

A man with a beard, wearing a dark velvet jacket with gold trim, a white shirt, and a black bicorne hat, is riding a dark brown horse. The horse is adorned with a decorative bridle featuring orange and yellow ribbons. They are positioned on a light-colored, possibly sandy or dusty, ground. In the background, there is a large, ornate, light-colored building with many windows and classical architectural details, including columns and statues. The scene is set outdoors with trees and a clear sky.

GALA OF IBERIAN HORSEMANSHIP

THE PORTUGUESE SCHOOL OF
EQUESTRIAN ART OF LISBON PERFORMS
WITH THE ROYAL ANDALUSIAN SCHOOL
OF EQUESTRIAN ART

BY CANDELA GONZALEZ

THE PORTUGUESE SCHOOL OF EQUESTRIAN ART OF LISBON, WHICH WILL SOON BE CELEBRATING ITS 40TH ANNIVERSARY, PERFORMED TOGETHER WITH THE ROYAL ANDALUSIAN SCHOOL OF EQUESTRIAN ART OF JEREZ THIS PAST JULY. THE PERFORMANCE WAS PART OF THE PROGRAM OF THE CITY OF JEREZ CELEBRATING THIS YEAR'S EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF THE HORSE.

It is rare to see any of the four Schools of Equestrian Art perform together. All four schools have only performed together twice, in 2007 and 2012 in Paris. Jerez and Saumur performed together in 2010 and Jerez and Lisbon performed together also in January of this year.

The performance follows the establishment of a collaborative agreement between the two schools to promote and develop further equestrian opportunities between them, but the union between the two schools has existed since before their founding years of 1973 and 1979, a union that was established by the two founding directors of the schools along with their small group of riders. Some of the riders from that first group at the School of Portugal are still present at the School today.

The Schools as they are known today are the result of the tireless efforts of those few riders from both countries who knew how to execute high school equitation performed by the royal courts. They worked to ensure that these, the highest ideals of horsemanship known, which originated in their countries, survived. The efforts of that union were reflected in their horses. The stables of the Andalusian Riding School in Jerez bear the names of some of the horses that resulted from that collaboration. The Spanish Stallion 'Valeroso' was trained by the founding director of the Portuguese School. The horse 'Garboso', who was the first horse to perform the long reins in the Spanish School in Jerez, came from Portugal.

The performance program featured the most distinguished events from both schools such as the horse driven carriages of Jerez and Doma Vaquera, the Picaria Real from Portugal, and the games of the court with the riders dressed in Federica attire. The program featured three joint performances of the two schools: a 'Pas de Quatre' with a pair of riders from both schools, long reins, and a carousel featuring six horses of both schools.

In William Shakespeare's play Henry the IV he depicts a vision of a man riding, quoting, "He vaulted with such ease into his seat, as if an angel dropped down from the clouds, to turn



and wind a fiery Pegasus, and witch the world with noble Horsemanship." That very description is what any rider of this form of horsemanship should transmit. The very description of the presentation of a rider representing the most important equestrian scriptures. Just as the Spanish Riding School of Vienna and the Cadre Noir of Saumur follow the Equestrian writings of Xenophon and La Guerinierè, Portugal preserves and instructs their equestrian practices on what is considered the Equestrian treaty of Portugal, 'The Noble Art of Horsemanship' written by the Marquis of Marialva, an approach to their horses that is calm, soft, yet effective, with a stillness and ease in the riding seat, and aids that are scarcely visible. Because of this their work is accurate and the movement through transitions is ever fluid, perfectly reflecting Shakespeare's description.

The Portuguese School of Equestrian Art in Lisbon has come a long way since its beginnings 40 years ago. Their first base at the Palace of Queluz accommodates all visiting heads of state including the Queen of England, former US President Ronald Reagan, and most recently the King of Spain who have all enjoyed performances by the School at this Palace. Still maintaining horses at their original home, the School recently opened a second establishment at the Picadeiro Henrique Calado in the center of Lisbon, just a few blocks from the Royal Riding Hall that was the original home of this art of horsemanship many centuries ago.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Candela Gonzalez comes from an Equestrian Family in Spain and is an avid rider. Her vast exposures to equestrian cultures and lessons have given her a sharp photographic eye that makes the equestrian strengths of any horse and rider standout. She has photographed some of the most distinct equestrian entities and has a strong admiration for military cavalry regiments and mounted state security forces, which is one of her specialties. She has photographed throughout Europe, Latin America and Asia photographing the uniqueness of the Equestrian cultures of each country.