

Cuban National Ballet at the Martí Theater over the weekend



The emblematic Cuban National Ballet Company, led by prima ballerina assoluta, Alicia Alonso, is set to offer two galas dedicated to the 120th birthday of late Cuban composer and pianist, Ernesto Lecuona, at the Martí Theater on August 1 and 2.

The mixed bill includes pieces that use scores by maestro Lecuona and other renowned Cuban composers, such as *Tarde en la siesta* (Late in the nap) by Alberto Méndez; *Cuba dentro de un piano* (Cuba inside a piano) by Eduardo Blanco; and three pieces by Alicia Alonso herself: *A la luz de tus canciones* (to the light of your songs) *La commedia è... danzata* and *Impromptu Lecuona*.

A composer and pianist, Ernesto Lecuona, was born in 1895 and died in 1963, he is considered an exceptional musician and the Cuban composer whose music has been promoted, commercialized and spread throughout the world the most, not only because of the number of pieces he wrote but also because of their quality. His most important works include lyrical theater songs, such as *Damisela encantadora*, *Eres tú el amor*, and the Cuban zarzuela (operetta) *María la O*, while for piano he composed emblematic pieces, such as *Danza de los ñañigos*, *Danza Lucumí*, *Andalucía*, *Granada*, *La Comparsa*, and the musicals *Rosa la China*, *Cuando la Habana era Inglesa*, and others.

The Cuban National Ballet Company was created in 1948 but it didn't receive full support from the government until 1959 when the Cuban Revolution came to power. Along with Fernando and Alberto

Alonso who were company co-founders, prima ballerina, Alicia Alonso, has ever since become the soul of the famous Cuban School of Ballet, which included figures, such as those whom British dance critic and former Royal Ballet School director, Arnold Haskell, called the “four jewels” of the Cuban Ballet: Mirta Plá, Loipa Araujo, Josefina Méndez and Aurora Bosh; and others that came later, such as Marielena Llorente and Marta García.

Alicia’s choreographic pieces are famous all over the world and performed by important companies, such as her version of Giselle, the Grand Pas de Quatre and The sleeping beauty danced by the Paris Opera Ballet; her Giselle performed by Vienna’s Opera Ballet and San Carlo of Naples; La fille mal gardée by Prague’s Opera Ballet and her version of The sleeping beauty by the Ala Scala Ballet of Milano.

She is one of the creators of the famous Cuban School of Ballet, along with her former husband, Fernando Alonso -the schools’ main creator. The school has earned admiration by its top quality training and selection system and its members, awarded and praised all over the world.

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