



CARMEN MATEU
YOUNG ARTIST EUROPEAN AWARD
Opera and Dance

CARLOS ACOSTA

Artistic Director, choreographer dancer and dancer

Born in Havana, Cuba in 1973, Artistic Director, choreographer dancer and dancer, Carlos Acosta trained at The National Ballet School of Havana. After winning a multiple awards, including 1990's Prix De Lausanne, he danced professionally with many of the world's most prestigious companies, with London's Royal Ballet becoming his home. Carlos retired from Classical ballet in 2016, after 28 years, having performed almost every classical role from Spartacus to Romeo.

Carlos created many award winning shows throughout his ballet career including Tocaroro, and Carlos Acosta and Friends of the Royal Ballet. He also choreographed The Royal Ballet Productions of Don Quixote and Carmen and the most West End production of Guys and Dolls. His written works include Pig's Foot and his autobiography, No Way Home. Yuli, a film inspired by his life had its premiere at the San Sebastian, Spain in 2018 and was then screened at the Havana, Berlin and Glasgow Film Festivals to great critical acclaim followed by general release in 2019 at cinemas across the world.

The culture and history of Carlos' homeland have been important influences throughout his career and will continue to be so as he has not only established his own dance company – Acosta Danza in 2015. The company tours the world with its vibrant combination of classical and contemporary, fused with Cuban elements of dance. In 2017, he created his own Foundation, the Carlos Acosta International Dance Foundation which opened his first dance academy in Havana. The Foundation gives young dancers the same opportunities that he himself benefited from, by providing a three year dance training programme, free at the point of delivery in an inspirational setting.

Carlos's extraordinary dedication to dance continues to this day and was recognised in the Queen's New Year's Honours List in 2014 where he was awarded a CBE for his contribution to dance. In 2018 he received the Queen Elizabeth II Coronation Award from The Royal Academy of Dance in recognition of his standing as one of the most influential figures in Dance today and in 2019, the Critic's Circle awarded Carlos with their annual award for outstanding services to the arts. His athleticism, the sheer joy of dancing as well as his tremendous ability to convey emotion, inspired a generation of dancers across the globe. His very touching story and the obstacles he has overcome speak for themselves.

In January 2020, Carlos became Director of the Birmingham Royal Ballet where he set to the task of building on the Company's classical traditions whilst expanding its repertoire and reaching out to new and more diverse audiences, In his first year, despite the impact of COVID-19 lockdown measures on training and live performance, Carlos formed exciting new partnerships and collaborations with international talent, commissioned major new staged works, whilst further embracing digital advances. He continues to forge a new direction for Birmingham Royal Ballet as it enters its third decade, which is surprising and unpredictable and truly defines what it is to be a world leading classical ballet company in the 21st century.