World Ballet Stars to Dance at Havana Festival

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Havana.- The Alicia Alonso International Ballet Festival of Havana stands as an exceptional opportunity for ballet lovers from around the world.

As organizer of this festival, Cuba's National Ballet Company (BNC) recently announced that the event will be held from October 28 to November 6.

The upcoming 26th edition will mark the 70 years of BNC founding by Alicia, Fernando and Alberto Alonso, on October 28, 1948.

The festival's program will feature the season marking the 75 years of Alicia Alonso's debut in Giselle, which is expected to be performed by first dancers from Cuba and other countries.

Dancers with the prestigious Cuban Ballet Company will alternate with artists and companies from other countries during the shows. Some of them will premiere pieces in Cuba.

The main venues for the biennial festival will be the Gran Teatro de La Habana Alicia Alonso, the Avellaneda and Covarrubias Halls at Teatro Nacional and Mella and Marti Theaters. The Ballet Company of the Grand Theater of Geneva, Switzerland; the National Ballet Company of Prague, Czech Republic; and the Danish Dance Theater of Denmark are among the foreign companies expected to perform in the festival.

Moreover, dancers of the New York City Ballet will bring the show 'Stars of American Ballet,' featuring names such as Daniel Ulbricht, Teresa Reichlen, Ask la Cour, Sterling Hyltin, Adrian Danchig Waring, Indiana Woodward and Gonzalo García.

HeeSeo, Isabella Boylston, Alban Lendorf and Cory Stearns will come for the American Ballet Theater, while Camila Bocca, Juan Pablo Ledo, Macarena Gimenez and Maximiliano Iglesias will represent the Buenos Aires

Colon Ballet Theater of Argentina.

The lead dancer of the New York City Ballet, Spanish Joaquin de Luz, will return to the Cuban festival, while U.S. Rasta Thomas will perform for the first time in the event presided over by Cuban Prima Ballerina Assoluta Alicia Alonso.

Other dancers who have confirmed their attendance are Rainer Krenstetter, of the Miami City Ballet, USA, and Marian Walter, of the Munich Ballet, Germany.

With more than 50 years of history, the International Ballet Festival of Havana favors the exchange between internationally renowned lead dancers, personalities, critics and businesspeople.

In order to honor Alicia Alonso, British choreographer Cathy Marston is preparing a ballet piece inspired by William Shakespeare's The Tempest.

The choreographer will turn the play's original male protagonist, Prosperous, into an equivalent female character to honor Alonso, Cuba's most important ballet dancer and one of the greatest legends of dance in the world.

'Prosperous is a magician that creates everything in that place surrounded by sea, like a small island full of music and dance. I rapidly pictured Alicia, who has created a sort of magic around the BNC and its dancers,' Marston told The Havana Reporter.

Different activities will be held in parallel to the festival such as exhibitions, theoretical conferences, book launch, and film and video seasons.

The Havana festival, which is one of the oldest of its kind in the world, will offer a special choice this time: a course on ballet technique for professionals, teachers and advanced-level students.

The long list of ballet stars who have participated in the Cuban festival includes Russian Maya Plisetskaya, French Sylvie Guillem, Italian Carla Fracci and Alexandra Ferri, Spanish Tamara Rojo and Jose Carlos Martinez, Argentinean Julio Bocca, Maximiliano Guerra and Paloma Herrera and U.S. Cynthia Harvey.

The BNC organizers always insist on turning the festival into a party of choreographic art that claims a phrase by outstanding Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier as its own: 'The spirit of dance is inseparable from the human condition.'

The Cuban Ballet Company has covered the country and Latin America with glory ever since it was founded.

The Cuban Culture Ministry this year issued a decree declaring the company Cultural Heritage of the Nation.