



BREAKING BOUNDARIES AND EXPLORING TRADITION

COMPAÑIA MARÍA PAGÉS MAKES JOYCE THEATER DEBUT WITH TWO DRAMATICALLY DIFFERENT WORKS, FEBRUARY 24–29

Wit is not what is expected from flamenco. But María Pagés is not interested in the expected.

Her troupe, Compañía María Pagés, whose groundbreaking transformation of flamenco into a contemporary dance form was acknowledged with the 2002 National Dance Award (Spain's highest honor in the field), will make its Joyce Theater debut, February 24–29. Featuring Pagés's surprising "El perro andaluz. Burlerías" and her more traditional "Flamenco Republic," the program will be performed by the Company's 14 dancers and musicians.

Suggesting Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí's 1929 film classic, "Un chien andalou" (The Andalusian Dog, whose title teasingly refers to their Andalusian-born friend Federico García Lorca), Pagés's "El perro andaluz. Burlerías" shares the film's ironic undercurrent and playful wit. "Burlerías" punfully refers to both *burlerías*, a flamenco form, and *burlería*, a kind of trick or illusion, not unlike the surrealists' sly twists of reality. By setting traditional flamenco dancing against music such as the tangos embedded in several Tom Waits songs, as well as works by Manuel Soler, Isabel Granda, Astor Piazzolla and Peter Gabriel, Pagés creates a surreal wit evolving from the juxtaposition of unexpected realities. The dance won the 1996 National Prize for Choreography, marking the first time a flamenco work received this honor.

In "Flamenco Republic," a more introspective work than "El perro andaluz. Burlerías," Pagés reverses the choreographic process by exploring the potential

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influence of dance on the *cante* rather than the music on the movement. Although Pagés is well-known for dances that demonstrate how traditional national forms could incorporate outside cultural influences, “Flamenco Republic” is pure flamenco, blazing with its fiery passion and poetic resonance. The 50-minute work is performed to live and recorded traditional music by Paco Arriaga, Manuel Soler and Pagés.

Born in Seville, María Pagés began dancing at the age of four. When she was 15 years old, she was invited to join the school of the National Ballet of Spain in Madrid, where she graduated with honors in Spanish dance. Her teachers have included many of the great 20th-century masters: Manolo Marín, Matilde Coral, El Guito and Manolete. As a principal dancer with the Antonio Gades Company, Mario Maya Company and the Rafael Aguilar Company, Pagés’s name became synonymous with flamenco in many parts of the world. Pagés began to choreograph in the late 1980s and founded Compañía María Pagés in 1990. Since then, the Company has performed in Europe, North America and Japan. Her early choreographic works “Sol y Sombra” (1990) and “Tango” (1992) established Pagés and her Company in the flamenco community; however, it was the premiere of “De la Luna al Viento” at the Teatro de la Maestranza de Sevilla that was unanimously hailed as a milestone in contemporary flamenco development, placing Pagés at the forefront of the dance form. In 1995, the first Berlin Flamenco Festival was dedicated to her.

In 1996 the Centro Andaluz de Danza in Seville commissioned her to create “El perro andaluz. Burlerías,” which received that year’s Spanish Choreographic Award for outstanding achievement.

In 1999, the Company began a residency in Torrelodones, which has since become its home. Later that year the Hispanic Heritage Awards invited Compañía María Pagés to perform at the Kennedy Center, Washington, DC. In addition to heading her company, she maintains a solo performance career. She was a featured artist in the international tour of Bill Whelan’s “Riverdance,” and has appeared on screen in the Carlos Saura’s films Carmen, El amor Brujo

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and Flamenco, as well as in José M. Sánchez's La Bella Otero, Hemingway, Fiesta y Muerte and Coccodrilli.

Prior to its Joyce season, Compañía María Pagés will perform at Sadler's Wells, London, February 10–14. After The Joyce performances, the Company will be seen at the Teatro Olimpico in Rome, Italy (March 9–20); as well as in Cuenca, Mexico (March 26–April 3); Taipei, Taiwan (April 12); Barna, Netherlands (April 20–May 4); and Tokyo, Japan (May 22–23). The Company will also have a seven-week tour throughout Australia and New Zealand, beginning this June.

The evening curtain for Compañía María Pagés's Joyce Theater season, Tuesday through Saturday, is at 8pm; the Sunday evening curtain is at 7:30pm. There will also be 2pm matinees on Saturday and Sunday. Tickets are \$38, and are available at The Joyce Theater box office or by calling JoyceCharge at 212-242-0800 or online at www.joyce.org. The Joyce Theater is located at 175 Eighth Avenue at 19th Street.

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