

Adaptation of El gran teatro del mundo

by Calderón de la Barca



direction irene serrano
musical direction berta ares y nacho laguna
dramaturgy luis sorolla e irene serrano


BallArte
Ensemble

EL GRAN SARAÓ DEL MUNDO

(based on El gran teatro del mundo, by Calderón de la Barca,
with music by his contemporaries Luis de Briceño, Juan Hidalgo, Juan Arañés and others).

direction: Irene Serrano
musical direction: Berta Ares y Nacho Laguna

with:
Berta Ares (violin)
Arthur Baldensperger (baritone)
Laia Blasco (soprano)
Nacho Laguna (theorbo and guitar)
Ana Nicolás de Cabo (percussions)
Mélina Perleín-Féliers (harp)
Giulio Tanasini (viola da gamba)
Paula Pérez (violin)
Irene Serrano
Luis Sorolla

adaptation and dramaturgy: Irene Serrano y Luis Sorolla
costume design: Paola de Diego
light design: Gabriel Piñero
produced by: BallArte Ensemble

production of:



in cooperation with:





ABOUT THE PROJECT

El gran sarao del mundo was born from the desire not only to revindicate, but also to explore the inherent relationship between music and text in the dramaturgy and staging of Spanish Golden Age theater. Originally, this kind of plays, especially the *autos sacramentales*, were pieces with a strong musical charge that accompanied and advanced the action, and which operated as an expressive element alongside the spoken word, in verse. This project aims to bring Calderón's text back into dialogue with musical compositions by composers of his time, within a contemporary scenic and expressive framework that prioritizes the communal, the playful and the festive (the *sarao*), as we understand it happened in the seventeenth century.

The auto sacramental of Calderón's *El gran teatro del mundo* serves as a framework to articulate a piece that is more than a "musicalized" play, and more than a theatricalized concert: both languages coexist and become inseparable in the spectator's experience. We are not before musicians who play to accompany, it is these same bodies on stage that embody the characters of the auto sacramental and sing, play and interpret.

The music is not a parenthesis in the dramatic action, nor a sound accompaniment to build atmospheres, but part of the plot and of the great party that this *sarao* presents us. A ludic, deep, hooligan and beautiful party.

We have privileged the most humanistic and universal aspect of the play, eliminating the liturgical load, to clear those essential questions that Calderón proposes to us: How do we live in the best possible way with the role that we have had to play in this world? How do we (inter)act with others and with ourselves without a script to guide us, with free will? How do we relate and reconcile ourselves with the fact that we have arrived here without knowing very well why and what for, knowing that in the end we are all going to die? And how do we accept this reality and continue making of life a great *sarao*?



SUMMARY

The Author appears. He walks around the stage, observes it.... Suddenly he feels like having a party: a representation of human life. Nothing would amuse him more. He invokes The World, his assistant director, who will take care of the stage, the lights, the costumes, the props...Everything is ready for the entrance and exit of the performers, the human lives that will enter this space through the cradle and leave through the grave. The characters will be assisted by the tenacious and rigorous prompter, the Law of Grace, who will make sure that everything goes according to plan, according to the script. But as soon as the characters arrive accompanied by their instruments, it becomes clear that nothing is going to go as expected. After an unequal and conflicting distribution of roles, these human lives exercise their free will and move further and further away from the text: they get too high in their roles, or become divas, or spend the whole show complaining, or refuse to say their monologues, despairing the dutiful prompter who only wants things to be done as God commands. The only constant in this performance is the music, the party, and a group of characters (the King, the Beauty, the Rich, the Poor, the Worker and the Religion) trying to solve how they want to play the roles they are assigned and how to comply while the awareness of death is getting closer and closer.



ABOUT THE MUSIC

The musical repertoire of the Spanish Golden Age theater was mainly based on the use of existing tunes, which were adapted according to the convenience of the plot to be represented. These tunes were constructed from rhythmic and harmonic schemes of great popularity in Spanish society, such as the *jácara*, the *villano*, the *danza del hacha*, *pasacalle*, *folías*, etc., and were learned and transmitted by heart, which explains to a large extent the absence of sheet music. However, some musical examples have been preserved that could have been used for the theatrical creation of the time. This is the case, for example, of Luis de Briceño and his “*Método facilísimo para tañer la guitarra*”, composed of many of the aforementioned songs. The musical practice in the theater of the time, and the songs of Luis de Briceño and other contemporary composers of Calderón, such as Francisco Berxes and Juan Hidalgo (noted for having worked directly with Calderón in many of his plays), have been the main elements on which the musical and imaginary of *El gran sarao del mundo* has been elaborated. In this sense, the musical approach stands out for its philological nature. Working with original sources, in which only the text and the chords to be played by the guitar appear, the verse has been a determining factor in many musical decisions, that is, the pattern of the syllabic rhythm has very often indicated to us what kind of solutions to look for at a musical level. As a result of this process in which music and theater become a single element, the musicians approach the musical text and the verse of Calderón himself in the same way. On stage, the music advances the plot and participates in the characterization of the parade of characters that we attend as spectators.

WORKS

Marizápalos. Anonym, C.XVII

Seguidilla: Dime de que te queexas. Luis de Briceño, 1626

Dança o Entrada de sarao español. Luis de Briceño, 1626

Yo soy la locura. Henri de Bailly, before 1614

No piense menguilla ya. José Marín, between 1644 and 1699

La dança de la hacha. Luis de Briceño, 1626

Tono humano: Ay, qué mal. Francisco Berxes, between 1695-1702

Solo a la vida humana. Anonym, C. XVII

Consideraciones y preceptos de un casado. Luis de Briceño, 1626

Folia: Serrana si vuestros ojos. Luis de Briceño, 1626

Esperar, sentir, morir. Juan Hidalgo, between 1614-1685

Un sarao de la chacona. Juan Arañés, 1624



ENSEMBLE'S HISTORY

Ballarte Ensemble was founded in 2020 with the aim of exploring the theatrical possibilities of Baroque and contemporary music through its dialogue with other disciplines such as theatre, dramaturgy and dance. Its interdisciplinary team is made up of musicians, dancers, playwrights, technicians and actors. In just five years, the ensemble has produced nine original musical creations for the stage: Dream (2021), The Banquet: the musical (2021), The Liberation of Francesca Caccini (2021), Sueño-verso (2022), El gran sarao del mundo (2022), Silencio en la sala que el fuego va a hablar (2023), Murmuros (2023), Transhumancias (2024), A Room Of Our Own (2025) and The Whale (2025).

Their creations have been performed in Spain, Switzerland and Portugal, and have received support from institutions such as the Spanish Embassy in Switzerland and Swisslos Fonds Basel Stadt. Ballarte Ensemble was awarded first prize in the Young Aragonese Creators competition in 2021, was a finalist in the Rema Awards in the 'Cross-Border Project of the Year' category in 2022 and has been selected for the EFFEIA European artistic residency programme in 2024. In March 2025, their show 'El gran sarao del mundo' was part of the FIAS (International Festival of Sacred Art in Madrid) programme; 'The Whale' premiered that same year at the Cisternmúsica Festival in Alcobaça (Portugal).

PROJECT'S HISTORY

Ballarte Festival

5/08/2022, h. 21:00 - Plaza Mayor de Sos (Spain)

7/08/2022, h 21:00 - Casa Suprián, Anciles (Spain)

29-30/06/2024 - Voltahalle, Basel (Switzerland)

FIAS MADRID

15/03/2025 - Galapagar (Spain)

16/03/2025 - Capilla Real, Madrid (Spain)





ENSEMBLE



IRENE SERRANO (THE AUTHOR) **direction, dramaturgy and actress**

Actress with a degree in Textual Interpretation from RESAD and in Audiovisual Communication from UCM. She completed her training at the Teatro de la Abadía, with Jose Luis Gómez, Vicente Fuentes, Ernesto Arias, Lidia Otón, among others; and with professionals such as Carles Alfaro, Andrés Lima, Roberta Carreri. She is part of the cast of *La vida es sueño*, directed by Declan Donnellan (Cheek by Jowl, La Zona and CNTC). She has worked for the CDN in *Supernormales*, directed by Iñaki Rikarte, and *La tumba de María Zambrano*; as a protagonist for the CNTC in *La señora y la criada*, directed by Miguel del Arco; *La vida es sueño*, directed by Helena Pimenta and *El desdén con el desdén*, directed by Iñaki Rikarte; and in the cast of *La gran Cenobia* and *En otro reino extraño*, directed by David Boceta; and *El burlador de Sevilla*, directed by Josep María Mestres. She has been part of the company *Nao d'amores*, directed by Ana Zamora, in the shows *Numancia*, *Nise, la tragedia de Inés de Castro*, *Comedia Aquilana* and *Triunfo de Amor*. Stable member of the company [números imaginarios], directed by Carlos Tuñón, with which she premiered *La última noche de Don Juan* (Clásicos en Alcalá), *Hijos de Grecia* (Festival de Otoño), *Lear* (desaparecer) (Teatros del Canal) and *La vida es sueño* (el Auto Sacramental). She has directed, for Ballarte Festival, *La liberación de Francesca Caccini*; *El gran sarao del mundo* (based on the auto sacramental *El gran teatro del mundo*, by Calderón de la Barca), direction, dramaturgy and verse consultancy; and *Silencio en la sala, que el fuego va a hablar*.



LUIS SOROLLA (THE WORLD)
dramaturgy and actor



Playwright, actor, director and producer. He is the founder of the production company Esto Podría Ser, specialized in the staging and translation of foreign contemporary plays and plays of his own creation. He is also a stable member of the company los [números imaginarios] (directed by Carlos Tuñón). Playwright-in-residence at the CDN, he publishes *Los muertos vivientes* within this framework. Graduated in Textual Interpretation by RESAD, he completes his training with professionals such as Lucía Carballal, Pablo Messiez and Ella Hickson among others, and in centers such as RADA in London or Kosmos in Movement (KiM) in Berlin. He has written and created plays such as: *una puesta en escena de "La Revolución"*, *Los Precursores*, *El Terror*, *La vida es sueño: el Auto Sacramental* (premiered at the Teatro de la Comedia); *La gran Cenobia* (version of the work by Calderón de la Barca para la CNTC); *Quijotes y Sanchos*; *En otro reino extraño*, based on texts of Lope de Vega (CNTC); *Leviatán* (auto-obra para un único espectador). As an actor he worked in plays such as *Play!* (CDN), *El mal de la montaña* (Teatro Español), *Interior: día*, *Oveja Perdida Ven Sobre Mis Hombros*, *Telémaco: el que lucha a distancia*, *Un robo*, *Lear (desaparecer)*, *Hijos de Grecia*, *Un cuerpo en algún lugar*. Ha dirigido *Una puesta en escena de "La Revolución"*, *Los Precursores* y la pieza (contenido) *Aquí estás, (indiferente) Aquí estamos, (triste) Aquí estoy*. He is a teacher at the Escuela Universitaria de Artes TAI, and at the ESAD in Valladolid, translator of theatrical texts and playwright for both training centers and theatrical performances.

BERTA ARES (THE POOR)
musical direction and violin

Berta Ares (Madrid, 1994) is a violinist and violist specialising in early music. She began her musical training at the age of three with the recorder and later took up the violin. She studied at the Arturo Soria Conservatory in Madrid, the Zaragoza Conservatory of Music and the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis in Basel, where she specialised in historically informed performance of the repertoire from the Renaissance to the Romantic period with Professor Amandine Beyer. She has also studied vielle and medieval performance with Baptiste Romain. She has participated in numerous musical projects in Spain, Switzerland, France, Italy and Germany. She has performed as a soloist with the Capriccio Barockorchester (Switzerland), Le Concert Idéal (France) and ARTEK (New York). From a very young age, she combined her interest in performance with cultural entrepreneurship and is co-founder of the ensemble Acciaccatura (2014-) and the Monzón Chamber Music Festival (2017-2019). Together with Nacho Laguna and Ramón del Buey, she has co-organised the five editions of the Ballarte Festival, a creative platform that has featured numerous artists and from which the Ensemble Ballarte emerged.



NACHO LAGUNA (THE KING)
musical direction, theorbo and guitar



Trained at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis (Switzerland), Nacho Laguna has worked and continues to work regularly as a continuo player with ensembles such as Gli Incogniti, Artaserse, Les Musiciens du Louvre, I Gemelli, Le Consort, La Ritirata, and artists such as Amandine Beyer, Philippe Jaroussky, Francesco Corti, Théotime Langlois de Swarte, and many others. He has toured extensively in Europe, America, Asia, and Africa, including at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, the Opéra Royal de Versailles, Tokyo Opera City, Hong Kong City Hall, the Arsenal de Metz, the Opéra de Angers-Nantes, the Teatro Real Madrid, the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, and the Bozar Brussels. He has recorded for labels such as Harmonia Mundi, Aparte, Nàive, Mediaphore Japon, and Warner Classics, as well as for various radio and television stations such as BBC Radio 3, Radio Nacional Clásica, TV France, and RTVE. His latest solo work, Ferrarese, was recently awarded 5 Diapasons by the French magazine Diapason. His interest in interdisciplinarity led him to found the Ballarte Festival and organize five editions, to found the Ballarte Ensemble and the Acciaccatura Ensemble, and to collaborate with artists from the fields of theater, dance, and performance.

LAIA BLASCO (THE VOICE) **soprano**

She began studying recorder in Valencia, her hometown, with Elisabeth Woltèche. She continued her musical studies at the Conservatory of Münster, Germany, with Jérôme Minis and at the same time studied singing with Helena Hajfitzy. She studied baroque singing at the "Scuola Civica di Milano" with Sonia Tedla, where she obtained the highest marks. She collaborates with several early music ensembles such as EGERIA, Puy de Saint Cyr or Boreas Musica. She is a founding member of Esemble Ibera Auri. She has participated in different festivals throughout Europe as Milano Arte Musica, Ballarte Festival, FEMÀS of Seville, Festival of religious music of Cuenca among others and in cycles of concerts for the CNDM (National Center of Musical Diffusion), Juventudes Musicales de España or Quartetto di Milano.



GIULIO TANASINI (THE RELIGION)

Viola da gamba



After completing a master's degree in double bass in Italy, Giulio Tanasini studied viola da gamba with Paolo Pandolfo at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis. He is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Performance in 2019 and a Master's degree in Specialized Performance in Early Music. He plays both instruments throughout Europe and collaborates with ensembles such as Gli Incogniti (Amandine Beyer), Il Pegaso Ensemble (Evangelina Mascardi), Los Elementos (Alberto Rouco), and Musique des Lumières, with whom he has performed in some of Europe's most prestigious concert halls. He is a member of the Ballarte Ensemble, with which he explores alternative forms of musical performance to the classical concert format, presenting his original works throughout Europe. He works with composer and singer-songwriter Francesca Gaza as a solo gambist in her ensemble and, since 2021, with the Maxim Theater (Zurich), where he performed in Michael Ruf's Die mittelmeer monologe. He collaborates with the ensemble Le Sommeil, with whom he has performed in the music season of Freunde Alte Musik Basel and at the Wilanów Palace in Warsaw. In his solo career, he has developed programs such as Le città invisibili (Ballarte Festival, Flimsfestival, and Altrisuoni, Combin en Musique, and Modulazioni). Since 2023, he has been working as a program designer for the Ballarte Festival, and his interest in contemporary music led him to perform as a soloist in the Musica riservata concert at the Venice Biennale Music Festival in 2024.

ANA NICOLÁS DE CABO (THE WORKER) **percussion**

She started as a pianist and at the age of ten she began to receive private percussion lessons. She combines both specialties with her university studies in the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Salamanca. After finishing her piano studies she decided to focus on classical percussion while specializing in the traditional repertoire of her hometown with Mara Cañizal. This opens the door to the Renaissance repertoire under the tutelage of Fernando Serrano, professor of Renaissance and Baroque plucked string at the Professional Conservatory of Salamanca. She studied historical percussion, as well as the Master of Interpretation and research of early music at the ESMUC with Professor Pedro Estevan. As a timpani soloist and orchestral percussionist, she has been part of ensembles such as Collegium 1704 and the Concert de Nations. She has participated in the BallArte Festival and in the first edition of Generación SMADE. She has accompanied Camerata Iberia, Concerto Italiano, Coral Annuba, Badalonense, Capilla de Santa María del Pi, Res Poliphonica, Alba Asensi, Janson Priset, Jonathan Stuchbery and Jaime González-Sierra. She is currently part of Sonorum Mare, Pretérito Imperfecto, Plebeyos Bailes and has her own project around unknown authorships with her group Cayreles.



ARTHUR BALDENSPERGER (THE LEY OF GRACE)
baritone



Interested in the stage as a singer and performer, after studying Literature and Arts in Paris, he graduated in baroque singing at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis (Basel, Switzerland). He continues to work as a performer by participating in different workshops (recently with the trainer Cloé Xhaufaire, at the “École du Jeu” in Paris). In 2020, he creates a piece with voice and saxophone at the Basel theater based on the biblical text of the Apocalypse. Attracted above all by live art as a means of expression, he is exploring the possibilities of text, voice and performance to convey meaning. He is currently pursuing a Master's degree in medieval singing in Basel.

MÈLINA PERLEIN-FÉLIERS (THE BEAUTY) **harp and soprano**

She began her musical training by learning harp, recorder, clarinet, and finally singing. She studied literature and performing arts theory at university, while studying acting and singing at the Lille Conservatory. She then studied scenography and costume design at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Visuels de la Cambre in Brussels before turning to music, particularly early music and historical performance. She studied historical harps with Angélique Mauillon and Renaissance singing with Véronique Bourin at the Conservatoire de Tour. She joined the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis in 2019. During her Bachelor studies, she studied historical harps with Heidrun Rosenzweig and singing with Katarina Livljanic. She is now continuing her baroque harp studies with Flora Papadopoulos and singing with Ulrike Hofbauer. As a basso continuo player, she has performed with orchestras such as the Staatskapelle Halle, conducted by René Jacobs, and the Compagnie la Tempête. She plays and sings a repertoire spanning several centuries, from the early medieval harp to the baroque Italian double harp, enjoys the droning strings of the bray harp, as well as the accompaniment of singers and instrumentalists as a basso continuo player, or the mellow sound of ancient pedal harps. She is a founding member of the medieval music ensemble Rubens Rosa.



PAULA PÉREZ (THE RICH)
violin



She studied baroque and modern violin at the Koninklijk Conservatorium in The Hague with Kati Debretzeni, Walter Reiter and Theodora Geraets and completed two master's degrees at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis in Switzerland, specializing in repertoire between the Renaissance and Romanticism with Amandine Beyer and in medieval Vielle with Baptiste Romaine. She is a member of the Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century and is regularly invited by numerous European ensembles such as the Netherlands Bach Society, the interdisciplinary group Geneva Camerata or the Nereydas ensemble. Paula has performed as a chamber musician in various festivals in Europe, Asia and America and has given master classes at the National Conservatory of Jakarta (Indonesia) and at the University of Mexico City. She also has a degree in Art History from the UNED and is currently specializing in a Master's degree in Conservation of Historical Heritage at the same university.

