

# The Legend of *Carmen* Revisited by Bambalina

*Bambalina Teatre Practicable* present their new play revisiting one of the most well-known universal legends. This time, as on other previous occasions with *Quijote*, *Alicia*, *Cyrano* or *Ubú*, the play is based on the original piece of literature, namely the novel by Merimée for this **intimately staged montage**.

Josep Policarpo, the company's producer, told us "this show came about at a very adverse time for theatre and the economy. We didn't want to mislead anyone, we all agreed that we wanted to put on a show for an adult audience. We thought about the concept of spectators in the widest and most generous terms, an audience to whom we could perform a play with clear intentions, clean forms and with a story to be understood and to take part in".

Jaume Policarpo, director of the montage, does not try to disguise the fact that "Carmen was inspired by our *Quijote*". *Quijote* is the Valencian show that has been most widely performed outside our frontiers in history and has been applauded in over 40 countries. He added that "we wanted to take advantage of part of its substance in order to build a new montage on it, more in line with our current sensibility. We knew we wanted to recover marionettes with bodies and expression. **There is a magnetism that only wakes when the hands of the puppeteers give life to a doll that then becomes a living being...**" Thus, this montage has a connection with the company's most visual theatre performances, reinforcing its international reputation.

Apart from the puppets, *Carmen* is built on the sound work of the performers (the actors **David Durán, Merce Tienda and Josep Zapater**). The actors perform on two different planes; namely that of the characters being represented by the puppets and the performances by the actors themselves which affords a more external view with a certain degree of **irony and a fair amount of humour**, particularly when dealing with some of society's clichés. Both the corporal expression and the soundtrack, composed by **Oscar Jareño** and **Josep**

**Zapater**, are reminiscent of the world of flamenco and some of the more well known pieces from Bizet's opera, with some of the instruments such as the guitar and the accordion being performed live.

*Carmen* is a **romantic, passionate story with a truly dramatic ending. A classic, a genre piece.** Bambalina feels that this has allowed them to better empathise with the narrative and toy with it with all the underlying freedom provided by the clichés surrounding it and with the familiarity that everyone feels towards the main character and the things that happen to her. The play covers some universal themes that are hugely important in the story, some of which are still fully valid today: women, their power of seduction, social order and subversion, the chauvinism that comes out at the end...

[www.bambalina.es/carmen](http://www.bambalina.es/carmen)

**BAMBALINA: 96 391 1373**



*Bambalina presents a new play by revisiting one of the most well-known universal legends, Carmen, the story created by Mérimée in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and which Bizet immortalised in his opera, and one that connects with the most visual form of theatre performed by the company.*

*A show through which non-language; i.e., the interaction by the puppeteers with the marionettes that come to life in their hands, and live music brings us an up-to-date, innovative version of this classic, where clichés are dealt with ironically, and even comically.*

Let yourself go. OK? Situate yourself close to the heart, to its hidden side. FAN. Now think LOVE. The sort that makes your blood burn. The sort that opens the earth under your feet. The sort that nullifies your will. That drags you to perdition. BLUNDERBLUSS. What's up with you? It's not love, you've gone too far, you've fallen for it. CARNATION. Her black eyes have trapped you, the swing of her hips, her heaving breasts. MARE. What has that woman got? She is free, pure and wild. What does that woman feel? MYSTERY. She belongs to nobody, not even you. Never. PAIN. MADNESS. DEATH. CARMEN. Carmen is her name. Forever.

## **ARTISTIC TEAM**

Plot, staging and direction: **Jaume Policarpo**

Performers: **Merce Tienda, David Durán, Josep M<sup>a</sup> Zapater**

Lighting: **David Durán**

Composition and performance of soundtrack: **Óscar Jareño**

Live music composition and performance: **Josep M<sup>a</sup> Zapater**

Puppets and atrezzo: **Jaume Policarpo, Ximo Muñoz**

Photography and audiovisuals: **Samuel Domingo**

Graphic and media design: **Inklude**

Performance filming: **Itaca vídeo**

Assistant Producer: **Inma Expósito**

Executive Production and distribution: **Ángeles González**

Production Manager: **Josep Policarpo**

## SOME OPINIONS...

Puppet theatre is sadly still a minority show, and there is an unfair prejudice that labels it as theatre for children, this is the result of ignorance or lack of knowledge about those who use it. And to all those who think in that way I recommend them not to miss this version that the Valencian company Bambalina has made about the tragedy of Carmen by Prosper Mérimée, which is a real treat. **An exhibition of comical and dramatic theatrical resources, gestures and lighting, choreography and scenery, that guarantee entertainment and fun, as well as hiding some anthological surprises that will leave more than one open-mouthed.** For me at least, it was the first time I'd ever seen a puppet have an orgasm on stage. And that is just one of many examples, not wishing to reveal any more here so the play doesn't lose its spellbinding capacity.

The montage, apart from being **ingenious and original**, is very intelligent in terms of its structural conception and dynamic narrative. The story is sufficiently well-known and is very linear, while also exuding emotions and sensations that are difficult to put across without text (because there is no text), which one would think could bore the public and make them lose interest in the story. But Jaume Policarpo resolves it brilliantly and counteracts it in a balanced way through alternating the methods and resources employed. To begin with it is a self-sufficient show, and that in itself is as curious as it is entertaining. The same actors / puppeteers are also the lighting technicians using lamps positioned all around the stage. It is a wonderful solution for small formats that is so often demanded by the precarious nature of today's theatre. And from there on an unexpected show comes out with enormous variety, which knows exactly when it starts to fade, when interest gradually wanes owing to formal repetition, when the narration loses intensity, conditioned by the expressive limitations of the chosen format, and that is just when it changes with absolute precision to introduce other formats or genres, even a type of Flamenco performance, an eccentric bullfight or a theatre scene with Famobil clicks, that becomes a true, delirious, comical chaos, reminiscent of the best performances by Tricycle. And in that way the show is never left wanting, because everyone's eyes are focussed on what is happening on the stage, susceptible to drastic changes at any time. **Top class enjoyment.**

*Javier Matesanz. Bocamoll, Palma Mallorca.*

Luckily, and thanks to the programmers of Teatro del Mar, the theatre company Bambalina needs no introductions. They are masters of the blend of marionettes and actors, to the point where you are never quite sure about exactly what is happening before your very eyes.

Everything is so wisely knitted together that even the main scene of the show is that of Carmen, when Carmen is Merce Tienda making love to Don Jose, when Don Jose is the marionette, because as a spectator I think it is perhaps the most difficult scene. **It has all the ingredients, from passion to eroticism. A true marvel.** The rest does not fall short either. The aforementioned part is only the most significant part to explain the group's work, which even manages to lend it a humorous air, without it losing its tragicomedy nature at any time.

**An hour full of pure enjoyment, overflowing with imagination and originality,** which also includes live music, as could not be any other way, uniting Bizet and Mérimée, through which its classical nature is omnipresent. Its trueness to the original is absolute, from the start, through the main story and naturally at its tragic end. There is not one single mistake. It is a top level show where the actors' hard work and efforts are rewarded with a **strong, sincere, moving standing ovation.**

Carmen made my weekend.

*J.A. Mendiola. Diari de Balears.*

You will never know where the marionettes end and the people begin, where the poetry ends and where the theatre begins. The fusion between passion and tension, between shadow and light bring Carmen to life with an unimaginable sensitivity, even with the clichés that are ever present with an ironic, even comical tone. A fantastic creative piece of work, wrapped up in an excellent musical atmosphere where you will spend 60 minutes immersed in aesthetic and ethical enjoyment.

*A spectator*