

BIOGRAPHY

CESC GELABERT (*Barcelona*) *Choreographer /Dancer*

Gelabert is one of the most influential Spanish choreographers and dancers of the moment. An emblematic and highly versatile artist, he has made a notable contribution towards the creation of a dance culture in Spain. Dancer choreographer and director. Cesc Gelabert was born in Barcelona (Catalonia, Spain).

He began his dance studies in 1969 when a girlfriend brought him into contact with Ana Maleras's studio, where she was taking classes. Soon he was a part of Maleras's group, studying jazz, contemporary and other techniques, while starting to experiment with his choreography. His dedication to football continued, and every weekend he would still play as captain of his team. Simultaneously, he was studying architecture for some years at the University in Barcelona, eventually giving up to become a dancer.

Gelabert's early dance training was with Anna Maleras, joining her group in 1969. In 1972, Gelabert created his first choreography, followed by his first solo *Accio 0* (1973) collaborating with artist Frederic Amat. *Accio 1* (1976) in collaboration with his sister Toni Gelabert and F. Amat performed at Sala Vinçon and Teatre Lliure, Barcelona and other venues.

He continued performing some evenings in cabaret, and taking jazz and contemporary classes with guest teachers. His favourite teacher being Matt Mattox, with whom he took classes in London.

Returning to Barcelona he formed his first dance group, whose début production was entitled *Ver-estiu-altumne-ivern-1*, a work for seven performers. 1976 was the year of his first performance at the Teatre Lliure.

In 1978 he decided to go to New York, enabling him first-hand contact with the New York dance scene. He decided to stay for two years. While working during the day doing various jobs, in the evenings he started creating group works with postmodern dancers, and new solos for himself.

My Old Corduroy Suit was to be his first New York solo, and was presented at the Kitchen theatre, to good reception, enabling him to be an active member of the New York dance community.

In 1980, returning to Barcelona, he began to collaborate with dancer Lydia Azzopardi, performing throughout Spain and festivals in France and Italy. Their early base was La Fàbrica, a significant dance venue in Barcelona, directed by Toni Gelabert and Norma Axenfeld.

1985 Gelabert Azzopardi founded the company, presenting *Desfigurats*, their first dance production for a large stage. The company was firmly established and based in Barcelona.

Simultaneously, Fabià Puigserver, the founder and director of Teatre Lliure, invited the company to become associates, enabling Gelabert Azzopardi to co produce with the theatre, and present the works for extended periods of time. Gelabert Azzopardi Companyia de Dansa has been the resident dance company of Teatre Lliure Barcelona, since 2003 until 2012.

1987 and 1988 two more works were created and shown at the Lliure, Verdi's *Requiem* and *Belmonte*, to commissioned score composed by Carlos Santos; with whom Gelabert had collaborated with in New York. Stage design and costumes by Frederic Amat.

Both these works became emblematic pieces in the history of dance in Spain.

The Company toured extensively in Spain and major International Festivals in Europe, America and Asia.

Cesc Gelabert developed an idiom closely in the association of a very personal style and a powerful presence as a soloist, performing internationally. As the company expanded, the choreographic language acquired a homogenous style. The dancers were recruited from different backgrounds, with solid technical preparation. The vocabulary being pure dance form. In conjunction with the company, Gelabert continued creating solos for himself, collaborating with artists from all medias.

During the late eighties, while performing at Festival Aix en Provence, he met Nele Hertling, director of Hebbel Theater, Berlin. This was to be the beginning of a long and extensive relationship of the Company as co-residents with the Hebbel Theater, until 2003.

During this long period between Barcelona and Berlin, he met and discovered the work of German choreographer, Gerhard Bohner. There was a bonding, both being solo performers, and both having seen each other's work. After Bohner's death in 1992, Gelabert decided to take the task of learning *Im Goldenen Schnitt I/II* from Cosima Santoro's video footage, and to perform the two solos.

Im Goldenen Schnitt I was soon being presented on international stages in major festivals, to successful acclaim. Undeniably, the result of this combination of Bohner's choreography and Gelabert's interpretation made the performance a singular and unforgettable experience.

Im Goldenen Schnitt I is still being performed.

Schwarz Weiss Zeigen, another Bohner solo, reconstructed in 2010 by Gelabert, and is presently being performed internationally.

Some projects since 2010

Ki a coproduction of Grec 2010 Festival de Barcelona and Yachiyoza Centenary Committee of Yamaga, Japan, for the Japanese Panorama. Gelabert co directed and performed in collaboration with Frederic Amat.

La muntanya al teu voltant, 2011 a company piece for twenty four performers, including Sardana dancers. The event inaugurated the Grec Festival de Barcelona in coproduction.

V.O+ Solo work 2012 In co production Teatre LLIure. Award winner of Premi Butaca 2012, as best Dance work of the year.

Tranç 2012 a dance work with film maker Isaki Lacuesta for the *Décimo aniversario del Institut Ramon Llull Cesc Gelabert interpreta Vicente Escudero* 2013 in collaboration with film maker Jordi Morató.

Foot-ball 2015, in co-production with El Teatre Nacional de Catalunya, Mediapro and the sponsorship of FC Barcelona and *Written on air* (Text Valere Novarina) 2016, a solo for the Grec Festival de Barcelona.

Recent productions:

Framing Time 2018 a Baryshnikov Productions project, co-presented by Baryshnikov Arts Center and Lincoln Center's White Light Festival. Reconstruction and dance of *Bauhäustänz Stäbe, Reifen* of Oskar Schlemmer, Gerhard Bohner, for the 100th Birthday Celebrations of the Bauhäus Berlin 2019. *NOM* a coproduction between the Gelabert Azzopardi and El Teatre Nacional de Catalunya.

Cesc Gelabert has created *In a Landscape* a solo for **Mikhail Baryshnikov**. Other commissions have been for **David Hughes**, **Balletto di Toscana**, **Tanztheater Komische Oper**, **Ballet Gulbenkian**, **Larumbe Danza**, **Hermès** and **Kukai**.

He has also collaborated with stage celebrities and artists in many productions, such as **Fabià Puigserver**, **Núria Espert**, **Jorge Lavelli**, **Montserrat Caballé**, **Milva**, **Gerardo Vera**, **Pilar Miró**, **Lluís Pasqual**, **Conchita Pons**, **Borja Ramos**, **Emilio Sagi**, **Carles Santos**, **Frederic Amat**, **Mario Gas**, **Julia Migenes Johnson**, **José María Sánchez-Verdú**, **Kanjuro VII**, **Lorenzo Mariani**, **Giancarlo del Monaco**, among others.

AWARDS

1983 *Premi Nacional de Dansa de Catalunya.* (National Dance Award of Catalonia)

1987 *City of Barcelona Award for Verdi's Requiem*

1992-2003 **DAAD** (*Deutsches Akademischer Austauschdiens*) residence scholarship Berlin.

1994 *The Gold Medal of Merit of Fine Arts* from the Spanish Government.

1996 *National Dance Award of Spain, Madrid*

1997 *National Dance Award of Catalonia*

1998 *FAD Medal (Promotion for Decorative Arts).Barcelona*

2000 *MAX Award for the Performing Arts for ZUM ZUM KA for best dance show of the year and choreography.*

2004 *The Herald Archangel critics award Edinburgh International Festival for Arthur's Feet, Viene regando Flores...and Glimpse.*

2005 *MAX Award for the Performing Arts presented to Gelabert for best male dancer 2004*

- 2006 *City of Barcelona Award 2005 for Psitt!!Psitt!!*
- 2006 *MAX Award for the Performing Arts* presented to Gelabert as best male dancer 2005
- 2006 *FAD Award Aplaudiment Sebastià Gasch 2005-2006* presented to Lydia Azzopardi for *Psitt!! Psitt!!* and *Caravan* costume design
- 2007 *Public Performing Arts Prize best dance show* presented in Tarragona 2006 to *Psitt!! Psitt!!-Viene regando flores desde la Habana a Morón*
- 2011 *Iniciatives Renovadores Award* from *l'Obra del Ballet Popular y la Federació Sardanista de Catalunya*
- 2011 *Premi Butaca Best Dance Schow* for Belmonte
- 2011 *Aisge Actúa Prize* to Cesc Gelabert for artistic career.
- 2012 *Premi Butaca* award for his solo *VO+*
- 2014 *Premio Ciudad de Cazorla de Teatro*
- 2016 *The Critics Price, Barcelona*, best dance solo for *Escrit en L'Aire*
- 2019 *The Gold Medal Award of Cultural Merit from the City of Barcelona*