

Evocative Exhibition of the Life and Work of Master Jorge Garcia (1935-2021)

The iconographic exhibition, which takes place simultaneously with the presentation of the ballet *Giselle* (Jorge Garcia's version), danced by the National Ballet of Portugal (NBP), in the month the company celebrates its 45th anniversary, aims to make better known the career of an artist who is considered, by many, the greatest ballet teacher who worked in Portugal in the 20th century.

His name, initially associated with the Gulbenkian Ballet, was also known in Portugal for the work that, for almost two decades, he build up at the Artistic Dance School of the National Conservatory, in Lisbon, and, simultaneously, at the NBP.

It should be noticed that Maestro's artistic and pedagogical legacy is very expressive not only in Portugal but also in countries such as France, Belgium, Italy, Brazil, Canada and the United States of America, among others. And his best-known choreographic work, *Majísimo*, was danced around the world by many companies, while his versions of the classical ballets (namely *Giselle*) were recognized, above all, for their stylistic accuracy.

Anyone who has studied with Jorge Garcia, in a conservatory or in a professional dance company, knows that he was a meticulous and a very demanding master with a great knowledge of the musical aspects of the dance teaching technique. And, sometimes, he could also have a very sharp sense of humor.

His classes were inspiring and organic, and his pedagogic skills and sense of justice were unquestionable. Like any great dance teacher, his attention to his students was directly proportional to the effort they showed him in the studio.

Those who knew him best can state that he was a tireless scholar (his many notebooks with precious handnotes can prove it) and a highly cultured artist. His personal library was a strong proof of this fact, in addition to many dedications written to him by well known authors on their own books.

Jorge Garcia was a music lover, in the strictest sense of the words, and a true opera lover. In his collection of vinyl records, audio cassettes, videocassettes, cd's and dvd's, there were as many recordings of ballets as operatic works. Which he heard over and over again.

Perhaps because he was born in a country where the royalties were systematically violated, with regard to his work contracts he was a ruthless and calculating negotiator.

He was a very reserved person – even with his closest friends – something in between a loner and a dreamer, and he lived his day-to-day life in an almost ascetic way. But, above all, Maestro García was a unique personality in the great world of Dance.

This exhibition, which may go to the University of Miami (The Cuban Heritage Collection), in the state of Florida - USA, reveals some unknown sides of Mr. García's work and a less public image of the Maestro.