

Theatre

"My inspiration is from here and now"

Catalonia Today interviews ballet director David Campos on the eve of his new Barcelona show

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David Campos, highly-acclaimed choreographer/director, will premiere his unique ballet *Turn Me On* in Barcelona's Teatre Romea on Thursday. His dance company Compañia de Ballet de Santa Coloma de Gramenet David Campos, which is the only classical ballet company in Catalonia, intends to dazzle audiences from its opening on June 8 until the final performance on June 18.

Sitting in the modest office of his classical ballet school on

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Carrer Nació, David Campos spoke about his new show, his career history and his views on dance. With the music of a ballet class in the background Campos says that in *Turn Me On* he wanted to reach a younger audience and thus decided to create a multimedia performance with large televisions and live music. "The group *Virus String Quartet*, which is from Barcelona, specialises in music that is used for video games", says Campos of the quartet that plays electronic music during the show. Above all, though, Campos claims the show is "about emotions", and expressing the things he wants to say through dance.

Although given the title *Turn Me On*, the performance also relates to the phrase 'turn me off'. "You will see that there are eight scenarios with themes ranging from jealousy to happiness and death", says Campos, whose choreography is anything but strictly classical. "In fact, I use the opportunity to change a little bit", he says. "I consider myself to be contemporary because all the inspiration that I get is from life – from now."

Turn Me On is "very eclectic" he insists. "You cannot say it's classical, you cannot say it's jazz or contemporary. It's expression. Forget about classical and just look at the dancers and

what they can do."

Forty-five year old David Campos was born and raised in the heart of Barcelona, near Sagrada Família. He took his first classical ballet class at the age of nine. "I wanted to sing so my mother and I went to enroll in a choir but we went on the wrong day", he said. "This day happened to be the day for ballet."

At the age of fifteen, Campos began studying at Barcelona's Institut del Teatre. In an effort to develop his talents further he moved to Paris where at 17 he studied at the Ballet School of Solange Golovine. Only a year later, Campos, who would also make guest appearances in both Asian and European companies, began five mind-broadening years dancing as a soloist with the Städtische Bühne Hagen in Germany, followed by another five years as a soloist with Belgium's Royal Ballet Flanders. It was during his career as a soloist in Germany that he met his wife, Irene Sabas, who also joined the same company as a soloist.

After a decade out of his home country he decided to return to Barcelona where he and his wife opened up the David Campos School of classical ballet, which

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is still thriving today. "There was nothing interesting. No company and no good school to take classes so we decided to create



Above clockwise: David Campos, on stage, poster for *Turn Me On* at Romea

our own school that specialised in classical ballet", he said. There he, his wife and assistants from his dance company, give classes to about 80-100 dancers with ages ranging from 4 to early 20s.

Campos suggests his niche for classical ballet was influenced by his home environment: "One thing I remember is that my father always played classical music", before he added with a laugh, "...but too much." He

and his wife have a 15-year-old daughter who also shares her parents' love of the art form. "Physically, yes of course. But not in mind", is his reply when asked if he would ever consider retiring from dance.

"I not only love dance but it has become a way of being – my existence. I don't think I know how to do anything better than to be in the dance world" he says, smiling.

Reflections on dance

Campos feels that the current dance scene in Barcelona is unbalanced. "Everything that is unbalanced is poor. If there is only classical, that is poor. Recently there has been too much contemporary and the public doesn't know anything else. Those contemporary ideas force people to think that classical is old fashioned."

He also hopes that the government will not only increase their budget for dance, but also take it a step further and insure that the necessary improvements actually take place. "It's not only about increasing the budget. To increase the budget just to reach more projects is not the way. When you get money from the government

they should check what you're doing and where the money goes."

He goes on to say, "I think it's very important to be open to the world. So if I do something, I'm not doing it just for Barcelona, I'm doing it first because I like it, it's the best that I can give and the further it goes, the better."

Campos, who invented the ballet foot stretch ten years ago, feels that dance is a way to peace. "I believe that as artists we should help society to focus more on the things that make you feel happy. Sometimes to see a beautiful painting, to hear a beautiful voice and to see a beautiful dance makes you very elevated."



Out on a limb at Teatre Nacional

• *Limb's Theorem*, the seventh ballet piece by choreographer William Forsythe, is being performed this month at Barcelona's TNC, at the hand-and foot-of the Lyon Opera Ballet. The ballet stunned its Munich audience in 1994 when it was performed for the first time in the National Theatre, by the Frankfurt Ballet. In *Limb's Theorem*, 30 dancers will twist and cant their limbs in a world of shadows and piercing light defined by a slanted wall, to the crashing and pounding electronic music score by Thom Willems. From June 9 to July 13; €15-30.



Sam, an homage to Samuel Beckett

• Barcelona's Sala Beckett had to prepare something special to celebrate the birth centenary of the playwright that gives the name to the alternative venue. The young company elnacionalNOensvol offers *Sam*, a show that puts together short pieces by Beckett, the master of absurd theatre, from June 7-25.