
Silvio Rodríguez and the National Symphony Orchestra on tour in Spain

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SIX extraordinary concerts in the same number of Spanish cities were jointly performed this May by the National Symphony Orchestra and poet, composer and singer-songwriter Silvio Rodríguez.

The tour paid tribute, in the best possible way, to the 60th anniversary of the National Symphony, created by maestros Enrique González Mántici and Manuel Duchesne Cuzán.

Hours before traveling to Spain, following a concert in the National Theater's Avellaneda Hall, Enrique Pérez Mesa described the upcoming trip as a "very interesting tour; this reunion of that great Cuban musician, the *trovador* Silvio Rodríguez, with the symphonic world."

Meanwhile, Maestro Pérez Mesa stated that "From the beginning, Silvio has been a very generous man, and has always highlighted the 60 years of the Orchestra, and that is the reason for the tour, in which, in addition, we have the privilege of another special guest, one of the best and most virtuous flutists in the world at present, Niurka González."

Pérez offered details of the selected program for the concerts, where, he noted, the most important thing was to make Cuban music known.

For the first half of the performances, selected were the already classic works **Tres pequeños poemas**, by Amadeo Roldán, and **Danzón**, by Alejandro García Caturla. In addition, the vanguard pieces, **Guaguancó**, by Guido López Gavilán; and **Pentesilea**, by Carlos Fariñas;

while a contemporary twist came with **Concierto de Otoño**, for flute and string orchestra, by guitarist and composer Joaquín Clerch, performed by guest flutist, maestra Niurka González.

As a show of the virtuosity of the Cuban Symphony Orchestra, included in the tour repertoire was **El Sombrero de Tres Picos**, by Manuel de Falla, in celebration of the centenary of this emblematic and renowned piece.

The second half of the concerts saw Silvio's performance, with five songs from his vast catalog: **La Era está pariendo un corazón**; **Ángel para un final**; **Jugábamos a Dios**; **Pequeña serenata diurna** and **El necio**, with orchestral arrangements by pianist Jorge Aragón.

Maestro Pérez Mesa confirmed that they would perform in very important venues, starting at the Euskalduna Concert Hall, in Bilbao, the Basque Country.

The second concert was held in the Plaza de Toros de Úbeda, Andalusia - a historic site dating from 1857, with capacity for 5,000 people. The concert featured as part of the XXXI International Festival of Music and Dance of the City of Úbeda, organized by the Friends of Music Cultural Association and the local City Council.

It was announced that the Festival decided to award its Gold Medal to singer-songwriter Silvio Rodríguez "For the extraordinary artistic quality developed throughout his professional career, as one of the cultural and musical benchmarks of our time."

The third stop of the tour was the Auditori Forum, in Barcelona, with capacity for 4000, located in Plaza Leonardo da Vinci. The Auditori has become one of the emblems of modern Barcelona and has hosted, for example, concerts by Ketama and the great Tribute to Luis Eduardo Aute.

The Palau de la Música in Valencia was the fourth venue. Inaugurated in 1987, it opened with **Concierto de Aranjuez** by maestro Joaquín Rodrigo. This May, the iconic venue also hosted the Radio France Symphony Orchestra, performing Berlioz's **Symphonie Fantastique**.

The tour concluded at the Community of Madrid Sports Centre, or WiZink Center as it is now known, a huge pavilion with capacity for more than 15,000 people. Through to December this year, it will host artists the likes of Backstreet Boys, Roberto Carlos, Elton John, Bryan Adams and Raphael.

Pérez also told our publication that a very special sixth concert would be held in the city of Llíria, Valencia, "because its local council has supported Cuban culture and, for example, has made donations to repair the Saumell Conservatory in Havana."

The director of the National Symphony Orchestra concluded by noting how wonderful it was that the Orchestra would be celebrating its 60th anniversary with Niurka and Silvio and these six concerts: "They have made a space in their agendas and work commitments for this colossal project, and they have given us this magnificent gift."
