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Ballet Hispánico
Thu, May 9, 2019 | 7:30 pm
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AMALIA HERNÁNDEZ AND THE BALLET FOLKLÓRICO DE MÉXICO

In 1952, dancer and choreographer AMALIA HERNÁNDEZ founded the Ballet Folklorico de Mexico, having embarked at a very early age on a never-ending quest to rescue the dancing traditions of Mexico. This vital search became a basic need to express not only in Mexico, but also in the rest of the world. Her goal was to share the beauty of the Universe in motion through Mexican dances from the Pre-Colombian era, the Hispanic Viceroy period, and the popular period of the Revolutionary years.

In 1954, Amalia began to garner recognition as a highly respected cultural representative of Mexico. In her earliest ballets, the audience sees the present time fade before their eyes, as they enter into a journey through the past: the lords of heaven and earth come back to life, the jaguars, the gods born of human flesh; and thirty different cultures that blossomed in centuries past leave behind a trail of color. All of these elements together gave Amalia Hernández the inspiration to create the Ballet Folklorico de Mexico.

A weekly program on Mexican television sponsored by the government aired the Ballet’s initial performances. Merely a few years into their formation, the company achieved a degree of international success that has been maintained for over fifty years. Amalia Hernandez and Ballet Folklorico de Mexico have since created over forty ballets for upwards of seventy dancers. The music, technical rigor, elaborate costuming and Amalia’s choreography have helped the Ballet and its followers disseminate the zest for rich Mexican tradition and folklore throughout the world.

Since 1959, the company has been permanently housed at the Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City. The institution has two main artistic companies called The First Company and the Resident Company, both whom alternate tours and performances in Mexico and abroad.

The company has currently given over 5,000 performances, and both Amalia Hernandez and the Ballet Folklorico de Mexico have been distinguished with more than 300 awards recognizing their artistic merits.

PROGRAM

I. OVERTURE

II. THE GREAT TENOCHTITLÁN
This dance takes its inspiration from the great city of Tenochtitlán, founded by the Aztecs during their northern exodus. According to folklore, the Aztecs sought a sign from the Gods indicating where they should establish their home; this sign was received in the form of an eagle devouring a serpent. The city was built on an island in the valley where Mexico City stands today. It would become known as the Great Tenochtitlan, capital of the expanding Aztec Empire, founded in accordance to the orders of the Gods. The ceremonies and rituals developed here are presented in music and dances shrouded in feathered splendor, rising to the sky in a mystical expression.

III. PLATFORM DANCES OF TIXTLA
   El Toro
   El Arrancazacate
   La Iguana
IV. REVOLUTION
Modern Mexico began with the Revolution of 1910. For the first time in the country’s history, Mexican women joined men in their political struggle. This ballet is dedicated to the soldaderas, the women who supported their men and even bore arms with them in Mexico’s fight for liberty. Contrasted with these men and women is a group of young aristocrats dancing European polkas, flirting and unconcerned with the people’s fight for freedom. A group of revolutionaries breaks up this party, brandishing their weapons. Now it is the peasants who dance popular dances of La Adelita in the aristocratic drawing room, with their compatriot Juana Gallo, the famous capitana. At the end of this movement, the revolutionaries march towards their new destiny.

V. CHARREADA
One of Mexico’s deepest traditions is Charreada, where men and women demonstrate their bravery in sports competitions, due to the work done in old Haciendas of Mexico. During a celebration full of color and fun, the Charro shows his beloved his abilities with the rope, captivating her to the rhythm of a Jarabe.
   The Rope Dance
   Country Love Dance

VI. TLACOTALPAN FESTIVITY
February 2nd marks the celebration of the Candelaria Virgin in the town of Tlacotalpan. Stages are built in the main square where musicians and dancers dance to fandangos. This celebration is characterized by the use of the mojigangas, enormous puppets that symbolize different cultural figures and archetypal human characteristics. The music is characterized by the sound of drums such as congas, common in the festive carnival season of the Caribbean.

   The Dance of the Fisherman
   The Indian Maria
   Jarochos, musicians from Veracruz
   La Morena
   The Cuckoo Bird
   The Fan Dance
   El Coco
   La Bamba
   La Sarna
   The Fans

   The Clown
   La Jarocha, or woman from Veracruz
   The Angel
   The Moor
   The African Boy
   The Indian Girl-Maria
   The Devil
   The Crier
   The African Girl

   --Intermission--

VII. THE QUETZALS OF PUEBLA
This ancient dance has its origin in the legend of the quetzal, mythological bird of Mesoamerica considered by the Indians as sacred and symbolizing for them the essence of beauty and elegance. The great headdress of King Moctezuma is said to have been formed from twenty four feathers captured at great peril from the long tails of the quetzals. In its home state of Puebla, the dance is executed by performers trained during many months to personify the bird and illustrate the dignity, godliness and grace the Indians attribute to this divine representation. The plumed crowns worn by the dancers are approximately six feet in diameter and demand from the dancer much practice and skill to achieve the imposing movements of this dance.
VIII. LIFE LIKE A GAME
In this dance, the game is controlled by the devil. He handles all characters as if they are marionettes and with their wires, he manipulates their destiny. Reality and fantasy interact when the devil uses both “cupid” and “death” to perform a tangled love story between a bride, her groom and her lover.

1. The Plaza (Rondas)
   a. Childhood Games
   b. “Games” of Love
      The Devil
      The Cupid
      The Bride
      The Groom
      The Lover
      The Jicotillo

2. The Fair
   a. Gambling Games
   b. The Lottery
      La Cucaracha
      The Golden Fighting Cock
      The Purple Fighting Cock
      The Little Death

3. The Ball
   a. Social Games
   b. The Roulette
   c. Games of Death

XI. DEER DANCE
The Yaqui people, who have a reputation for being excellent hunters, have managed to be the only indigenous culture to preserve their cultural autonomy in the face of Spanish colonialism. Free from any racial mingling or modern cultures, the Yaquis continue hunting with bows and arrows, cultivating the land according to their ancestor’s methods and celebrating their ritual dances with hermetic fervor. The Deer Dance is part of a rite that is organized in preparation for a hunt. It said to bring luck and a bountiful profit to those who participate.

X. JALISCO FESTIVITY
The state of Jalisco is the land of the Charros, the Chinas and the Mariachis. Since the last century it has become a symbol of Mexican nationality. The Charros of Jalisco are known for their high spirits and joyous grasping of life. Jalisco's folklore captures the soul of Mexico in its sensual music, refined dances and dazzling costumes. For this reason the Ballet Folklórico de México culminates every performance with this ballet. It opens with a Mariachi parade playing lively sones at the start of a fiesta. In the background is the traditional gazebo found in all the provincial plazas of Mexico. During this colorful fiesta, the songs and dances of Jalisco: The Snake, El Tranchete, La Negra and El Jarabe Tapatío, the famous Mexican Hat Dance are performed. At the end of the performance, the dancers salute the audience with an abundance of colorful paper streamers.
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ctmtheater.org | 608.255.2080

Forward Theater Company
forwardtheater.com | 608.234.5001

Kanopy Dance Company
kanopydance.org | 608.255.2211

Li Chiao-Ping Dance
lichiaopingdance.org | 608.835.6590

Madison Ballet
madisonballet.org | 608.278.7990

Madison Opera
madisonopera.org | 608.238.8085

Madison Symphony Orchestra
madisonsymphony.org | 608.257.3734

James Watrous Gallery
wisconsinacademy.org | 608.265.2500

Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra
wcoconcerts.org | 608.257.0638