i>Jaume Policarpo, David Durán, Josep Policarpo</i>
Direction & Stage scenery	<i>Jaume Policarpo</i>
Marionettes	<i>Jaume Policarpo, Ion Ladarescu, Ximo Muñoz</i>
Executive production	<i>Josep Policarpo, Ángeles González</i>

## PERFORMANCES

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Teatro Sociale, Como (Italy)  
Teatro Civico, L'Alghero (Italy)  
Teatro Olimpico, Rome (Italy)  
Teatro Olimpico, Vicenza (Italy)  
Conservatoire National de Musique Maurice Ravel, St. Jean de Luz (France)  
Conservatoire National de Musique, Lyon (France)  
Association du Méjan, Arles (France)  
Une Région en musique:  
Saujon, St. Pierre d'Oleron, Le couarde en re, Marennes, Poitiers (France)  
La huella de España, La Habana (Cuba)  
Miyazaki International Music Festival (Japan)  
Palacio de congresos , Santander  
Auditorio Manuel de Falla, Granada  
Gran Teatro de Córdoba  
Palau de la Música de Valencia  
Claustre de la Universitat de Valencia  
Auditorio d'Ontinyent (Valencia)  
Auditorio de Torrent (Valencia)  
Auditorio de Riba-Roja (Valencia)  
Teatro Calderón, Alcoi (Valencia)  
Conservatorio de Música, Castellón  
Teatre Talia , Valencia  
L'Altre Espai, Valencia

## **CRITICAL REVIEWS**

### **Subtleties of the diminutive**

What is impressive is the mastery shown in handling the puppets, the gracefulness of their movements and their speeches in unison with the singers and the musicians. The puppet show combines the simplicity of its construction with an aesthetic approach that aims to reproduce the small theatres of the Castilian travelling tradition of the era that, along with the marionettes' design, carries the group's stamp of quality. It is a delight to see this group working with a show impregnated with emotion in an era of cybernetic bastardisation.

*Virgilio Tortosa. Que y Donde.*

### **The University Cloister lived a magical night with Falla**

Showing the Valencian public the puppet production of "El retablo" performed by Bambalina Titelles (which received so many good reviews throughout its tour of Italy a few months ago) has served to increase public interest, congregated in a genuine mass in the cloister, allowing them to enjoy an authentic night of magic with Falla's music.

*Fernando Morales. Las Provincias.*

### **Bambalina's marionettes captivated the Palau**

This marionette company's work has been really exceptional and it merited showing to their countrymen what they had already shown abroad.

*Fernando Morales. Las Provincias.*

### **Falla for dams**

It was shame that only those attending the Large Dams Conference and a handful of guests were able to enjoy the best production of the season in Valencia. Beautiful staging by Bambalina Titelles, based on the ingenious idea of putting a puppet show within a puppet show, accompanied by the enchanting musical interpretation.

*Alfredo Brotos. Levante.*

## BAMBALINA [history]

BAMBALINA INVADED THE VALENCIAN SCENES IN 1981 AND DIRECTED ITS GLANCE TOWARDS A VERY SINGULAR FORM SUCH AS PUPPET THEATRE. IN ITS EFFORT TO REGENERATE AND DIGNIFY THIS ARTISTIC FORM THE MOSTRA DE TITELLES A LA VALL D'ALBAIDA (1985) AND THE INTERNATIONAL PUPPETRY MUSEUM OF ALBAIDA (1997) ARE CREATED, TWO INITIATIVES WHICH HAVE SIGNIFIED A CULTURAL REVULSIVE FOR THE REGION AND HAVE BECOME AN INTERNATIONAL POINT OF REFERENCE.

IN 1990 BAMBALINA ESTABLISHED ITSELF IN VALENCIA AND BEGAN TO COLLABORATE WITH CREATORS SUCH AS CARLES ALFARO, JOAQUÍN HINOJOSA, RAMÓN MORENO, GEMMA MIRALLES, JOAN CERVERÓ, CHARLES DITOUT, JEAN-FRANÇOIS HEISSER AND PETER CSABA. THE COMPANY MAINTAINS A CONTINUED PRESENCE IN THE MAIN CITIES OF THE STATE AND IN A LARGE PART OF THE EUROPEAN FESTIVALS. THE GROWING RELEVANCE OF THE COMPANY IS MADE CLEAR IN NUMEROUS PRIZES AND IN THE CERTAIN RECOGNITION BY THE HIGH-RANKING INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS THE GENERALITAT VALENCIANA AND THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE

From the year 2000 the company takes on projects of greater scope. It co-produces with the State Cultural Commemoration Society and the Valencian Institute of Music. Later, it signs exhibition agreements with the Instituto Cervantes and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which leads on to tours throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico, Central America, South America, Morocco and the whole of the East Asia. In 2005 bambalina culminates this expansion process by producing *Ubú*, a co-production on a great format for the "Nave de Sagunto" (Sagunto warehouse).

Bambalina has always stood out for its interdisciplinary vocation of its performances and for using theatrical language in symphony with its most contemporary dramatists. In its 25-year course, the company has brought to the stage some emblematic titles belonging to the universal literary and musical repertoire, such as *Pinocchio*, *Quixote*, *Ulysses*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Alice*, *El Retablo de Maese Pedro*, *Historia del Soldado (Story of a Soldier)* and *Hello, Cenerentola! Playing with Rossini's opera*. A more personal line of creation has been developed with proposals such as *El Jardín de las delicias (The Garden of delights)*, *Pasionaria*, *La Sonrisa de Federico García Lorca (The Smile of Federico Garcia Lorca)*, *El cielo en una estancia (Le ciel dans une chambre)* or *Kraft*.



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Tréteux de Maître Pierre

PC1Kw RJ

scene area tréteux ← 6 mt  
6 mt

