
A great tribute to Alicia Alonso

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Alicia Alonso is one of the aesthetic symbols of the nation. And she is also an example of dedication and commitment to a collective work. The greatness of her artistic career ranks her among the most important ballet dancers of her time, but her creative work goes beyond performance. She is a foundational work.

We can say she was inspiration and mainstay of some of the greatest performances in the Cuban culture. What's more, she was one of the top cultural ambassadors of Cuba to the world.

Why do we still watch a shooting of her dancing fifty years ago, and it still seems contemporary? Alicia Alonso was never content with repeating uncritically the canons of her time, or just following circumstantial trends or fashion. She was always looking for the essence of things by taking profits of her enormous intuition, natural talent, and her masters' teachings.

But Alicia's greatest credit, beyond the daily expression of her art, was to multiply a heritage. She could have neglected everything, and even gloated about her self-fulfillment. By the time the Revolution succeeded, she was already one of the greatest worldwide. Hence, any ballet company would have been honored to have her.

But she led a very important task instead: the foundation of the Cuban Ballet School, a reference school, a movement that has placed Cuba within the universal ballet map, resulting in a real wonder.

Of course, the story would have been different without the support of institutions. But without Alicia, without Fernando Alonso, or without the greatest masters in the early years, ballet would not probably exist in Cuba, at least not the way we enjoy it now: art shared by thousands, which belong to an entire people.

Her centenary will be, therefore, a national festivity.

The Ministry of Culture has organized a wide program of activities where all arts will converge in a multiple festivity. The Alicia Alonso International Ballet Festival could not be organized this year due to the sanitary emergency. The

Cuba's National Ballet is hence organizing a season at the Alicia Alonso Grand Theater, to be held in December.

And because all tributes Alicia deserves could not come into fruition this year, the final decision is to extend the festivities throughout 2021.

The performances of the company, founded and led by Alicia for so many years, will be dedicated to highlight her contributions to the universal art of ballet. Other dance companies in Cuba will also dedicate their performances to her, as the creative work of the *prima ballerina assoluta* is the starting point of a great dance movement our nation is quite proud of.

There will be also visual arts exhibitions, film cycles, concerts and book launching. Everything is done to celebrate one fundamental fact: Alicia Alonso was, is, and will be Cuba's National Artist.

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