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AURORA VARGAS



JALEO



newsletter of the flamenco association of san diego

VOLUME IX, No. 4

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WINTER 1986

The goal of Jaleistas is to spread the art, the culture, and the fun of flamenco. To this end, we publish Jaleo, hold monthly juergas, and sponsor periodic events.

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(Published July 1987)

COVER PHOTO: Aurara Vargas, gypsy cantaora.



"EL ARTE Y LA GRACIA" POR TANGOS; PEÑA JUANITO VILLAR, CADIZ, SUMMER '86
(DANCING) MARIA SOLEA, EL CARBONERO ON GUITAR

ESTAMPAS Y CUENTOS DE ANDALUCIA

SONGS OF THE EARTH (OR WHERE THE HECK IS THE FLAMENCO?)

...and in his brain,
Which is as dry as the remainder biscuit
After a voyage, he doth strange places cramm'd
With observation, the which he vents in mangled forms.

(Wm. Shakespeare, in "As You Like It", ca. 1600)

by Tío Paco, el del Puerto

At a first glance, some of these "cuentos" may seem to lack a central "flamenco" theme, and the reader may wonder where the punch-line is. After all, you might say, *Jaleo* is first and foremost a serious, flamenco-oriented publication, and shouldn't become a half-witted hodge-podge of travel brochures, kitchen recipes, and crash-course in Andalusian slang. The answer is that in Andalucía, flamenco is everywhere. It is a way of life so deeply interwoven in the very fabric of Andalusian life, that it cannot be separated from it. It is something that comes from deep within the earth, drunk along with "finos" (frequently in excess), tasted in the "aceitunas", breathed in the dusty air, and passed along with mother's milk. The visitor who tries to pry away "just" the music, or the dance, may fool himself into thinking he/she learned "flamenco", but will miss out on the essence of things. For being a true "flamenco" means being first an Andalus or Andaluza at heart. Although certainly much less pleasurable, there can be as much "flamenco-ness" in the incessant drone of the "mopeds" that criss-cross Andalusian roads, as there is in a flashy falseta by Paquito. Thus, some of these "flamenco-less" stories are Instamatic snapshots of that way of life. Accept the quality for what they are. Whether flamenco will "disappear", as some predict, as Spain joins the rest of Europe, and Andalusia joins the rest of Spain, I do not know. I rather think not, for no matter what happens here, there will always be a little "flamenco" within every one of us, wherever we are.

...AND A DISCLAIMER (OF SORTS)

Throughout these last few trying and rewarding months, I have come to know and love Andalucía, its art, its people, (and even its visitors from afar) as if they were my own. I beg the reader's forbearance for omitting names and places when relating some "cuentos". Abusing the unparalleled Andalusian hospitality, no matter for what purpose, would be unforgivable. Be assured that the gist of the story remains unchanged.

ON THE FESTIVAL TRAIL

After more than six hours, the wooden chairs bite every point of contact with our anatomies. We do not dare move though, as we have barely managed to shield each other from the stiff cold breeze. A red pony-tail gently brushes my face in the wind. The bar seems miles away in the back of the open-air auditorium, and we haven't the courage to defy the elements to fetch a drink. Anyway, at five in the morning, you really can't decide whether you are thirsty, hungry, or just plain sleepy. The slate of cantaoras reads like the "who is who" in the world of El Cante, but at this late hour, with hard chairs, and unfriendly weather, my sense of irritation increases. Does it have to be a damn marathon? An overdose of a good thing? I sense she is ready to leave, and so am I. But we've make it this far, and by golly, we'll stick it out! The "emcee", a ubiquitous figure in all these Festivales, is unbelievably (and often unjustifiably) flowery and long-winded when introducing the artists. After doing his allotted three (or was it four?) numbers, cantaoar "A" does a lengthy bulería as an encore, with "B" at the guitar and several "palmeros" drawn from the audience. We have already

-----LETTERS-----

NEW ARTISTIC DIRECTOR FOR THEATER FLAMENCO

Dear Editor,

I would like to take this opportunity to announce that Mr. Miguel Santos has been named artistic director of Theater Flamenco of San Francisco succeeding Ms. Dini Roman, who will be returning to her native Boston after serving as artistic director for three years.

Miguel Santos has been with the company since shortly after it was founded by Adela Clara in 1967.

We warmly thank Ms. Roman for her unending dedication and artistic contribution and look forward to the promising leadership and artistic direction under Miguel Santos.

Rosa Aguilar
San Francisco, CA

'GYPSY GENIUS'

HISTORIC - EXCLUSIVE VIDEO RELEASE
BY
MANUEL AGUJETAS DE JEREZ

For the first time in flamenco history, the legendary Manuel Agujetas de Jerez performs on video cassette. The world famous maestro of the Jerez dynasty of gypsy flamenco singing gives an historic performance that will remain forever. Beautiful cantes por Soleá, Fandango Grande, Siguiryas, Malagueñas, Romeras, Taranto, Tientos, Bulerías. Length - 90 minutes in color. This video features the special collaboration and original guitar accompaniments of recording and concert artist RODRIGO. Don't miss out on this first world release as it is a collector's item. No studio video of this kind has ever been made. Order Beta or VHS. Only \$49.00. Send cash, check or money order to Alejandrina Hollman, 148 Taft Ave. #11, El Cajon, CA 92020. The performance took place on August 5, 1985. An educational "must" for guitarists and singers. Allow 3 to 4 weeks for delivery.

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seen many others whose names could fill an Encyclopaedia del Cante. We want to see "C" do just one cante, and I am not leaving until then. I can't manage to applaud "As" twenty-five minute bulería (how much he must love the sound of his voice), my hands are too stiff from the cold. Finally "C" appears, and with his brother at the guitar, begins to sing. Maybe he is inspired at being in his home town, but his soleá por bulería is magnificent. The guitarist smiles approvingly, his toque sounding far better than before. Somehow it is no longer that cold, and the wind has died down, or we don't notice it. We applaud enthusiastically, and look at each other. Na, I guess we are not ready to go yet. Next comes a tiento. How long has it taken for the "dichoso duende" to come out? Couldn't it have made it earlier? The sky is becoming light in the east. The sun will be rising soon. Bone-weary, we go back to the car, and as we leave, we hear a woman's voice singing an stage. Perhaps it is La Fernanda, who we saw sitting in the audience earlier. But we are on our way, red pony-tail now neatly tucked into a "moño". There are few people out in the streets from which to ask directions, and we miss our way, going through Trebujena instead of the better route through El Cuervo. The winding bumpy country road is virtually empty save for a couple of mopeds. The sunflower fields look golden in the early morning sun. Jerez is on the horizon, and home is just beyond. Hope to catch a few hours rest, but it will be difficult with the raucous Sunday beach crowds. Wish for an all-night Denny's or Sambos' (I think they are called "Seasons" these days) and a short stack of pancakes for breakfast with lots of maple syrup before turning in, but this is not the U.S. of A. and we'll make do with "café con leche" if we can find it (we don't). We are tired but fulfilled. A most worthwhile evening indeed.

AURORA VARGAS

The first time I saw her on stage was at El Potaje Gitano in Utrera with Paco del Gastor at the guitar, where she was introduced by the typically hyperbolic announcer as "...a young, beautiful, and talented artist, in short, a gitana...". The second time, it was the Cádiz Festival, this time accompanied by Paco Cepero at the guitar (what a team!). The third, it was at the Gazpacho Andaluz in Morón, with Paco del Gastor again at the guitar. At twenty-nine, Aurora is indeed young, for most exponents of El Cante will not truly "blossom" until they are well into their forties or fifties. Tall, with long flowing dark hair, piercing eyes, a Raquel Welch smile, and a gypsy complexion -- the kind Garía Lorca called "antasma de aceitunas y Jazmín" (just how do you translate that!) -- she also happens to be an uncharacteristically attractive "cantaora". But what is truly remarkable about this artist is her stage presence. Aside from the typical gypsy texture, her voice has also clarity and power. Her concentration while singing is absolute, and one gets the feeling that it would not matter to her whether one or one million people were sitting in the audience. A superb dancer as well, Aurora will usually close her cantes with a spontaneous and fiery dance which will leave the public clamoring for "otra! otra!". Right after the Cádiz show, I found her having a soft drink just outside the auditorium, and had a chance to chat with her for a few minutes. She confessed to being the mother of two girls (the oldest thirteen years old), with another one "on the way". Her husband is lovingly supportive of her "arte", participating in most of her appearances as one of the "palmeros". It appears that promoters have taken notice of this extraordinary artist, because she is one of the more heavily booked "cantaoras" in this year's Festival circuit. Surprisingly, she has not cut any records yet, but said, "maybe one of these days..." (I hope she does, but I wish there was a way to capture her presence!). El Cante Flamenco is a narrow path, and as it frequently happens with artists like her (María José Santiago, Chiquetete, and Rocío Jurado among others), after a certain point, it becomes too restrictive, and they tend to wander off into "other" forms of singing that have a wider and more lucrative appeal. It is difficult to shackle talents like Aurora's, for whatever reason, but selfishly, I sincerely hope she remains in the "true path".

WHITHER DANCING?

It is not hard to understand why outside Spain, flamenco is frequently equated with dancing. After all, the flashy colours, the clicking of the heels, the castanets, the provocative poses by the dancers (done in various degrees of good taste) are, along with bullfight motifs, and select views of the Costa del Sol, what travel brochures tell you Spain is "really" like. These picture post-card images of a "tablao" usually show the dancers very much in the foreground, while the guitarist and singer are relegated to decorating the background along with copper pots, wineskins, "pat negra" hams, and garlic and red-pepper tresses. While there are indeed many "tablaos" that fit this image, they are designed to fulfill the expectations of the unknowledgeable tourist, and are of no interest to the true believer. In the real world, the situation is quite the opposite. Flamenco is first and foremost "El Cante", with the guitar and dancer (in that order) assuming a supportive role. The reasons for the distorted view outsiders have are many, and maybe we can talk about them some other time. Nevertheless,



A YOUNG, BEAUTIFUL AND TALENTED ARTIST...
IN SHORT - A GITANA - AURORA VARGAS AL CANTE.



CANTAOR RANCAPINO, EL TIO PACO, AURORA VARGAS AND
HUSBAND - CADIZ, SUMMER '86



AURORA VARGAS, SINGING AND DANCING POR BULERIAS.
(PACO DEL GASTOR AT THE GUITAR) MORON - SUMMER '86

proceedings of the Congress are included in this guide. Performances range from 1 cantaor and 1 guitarist in Marinaleda, to 19 artists, plus the 'cuadro' that accompanies the dancer in Ronda. As the total number of programmed performances is 641, the resulting mean is 6.7 artists per Festival, which is not too bad. But the breakdown between cante, toque and baile will illustrate better, the content of the Festivales.

"The Cante: A total of 117 cantaores share 414 performances, which gives us a mean of 3.53 appearances per artist, which is nothing but a quotient, a simple number. Because, looking closer, we find that of the 117 artists that appear in this guide, only 18 perform more than 5 times, with El Cabrero having the greatest number, 28 appearances. But that is not the only conclusion we can draw. Where is La Fernanda de Utrera? If this guide presents a true picture of what is available, of what the organizers want, one asks where are the artists like the gypsy-woman from Utrera, or what are National Contests for because, where is El Pele, or Boquerón for instance? We have placed the cutoff rather low at 5 appearances (programmed in this guide, do not forget this detail), and therefore La Fernanda and La Bernarda are not included (one), or Chocolate (three), or Enrique Morente (three), or Romerito de Jerez (Two), or Miguel Vargas (three) or...

"El Toque: Thirty-seven guitarists appear in this guide, which gives an average of 2.56 per Festival. The problem arises again when finds that only 9 of them surpass 5 appearances. In this regard, José Luis Postigo has the absolute record of the three areas, cante, baile and toque, with a total of 33 appearances. But important names such as Pedro Peña (three), Manolo Brenes (two), Paco del Gastor (three), or the 'Bienalistas' José A. Rodríguez (two), or Rafael Riqueni (one), do not even make the cutoff.

"Dancing, whither? But it is with dancing that our worries increase, and where one asks, outraged, where are we going? There is a total of 49 performances, which gives an average of 0.6 appearances per Festival, which in statistical terms mean that 40% of the Festivales have not included dancing at all. And this is particularly bad considering that only three 'cuadros' surpass 5 appearances, with 9 Festivales, Manuela Carrasco, and the Fernández Family, followed by Angelita Vargas and El Biencaasao with 6. But what is unexplainable to us is the absence of a genius such as El Farruco (one), or that impressive group Los Montoya (one), or Pepa Montes (two), El Güito (one), Carmen Albeniz (one), El Mimbres (one), and many others, obviously including those such as Matilde Coral and Rafael, who as we know, will not do Festivales, as they are totally dedicated to teaching. Whither then dancing? If this is what the 'afición' demands, then it does not ask for dancing, and it is a rare Festival or 'Peña' that features a dance recital. We are then witnessing the demise of what is perhaps the oldest expression of flamenco. Given the circumstances under which Festivales take place, a much greater importance should be given to the variety of rhythms, movement, colour, expression, in short, the art that brings it all together, and that could be the most attractive aspect to the varied and pluralistic public that attends the Festivales.

"Final S.O.S. But with the lack of imagination we seem to display, and we refer to the editorial comment in this issue, we will finally bury this aspect of secular flamenco, without anyone caring much about the loss. Our S.O.S. at least, is hereby broadcast with great force at the top of our voice."

serious dancing is very much an integral part of flamenco, and a very important one indeed. And there is still some superb flamenco dancing around. The somewhat secondary role that dancing occupies may surprise foreigners, but it also worries some serious flamencologists in Spain as well. To illustrate this point, I offer without comment, a translation of an article which appears in the Guía de Festivales Flamencos '86. It speaks for itself:

"The appearance of the Guía de Festivales Flamencos, published by the 'Asesoría de Flamenco de la Consejería de Cultura de la Junta de Andalucía', with all the value of a publication of this nature should have, and without admitting possible faults through omission, last minute changes, indecision at the time the information is submitted, etc., that could happen largely due to the organizers, who do not always know what they want, or who cannot always have what they want at the time they submit the information to print this guide, this document will still allow us to perform an emergency radiograph of the present state of flamenco throughout the Summer Festivales, of their nature and content, and the relative ranking of the artists.

"The Festivales: A total of 95 Festivales plus three 'Concursos' and the

DINING OUT IN STYLE

Ignacio sees me walk in and, anticipating my request, begins to pour a "caña" of Cruzcampo from the tap. "Que le pongo pá comé?" (What would you like to eat tonight?), he asks, placing the tall cool glass on the makeshift counter. In Ignacio's speech "s's" sound like the English "th" (as in "thaw"), while "d's" and "l's" are almost non-existent. A small mongrel-pooch with a marked underbite is wearily scratching the sandy floor looking for scraps. The "chiringuito" (small food and beverage stand), one of many makeshift businesses that go up during the summer at the beach is relatively quiet tonight. When the winter comes, this place will become another skeleton in the windswept stretch of beach. The "venta" keeper is a man of few words, but his laconic sentences have a Shakespearean directness. "Me ha llegao caballa, y mi mujé ha becho una pirriñaca que quita er sentío..." (I've got some fish, and my wife has made some 'pirriñaca' that'll take away your senses...), suggests Ignacio. Just what I had in mind, and I acknowledge with a thumbs up. Even though the thermometer reached nearly 95 degrees earlier, the strong "Levante" wind has kept the usual Saturday beach crowds rather sparse. The pooch has apparently found nothing, and curls up at my feet patiently hoping for a morsel from my plate later. It is nearly 10 PM, but the sun is still high over the horizon. The low tide has left uncovered vast areas of the Sancti Petri estuary, and the remaining puddles look like quicksilver against the blackish bottom. During the warm season, Ignacio ("Chicho") and his family will work their fingers to the bone in the "chiringuito", which will net enough to tide them over until next year. Not much happens here during the winter months. Perhaps an odd job or two, but can't count on it. In the distance, the lights of Cádiz twinkle. Chicho was born there, as were his parents, and their parents, for generations. I wonder if they ever lived through "...las bombitas que tiraron los fanfarrones...". The "caballa" arrives. The fish that swam earlier that day in the Bay of Cadiz is grilled to perfection, covered with a light crust (a secret recipe) and sprinkled with coarse sea-salt. The "pirriñaca", a mix of fresh tomatoes, green peppers, onions, oil, vinegar, and spices truly takes away your senses. I save room for some of Ignacio's wife's home-made "tocino de cielo" (a very sweet, pudding-like desert) and coffee. The friend at my feet, who obviously does not like fish, loses interest and, hoping for better luck, saunters towards other customers who are having "lomito". We make small after-dinner talk with Ignacio. Business has been slow today but is bound to pick up tomorrow. Chicho hopes for a day off to take his son into town, but tomorrow will be a busy day, and he'll need all the help, he can get ("...con mi niño paseando, cada vez que voy a Cádiz..."). Nothing keeps the beach crowds away on a Sunday. Perhaps there were bathers right here, a long time ago, just watching while "los gabachos" (Neopoleon's armies) were unsuccessfully trying to capture Cádiz with "bombitas." The same temperament that can be cheerful in the face of adversity hasn't changed one bit. My check is added up with chalk on the counter top. Seven-hundred pesetas (about \$5) including a tip. Bidding the family good-bye, I take my leave. I think I'll go into town tonight. I am in the mood to listen to some "cante por alegrías," and Cádiz is just the place.

THE GYPSY WOMAN

She is getting up in years, and carries perhaps 40 or 50 pounds more weight than she should. Her hairline is set very low, almost continuous with her eyebrows. The bushy sideburns curled up into "caracoles", and upper lip frame her rather puffy facial features in a most peculiar way. She can't read or write, and one would be pressed to call her language anything resembling "Spanish". But when she sings, she becomes as radiantly beautiful as a pin-up, and when she dances (can she dance!), she is more graceful than a Southern California belle in a jazzercise class. Tonight she has done several carnes, and now she is closing off with a siguiriya (which she does best) in the memory of her late brother. The guitar from Jerez (where else?) is one with her voice. The audience is uncharacteristically quiet, the glasses of fino and beer, and the tapa dishes having been forgotten for the time being. I see several people casually wiping their eyes, while others do it not so discretely with a handkerchief. I can't understand why, because no one is smoking in the room either. But then I can't see well, my eyes are rather blurry and won't focus very sharply. Don't know why. After all, it is just a gypsy-woman singing, isn't it?

VISITORS FROM AFAR

They've been coming over for thousands of years. I think the Phoenicians were the first, followed by just about every imaginable ethnic group from every corner of the world who could ride a horse, sail, or walk. Each in search of something. Some found it and stayed, many did not and moved on. Nowadays they come on TWA, KLM, Lufthansa, or with Eurail passes in hand and toting back-packs. Otherwise the motives may not have changed much. I began to wonder what the "typical" wanderer was like, and came to the conclusion that there is no such animal. Each

person comes for his/her own reasons, which are as varied as the people themselves. Here are some sketches of various interesting (and other not-so-interesting) visitors I've come across. If they sound like someone you might know, it is surely a coincidence.

H.M., single male, thirty nine year old artist and part-time physical therapist from Illinois. Plays jazz guitar and the blues among other things. Saved enough to come to Spain to celebrate his fortieth birthday and study flamenco. Bought an expensive guitar in Almería, but broke it during a juerga, unaccustomed to the large quantities of "fino" normally consumed. Trying to learn the compás, but can't find anyone able to teach it here. Will resume flamenco studies back in the U.S. Thinks insurance sales may be more profitable field than former employment, and give him more time to spend with the guitar, as soon as he gets it fixed.

M.H., thirty-four, young urban professional (YUP) single female from Oregon. Likes art, jazzercise, and meditation. Can't seem to meet the right man in her hometown, but has no time to date anyhow. Came to Spain on vacation but decided to stay longer. Speaks strange language containing phrases untranslatable into Spanish, such as "my own space". Finds flamenco (pronounces it 'flamingo') exciting, and is thinking about learning the sevillana. Enjoys Spain, but must return home soon, as she just bought a brand-new 16-valve Toyota which she misses.

G.D., male, twenty one, West German graduate student and classical guitarist. First learned about flamenco from Spanish bartender-friend in Dusseldorf. Loves flamenco but thinks "palmas" are done too loud in Spain. Listens attentively, taking extensive notes on pentagram paper. Takes frequent smoke breaks in dark alleys behind buildings. Frustrated at not finding more bulerías in sheet music. Plans to become a classical and flamenco concert guitarist. Finds it difficult to accompany singing with complex left hand contortions, as he refuses to use a "cejilla", which he deems unnatural. Burned his VW van's clutch in steep streets in one of the "pueblos blancos" (white towns) whose name he can't quite remember. Hitch-hiked back to Jerez, where he is staying with friends awaiting repairs to van. Spends much time examining Michelin road map of Andalucía trying to recall name of town, believed to rhyme with "caracoles".

K.D. male from Australia, indeterminate age and marital status. Carries bulky boule in coat pocket. Spent a year in an Israeli kibbutz and is now headed back to his country. Wanted to do the Romería del Rocío and learn the flamenco guitar. Disappointed at only having one week to spend in Spain, as airline return ticket is due to expire soon. Plans to go back to Sydney via Los Angeles, California and maybe study jazz guitar there as well. Last seen headed towards the bus terminal to catch transportation to Sanlúcar. Limited knowledge of the Spanish language, compounded by excessive brandy intake prevented him from understanding it was not the right way to get to intended destination.

T.H. twenty-nine year old recently divorced female from Ohio, licensed vocational nurse and part-time aerobics instructor. Learned about flamenco dancing after seeing movie "Carmen" with Antonio Gades. Wanted to get as far away as possible from ex-husband, and Spain seemed like a good place. Fell madly in love with flamenco dance teacher in Granada and shortly thereafter with bullfighter in Málaga while attending flamenco festival there. Could not decide for either until she found out both were married. Torn between staying in Spain and returning to Ohio. Considering getting back together with "ex-" who in retrospect does not seem quite as undesirable.

L.L. thirty year old single female from Pennsylvania. A therapist by profession, decided to give up burgeoning practice there because M.D. boyfriend was unwilling to commit himself to marriage after several years of courtship. Wants children, and feels biological time clock unwinding fast. Came to Spain hoping to find job with U.S. Government, and in search of excitement and good weather but has only found the latter. Does not smoke or drink, eats only vegetables, and rises early in the morning to jog. Has found lifestyle incompatible with most other people's here. Likes flamenco dancing, and is slowly learning the "palmas". Boyfriend may come and visit this Fall. May stay in Spain a while.

Q.M. forty-seven year old retired U.S. serviceman, married, but sent wife back home to Kentucky, as she could not quite adjust to living in Andalucía. Enjoys farming and horses, but mostly sits around sipping "manzanilla" and occasionally dabbles in flamenco guitar. Well known and liked by locals in small coastal town where he settled, he is easily recognized by a much larger than average 6'4", 250 lb frame and tousled red hair. Has taken up with younger girl who would like to marry him and have his child. Has not told her of his vasectomy, done twenty years ago after the birth of his last daughter who recently made him a grandfather. Has no plans to return to the US, although he might consider it if the "night" job came along.

MIDNIGHT TALK

During the Andalucian summer, nights seem to just go on and on. We have stopped at a "venta" in the outskirts of town for a nightcap after the

show. The "venta" is ready to close. At three o'clock in the morning there are only a few stragglers left, downing the last glass. No more "tapas" though, as all the food has been put away for the night. With some reluctance, the waiter accedes to our request for three bottles of beer. Taking two of them, Antonio sits pensively across the table lighting the umpteenth Fortuna cigaret of the evening. The pocket flask of "Escocés" that helped him clear his voice is long empty. It was a good night for El Cante. *His arte was recognized and appreciated in the small town in the Sierra where he sang earlier, and the success is to be savoured. How did he get to sing like that? His father did, and he learned by his side while working at the small convenience store he owned in one of the poorer sections of town. Antonio had a nice voice, and success came to him by bits and pieces, taking him from the neighbourhood 'fiesta', to the small-town-Feria circuit, then to the larger towns, and finally to a long term engagement in a fancy Hotel in Málaga with a flamenco company. Yes, he was doing very well. There was even talk of a tour through Europe and possibly doing a record. But then his father died suddenly at age 45, leaving a wido and 9 younger siblings to be taken care of. And Antonio, the oldest brother, returned home to stay. He looks at me through clouds of smoke, pausing to sip his beer and talks with some difficulty remembering a painful episode of his life. Yes, his father's death was a horrible one. His stomach perforated and he would bleed profusely from the bowels. He spent many weeks at the Hospital, but the doctors could do nothing for him. They said his liver had shrunk cutting off the circulation to his insides, making his blood well up in his stomach. He was a strong man, always clean living, hard working, and loved his family above all. Within a few weeks he just turned skin-and-bones and died. We sit in silence for a while. Out there is a symphony of frogs and crickets in the warm night, and the air is heavy with orange blossom and jazmin scent. No, he did not drink that much, no more than I do says Antonio swirling the last of his beer in the glass. I haven't the heart to tell him that is more than enough.*



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AN INTERVIEW WITH MANUELA VARGAS

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[from: Cambio 16, June 6, 1986 sent by Marysol West, translated by Paco Sevilla]
by Lola Díaz



Manuela Vargas, bailaora from Sevilla, was born forty-five years ago in the barrio of La Alameda, the center of flamenco in Sevilla at that time. She grew up surrounded by great flamenco artists and learned the art of dance and life without losing rhythm, that is, with verve and authenticity.

Are you a bailarina or a bailaora?

"I am a bailaora."

What is the difference?

"A bailaora dances always to guitar palmas pitos and with the voice of the cante."

When you dance you seem to be in a trance.

"Of course! I have a dance that I enter into, a sort of personal trance. Perhaps this is not understood by those people who try to destroy me and say that I do it because I am showing off, but they are completely wrong, because my body suffers, and when a body suffers it is because life is hitting you hard."

In what sense?

"Well, I, you could say, have a spirit that makes me do flamenco from deep within and, therefore, even though I want to get it out through my body, with my feet, and by trying to do many movements with my arms, I am unable to do it. It's as though it takes over my body, as if paralyzed one in the same and I have to

get it out!"

In what barrio of Sevilla were you born?

"I was born on Calle Feria, where everything was flamenco. There was Chacón, La Niña de Los Peines, La Malena, Pastora Imperio -- I can't begin to tell you. So, in that barrio, I cut my teeth on flamenco. I don't want to criticize, but these flamencologists who write this and that about flamenco today don't know anything."

You began at a very early age to dance in the fiestas of the señoritos. What memories do you have of those times?

"I wouldn't want to start over again the way I began. I don't remember anything good about my childhood. I was a little girl that didn't have dolls or a first communion."

And did you dream of these things?

"Back then you were supposed to wear white and always some friend of my mother's wanted "to lend" me the dress, but invariably something would happen and it couldn't be. I ended up doing my first communion at school, in a white smock with buttons. I never wore the traditional white. Not in my first communion or even as a bride."

Even as a bride?

"No, because I had a civil wedding in Chile. My ex-husband had been married previously so we couldn't be married in church."

How did it come about that you were married in Chile?

"Ah! Well, I fell in love, and love is beautiful, one of the best things that can happen to you in life. I was married in 1970 and in 1973 my twins girls were born and there I was separated from my husband, which was very sad, because I was still in love."

Why do you think couples fail so often?

"Look, it is a very difficult thing, not only for couples, but also for friends. We are egotists, because the world is egotistic. Besides, one thing is the family and the marriage is something else. For example, we were all very connected with my grandfather on my mother's side; we were all born in his house and he gave shelter to his daughters, their children and his son-in-laws. He also gave shelter to people from Jerez during the war!"

Was he a liberal?

"He was an awning maker. He used to make the big awnings that covered the streets of Sevilla in the summer. Anyway, all the children lived in his house and when it was time to eat, there were thirty people at the table. But my grandfather was happy."

Is Vargas the name of your mother or father?

"It is my grandfather's name. Even my nephews who have their own mother and father's name keep using Vargas. They are the sons of Vargas, the grandsons of Vargas, and the great-grandsons of Vargas."

When did you begin to feel famous?

"Pues, after a long fight, from the time I was a little girl, I had the chance to go to Paris with a group and that is where I began my career on the big stage. Later, although I have lived and worked in Spain, I had to go elsewhere, because there were no possibilities here at all."

Have things gone better for you under Franco or now with the democracy?

"Under the previous regime I had to work alone and mostly outside of Spain. But I never went to dance at La Granja [Franco's summer residence] or any of those other places where they used to invite artists to perform. Of course, I was born under that regime and when I was called to dance at a coming out party or a baptism, a wedding or any other party for their enjoyment I went because that was my life style and I was living in this country."

So those same parties that you were contracted to work for are the ones you are now invited to attend. I suppose you view them differently now...

"Of course it is a different thing. I began in the tablaos of

Sevilla, at a very young age. They would say to me, 'Listen, there is a party.' And I would reply quickly, 'What will they pay? Two hundred pesetas?'

And off I would go to earn a few coins to buy shoes or whatever. We would put together some sort of group and go to the big houses, but entering through the back door."

Now you go in the main door...

"Of course. With life and the fight for my dance, I now don't enter through the same door."

And now you are also among the best dressed and most elegant women in this country...

"Yes, but when I was thirteen I was a ragged little girl, thin and pretty ugly, although I was like a wild animal, a young colt. Then, later, they began to say how well the flamenco dress suited me, how elegant it looked. I don't know if you have it inside you or not, but I didn't"

Is it important for a bailaora like you to be in the Ballet Nacional?

"I was in it for three years. What I didn't want was to be where I was when I was young, in those tablaos to provide amusement for people with a whiskey in their hands and no appreciation for you at all."

Are you a gypsy?

"On my mother's side."

Do you feel like a paya or a gypsy?

"I don't feel one or the other. I grew up with gypsies and I am comfortable around them, in spite of the fact that they are difficult and will sometimes disappoint you. But sometimes you even like that about them."

Why do you like it when they disappoint you?

"Because they are proud, sensitive people and it is wonderful when they offend you, because they do it without realizing it, maybe just because they lack education. But I have never been influenced by racial factors, because, in Sevilla and some other parts of Andalucía, the gypsy is just like anybody else, and not like they say now -- that gypsies are like this or that. At least in the barrio of La Alameda, everybody was equal, some darker, some lighter, and even some who were very white."

Can you tell a gypsy at first sight?

"I see it immediately, even if they don't sing, dance, or have dark skin!"

How do you tell?

"Pues, I don't know... Maybe their way of looking. The gypsies have a sad, yet proud look in their eyes."

When you dance on stage are you aware of the audience?

"When I am on stage I see nothing. Now, for example, in the Teatro Monumental, which is huge, it is as if I were in a small box, isolated by the strange atmosphere that the lights produce. Sometimes I say, 'what about the audience?' But, even if they applaud me, I have to be told, because I hear nothing."

How is that possible?

"I don't know. I am enclosed in my little world and, during those two hours that I may be up there expressing or transmitting something. It is as if I were floating. And, imagine, here I have one bruise and here another; my feet are so swollen that I can't even get my shoes on. But when I go out there I forget everything. It is very beautiful to have that opportunity to live floating for several hours within this constant fighting and suffering that we call life."

I believe that your present love is a Latin American, as was your ex-husband...

"He is from Uruguay. I met Damian the year I was separated, but he went to live in Switzerland and I didn't see him again until he returned last year."

Do you prefer Latin Americans?

"I don't know if I have a predilection, but it is true that they have

strength and something similar to what we have here. Also, men of Spanish society used to always say, 'an artist, an artist!' as if we were something strange. When I was sixteen, I had my little boyfriends and, since I wanted to dance, they would come to me saying that their mothers didn't want to see them with an artist."

How did you react to that?

"I was very proud and would answer, 'Bueno, if your mother says that you can't be my boyfriend, it makes no difference to me!' and that made me even more determined"

Now your art has opened many doors for you. Are you comfortable in that world?

"I have never felt part of it. They have always seen me just as a dancer and most of the people are those of whom I have never asked anything. So I treat them normally and when I am able or fancy it, I go to their dinners, and when I can't, I don't go. But I always arrived with my head high

Do you have friends in those those circles?

"Not really friends. A true friend is one who truly worries about you and who can be trusted with any problem. In that world, I have few, if any, of those. They are acquaintances. Friends are those four people whose heads you beat every day, like a drum, with your problems, and they do the same to you. With the rest, you live, you put up with, or halfway put up with, and that's it."

The dance, your children, love. Do you have any priorities?

"Children are very important, but they leave when they grow up. Love is something else, perhaps the most important."

Could you dance the way you do now without love?

"I could work without love, but always thinking about it, feeling that it is coming."

Looking for it?

"No, not looking for it, because if you look for love, it becomes false and that is not right."

Is there any Golden Rule for doncing flamenco?

"That depends. I have listened to many knowledgeable people talk about flamenco, people who knew a lot and who I listened to with a lot of interest in the barrio where I was born. They said that a woman always dances with her hands, with her gestures, with the elegant movements of her body. But that is not the type of dancing that some flamencologists want you to do, which consists of making much, much noise with your feet; dancing for dancing's sake as though you were a machine."

And that is not your style of dancing...

"No, because flamenco is soul and spirit above everything. And I have to dance por bulerías with an apron, like a gypsy basket maker, because that is what I know, because I cut my teeth doing that and that is the only thing I knew how to do when I started dancing. I have developed into more than that and I believe it is very beautiful to have been able to give something new to the world of dancing."

Can you explain what flamenco is for you?

"It is my whole life! There are people who really get involved in flamenco and people who don't; but even those who don't can still like some aspects of it. For me flamenco is something that penetrates through the skin, that takes possession of your body and it is something real, alive and true."



YOU...A FLAMENCO DANCER?

An interview with Teodoro Morca

by Marina Granich

There's no one better qualified to give us a rundown on flamenco than Teodoro Morca. Teo, as he likes to be called, believes flamenco has something to offer everyone. He's spent 35 years of his life involved in the art, as an internationally-known flamenco dancer, choreographer and teacher. Los Angeles-born, Teo is living proof that you don't have to be born in Barcelona to dance flamenco. He's appeared with many of the major flamenco groups in Spain and has toured Europe and America with his own dance company. Besides receiving the prestigious St. Denis Choreographic Award (1982) in the States, he has been given the Gold Choreographic Award in Spain, as well as various fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts. He also is a Commissioner for the Washington State Arts Commission.

Many of us have seen flamenco, at one time or other, but can you tell us exactly what is flamenco?

"Basically, flamenco is the art, the song, the way of life of the people of Southern Spain, a melting pot of people...very much like the people in the United States in that blend. It's an art form relating to that part of life, very much like our jazz and blues. It was born with people expressing their feelings and emotions, their joys and sorrows, comedies, tragedies, every facet of their life through this art form."

"It's an interesting mixture of Eastern and Western cultures. The hands, the upper body, the styling of the dance was very influenced by East Indian dance, Arabic dance."

"It's a dance form that is thousands of years old, although the way we know it, it is just a few hundred years old, as far as a performing art. It's an audible form just like our tap dancing, expressing rhythms of life. It's definitely an art form of an oppressed people, that's why it has a built-in drama and emotion."

What attracts people to flamenco?

"The basic humanness, feeling, drama, emotion. We're all emotional people, we're all dramatic. This flamenco taps something in every person. If you see good flamenco, you see someone becoming themselves in dance, music, song. It's a real immediate thing...It's the immediacy of feeling that really attracts people..."

What can flamenco do for your body?

"Flamenco is very isometric in the sense that it's energy. It's also aerobic. Very few dance forms work the upper body like flamenco and the lower body, as far as that goes. It has such a built-in isometric tension. It works against gravity. That's why it's great for the whole body...Gravity pulls our organs down and my philosophy is that gravity, if you give in to it, has a lot to do with aging. This is where flamenco comes in with that total pull-up, that carriage...you lift the whole body off the ground."

"When I was teaching in Los Angeles, I was teaching a bunch of women...some of them were models. One of them told me after she'd had her child, she'd been trying to get her breasts back to their old shape. She noticed that, thanks to the working of the posture and especially the arms and back in flamenco, her breasts were firming up and getting back their uplift."

"The whole tension of the way the knees are bent in a unique part of flamenco...We all admire the tight tush, so to speak of flamenco dancer...There's nothing like the stomping of flamenco for cellulite removal...Flamenco deals with parts of the body we very seldom use. The arms being up in those positions does fantastic things for the posture. You end up with so much more class and style."

Specifically, how does flamenco help posture? You mention posture a lot.

"The flamenco posture is natural. We've lost that. You can see good posture in many so-called primitive people who walk around carrying things on their head...If you look at a skeleton, you notice a plump line that goes right through the spine through the center of the hips and down. This is flamenco posture. It's nothing more than getting back to that healthy centered posture, which I feel is one of the secrets of good health. Most of us are slumped, then the whole body goes to pot. You're out of balance."

How does flamenco rank with other forms of movement or dance as an exercise?

"It ranks very high if done with a basic system of strengthening and stretching, beforehand. Flamenco has that total isometric energy, that cat-like quality that can develop beautiful posture. It's an aesthetic exercise. You can carry flamenco into your daily life...A lot of people jog and stuff, but it doesn't really improve their posture. They're working out in aerobic terms, but it really doesn't improve their looks in the sense of how they carry and present themselves."

"Since there's not a lot of leaping and jumping, I think there's less stress on the body than, say, in classical ballet, over a longer period of time. You

can keep on with flamenco until you're older than in many other forms of exercise."

Are there any athletes who use flamenco as a part of their fitness routine?

"Yes, but on the whole it's something that hasn't been tapped. Lisa Lyons, who became a famous female body builder, studied four years of flamenco, on and off, with me. If it got across how aesthetic flamenco can be for athletes, for carriage, style, coordination and control, then this could be a revelation. Athletes, especially in this country, have a macho, jock thing. However, that's changing and I think every athlete would like to be graceful... would admire what Baryshnikov does with his body."

Eastern movement forms like yoga or tai chi, have a philosophy behind them. What would you say is flamenco's philosophy?

"Flamenco's philosophy is expressing our deepest and lightest emotions, our immediate feelings...real immediacy... that's why it's so intense. In our culture, sometimes, everything stays buried inside. Flamenco's basic philosophy is to communicate these feelings, instead of burying them...communicate sensuality, passion, communicate happiness, joy, sorrow..."

What are flamenco's psychological benefits?

"You are throwing out, so to speak, in movement, feeling and emotion, everything that might fester in you. We're in a world where you almost need psychoanalysis, because people are afraid to express themselves...People are afraid to cry, to laugh. People are afraid to communicate their deepest feelings. In flamenco, when I've gone through hard times, I can go to a studio and just kind of climb into the music. It's just an immediate release, and that's the benefit. It's my release, I just don't believe in drugs or anything like that."

Can doing flamenco help women to overcome inhibitions?

"We're in this kind of world where women are liberated, men are liberated...everybody's trying to perform...contests and sexual situations where men are getting up tight because the women are liberated or visa versa. Everybody's trying to pretend they're really together."

"Flamenco can be sensual, sexual, releasing of inhibitions without being cumbersome to society. In flamenco, you just let yourself be beautiful. We're too analytical about ourselves. I think flamenco can be just a tonic if a person uses it for what it is...emotional release, physical release, spiritual release. It's letting yourself feel...beautiful, sensual, sexual, and everything you've ever dreamed about being."

Do Spanish women and flamenco have any lessons to teach American women about their femininity and sensuality?

"In some ways Spanish women tend to be less uptight than American women. And more natural. A little more relaxed with life and they have a little more joie de vivre. In Spain, men and women both are more sensual, not in a sexual sense, but in terms of feeling comfortable with themselves. In Spain everyone touches...they let their basic sensuality come out."

"Flamenco is a relationship with yourself of just being yourself. If a woman wants to feel feminine and sensual and wants so help with it, flamenco can do that, because that's what flamenco is all about. It's a very sensual art form, it's a human art form. It hasn't been boiled down or plasticized, it hasn't been refined so much. It still has its roots, it's earthy quality."

Let's not leave out the men. What can flamenco do for them?

"There's a whole lot of pride in flamenco. Just getting your body together in the flamenco way develops a deep pride within yourself. Flamenco can help men be honest with their own selves and their own masculinity. There's a lot of hypocrisy in what we usually call masculinity...like the John Wayne complex...cowboy macho. It's hypocritical, because every football player would like to be graceful and every man would, deep down inside, like to let his emotions out, without being labeled feminine."

Can flamenco help you relax?

"I feel it can. It releases tensions through exercises that defy gravity. If you learn to use energy and then release it, it can get rid of tensions."

Would you say flamenco is a form of meditation?

"It's related to yoga and the martial arts in its zen quality, meaning that you can climb into the dance. The whole idea is to get past the technique. Let yourself go. The rhythms, especially, footwork...when you learn a little footwork, try putting your hands over your ears when you're doing this footwork...you can feel that pulsing inside you. The four-count rhythm is very much like the way our hearts beats...the whole way you move sensually is very much like that loping feeling in you heart and you can almost hear yourself relating to that...It's the rhythm of life..."

In your teaching experience, what kinds of people have wanted to study flamenco?

"I've had all kinds of people...doctors, lawyers, actors, computer engineers, and the only thing that ties them together is getting back to what attracts people to flamenco, in the first place. They want a vehicle to feel honestly through...feel emotions...let their bodies move."

Let's face it, very few of us are ever going to perform flamenco. What

else can you do with it?

"You don't have to perform. You can learn to use it as a way of finding yourself creatively, or spiritually...to exercise, or just have fun. Often, flamenco enthusiasts get together and have parties called juergas, where you have a guitarist and everyone dances."

LA FERIA DE SEVILLA, 1987

by Carol Jane Bangs

I thought *Jaleo* readers, unfamiliar with the Feria of Sevilla, might like to hear a bit about this year's event. In spite of lots of advice from friends, I know that I was unprepared both for the nature and the magnitude of this unique annual ritual in which the whole city and much of the surrounding area enjoys several days of something approaching the medieval concept of "days of merriment." Day is turned into night and the present mingles with the past as elegant Spanish matrons spread their heirloom mantones over the balconies of the Plaza de Toros, horsemen in cropped jackets, with wide Cordobés hats, guide their mounts through the narrow passages of Barrio Sania Cruz in search of friends or the best local tapas. One doesn't have to visit the fairgrounds to be reminded that this is Feria week--the reminders are all over town.

The festivities actually begin much earlier, in the salons and workshops of Sevilla's dressmakers and costumes designers, who work overtime creating the most elaborated and befrilled dresses since Scarlet O'Hara's garden party frock--the "trajes flamencos." While the basic patterns are traditional, each year's styles are slightly different--a little longer ruffles, a different kind of trim, so that fashionable ladies insist on a new dress for each Feria. Last year's dresses can be picked up for a song by canny readers of the local classified ads. For those whose budget's don't allow for custom tailoring, hardly a shop in the city is without at least a small selection of ready-made dresses, ranging from the offerings of Corte Inglés and fashionable boutiques to the racks of the corner "tiendas de todo." These dresses are not to be confused with the professional costumes seen on dancers in tablaos or flamenco concerts--the skirts are stiffer, the sleeves short and puffy, the ruffles more innocent and flirty--no matter what age of the woman wearing one, she looks as if she'd fit in at a deb ball or birthday party. Still, as the traditional costum of Andalucía, the outfit is perfect for dancing sevillanas, which is, after all, what the Feria is all about.

In the weeks before the Feria one cannot walk into a shop or home in Sevilla, or down any street, without hearing sevillanas coming from one or more sources--it is the regional muzak, heard in supermercados, taxis, and elevators. But it is also a rhythm in the air--tapped out by old men's canes, clapped by groups of young people walking down the sidewalk, hummed by almost everyone. The sound of sevillanas becomes a part of the ambient noise of the city--like the traffic, the swallows, the shouts of playing children.

The weekend before the fair begins, workmen scurry around the fairgrounds (located on the outskirts of town, next to the barrio of Los Remedios), constructing the structures known as "casetas," which will be the focal point of the following week's festivities. They also provide public services adequate for crowds estimated at up to a million people a day, refreshments stands and curio displays just outside the fair itself, and a large amusement park. Once the casetas are constructed, the decorating crews take over to festoon them with special wallpaper printed to resemble azulejos (Spanish tiles), lace panels, ceilings made up of balls of tissue paper wired onto clothesline, posters, paintings, fans, photographs, and even antique mirrors or other furnishings in the more elaborate structures.

Each caseta is operated by a particular group or individual; over 500 applications are waiting for an opening for one of the approximate 300 places available. Some are run by political parties, district governments, trade unions, or public agencies, but the majority belong to private clubs, associations, businesses, or just to individuals or groups of friends who can raise money for the annual fee.

Monday night, at midnight, the huge arch at the front gate of the fairgrounds is illuminated; the surface is covered with hundreds of lights bulbs and the arch itself casts a glow that can be seen all the way across the river. More lights are strung across the streets so thickly that one has to peer up through them periodically to be reminded that it is not daylight lighting up the casetas and streets between them. Traditionally, each caseta has a private party for its members or special invited guests on Monday evening, opening up to a wider audience later in the week.

Beginning on Tuesday, each day naturally divides into two parts--the morning--roughly from 11:00AM to 4:00PM, and the night and dawn--from 11:00PM until 6:00 or 7:00 in the morning. In fact, there is hardly any time

of the 24 hours that the grounds are not filled with people partying in casetas, singing and dancing in the street, eating and drinking and making merry. But daylight hours are the hours for the horses and carriages. Elegant riders tour the grounds, stopping here and there for a copita of fino sherry lifted up by a friend on the ground, and ladies decked out in their trajes flamencos ride behind their elegant escorts, skirts draped gracefully over the backs of the Arabian or Andalucian mounts.

Carriages for hire mingle with private coaches as groups of natives and visitors tour the grounds and show off their finery. (I took a picture of Cristina Hoyos playing tourist in an open cart). The streets are filled with gaggles of teenage girls and baby carriages occupied by miniature flamencas and caballeros (some dressed in outfits seemingly sized for a doll).

The evening is given over to pedestrian traffic, but no less busy. Imagine 300 cocktail parties going on, all on the same street. Then throw in a few discos and a big band dance. Fill the streets with revellers who don't have an "in" at a caseta, and tourists from all over the rest of Spain and Europe, and you have about the mix that prevails. Since many of the casetas are operated by businesses entertaining customers, or clubs with large memberships (like the Elks, Rotary, etc. here), many ordinary Spaniards have at least one place to go and drink and visit and dance sevillanas. But even those who don't, make their own parties out in the streets, where circles of friends gather to do palmas, sing sevillanas, and encourage their comrades to dance in the dust.

The majority of the casetas feature only sevillanas--and most of these now use taped music. A few employ local musicians to play for the dancing, and it seems almost every aspiring guitarist in Sevilla has a job during Feria time. A few, with more money, bring nationally known talent. One evening at a caseta of a local radio station I heard a chorus from Rocio, a foursome playing pop rumbas, an excellent duo playing and singing sevillanas, and a fourteen year old dancer with lots of gracia who was accompanied by her sixteen year old brother on the guitar.

True flamenco is a rarity at the Feria. This sometimes comes as a surprise to tourists who read article in the United States magazines which describe Feria time as an excellent chance to hear major artists. In fact, there are many good performers throughout the week, but almost without exception these performers are hired by wealthy individuals to perform for a very small group of invited guests. Unless you are an ambassador, of a personal friend of the Duchess of Alba, your chances of hearing anything but sevillanas and an occasional rumba are very slim.

Three days in to the Feria I passed by a caseta about 4:00 in the morning. The front tent flap were tied shut and there was a stern looking guard posted in front. Standing just outside, I heard some moving fandangos grandes. As the guard didn't seem to mind, I stayed for about a half an hour, but never found out the name of the cantaor. Exceptions do happen, though. After almost a week of chatting with Spanish businessmen in casetas and dancing sevillanas in every style and variation possible, with little children, old men, housewives, pop singers, even a bullfighter, I was finally invited to a caseta by one of the performers there, who told me I would hear some "real flamenco."

He wasn't kidding. This was one of the very exclusive parties, put on by a group of wealthy aficionados who knew what they wanted to hear. The caseta was not large, and the rear third was taken up by a bar where the fino flowed copiously all evening. When I arrived, about 3:00AM (one learns it is a waste of time to arrive before 1:00 at the earliest), the front half of the caseta was set up with chairs in a circle; a group of fashionably dressed men and women occupied the chairs and stood behind them, but the inner circle was made up of about eight gitanos competely caught up in a fast paced bulerías. Over the next two hours the bulerías never stopped for more than a few moments, while one of the two guitarists repaired a broken string or stopped for a drink. Juan del Gastor, from Morón de la Frontera, was playing, with his brother, Paco. The main singer was the extraordinary cantaora Pepa de Utrera; several others, whose names I did not learn, filled in when she got hoarse. There were two male dancers as well as a few spontaneous volunteers who stepped out briefly from their primary roles as palmistas and jaleistas. After a few rumbas, an alegrías, and a soleares, the bulerías began again, continuing until daylight could be seen peeking through cracks in the canvas door flaps.

Since my plane to London was scheduled to leave at 10:30 that morning, the guitarist who had invited me insisted it made no sense to sleep. Over coffee we discussed the phenomenon of the Feria and it's relationship to flamenco in Spain. He told me it was a good thing for performers, since the pay is usually good in the casetas which seek out serious musicians, rather than sevillanas "dance bands," but that people prefer the more serious festivals such as Rocio, that which culminated the pilgrimage on horseback and wagon made by devotees of Las Virgen del Rocío, the "Virgin of the Dew." Still, he said, the Feria is unique, very Spanish, and very much part of Sevilla. One should be there at least once.

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THE BLUES OF SPAIN

In Madrid and Seville the Nightclubs Called Tablaos Feature the Soulful Gypsy Dance

[from: The New York Times, March 22, 1987; sent by George Ryss]

by Hubert Saal

Flamenco, according to Federico García Lorca, its poet laureate, was "born of the first cry and the first kiss." Flamenco is elemental: the women are hot, the men cool, and the songs sung in voices that spring from the earth, tasting of tobacco and wine. The songs came first. Like the blues of black America, the songs are lonely cries from the heart.

There is an enormous body and variety of flamencan songs and dances, light as well as dark, saucy as well as sad, quick and slow, heated and calm, from the bulerías of Jerez de la Frontera and the malagueñas of Málaga to the bounty of Seville, including the sevillanas corraleras, which has become Spain's national dance, and the soleares of Triana, Seville's gypsy quarter, which often are anguish distilled.

The customary places to see flamenco in Spain are nightclubs, called tablaos. There the cuadro, the group that usually consists of a dozen guitarists, singers and dancers, stands or sits around the rear of a small stage while one or more of the company dances front and center. They are all jaleadores, clappers, capable of the softest or most jarring sound of palm against palm, and who in tight, syncopated rhythms intensify the beat. They also shout encouragement to the dancer, and the audience joins in enthusiastically: "Olé," "Élé," "Guapa" ("you, pretty girl, you") or "Así se baila" ("That's the way to dance.")

The flamenco in tablaos is frowned upon by purists. Commercialism has compromised the authenticity of flamenco, they say. And they're right. At the heart of the flamencan experience is the mysterious duende, which Lorca called black sounds, a kind of gypsy soul, which flies only on the wings of spontaneity and improvisation. To see authentic flamenco you must go to a juerga, a gypsy celebration. There, if you are lucky, somebody's cousin will be moved to sing, and in turn inspire someone to dance. Anyone with that kind of entree in Rocío or Alcalá de Guadaíra ought to take full advantage. Who knows, skill as well as spontaneity may accompany the improvisation. The chances are, however, that if the flamencans are any good, they'll have gone to the city, to Madrid or Seville, to work in the tablaos.

The flamenco artists in the tablaos, like opera singers or ballet dancers, seek to elevate and polish their performances. There's plenty of room for improvisation in the tablaos. The guitarists constantly experiment with new harmonies and play to each other. The singers choose the verses from the many variations that time has handed down. And the dancers, especially in the hushed, cadenza-like silences, can respond to whatever spirit moves them.

Unbeatable here is the singer's croaked yawp, imploring the dancer with trembling hands to greater insight and greater virtuosity. In the dancer's response, the airy fingers, curved arms, drawn carriage, like a bow, and explosive feet, we see the tension between deep feeling and outward expression. They live in that moment on the edge of their emotional and physical selves. At the best, their virtuosity is never for itself alone. But sometimes it is, and it's so fine, propelled to the extremes of sound and rhythm, that it's irresistible, say like the 32 fouettés of Odile in "Swan Lake."

Marvelous flamenco can be encountered all over Andalusia, but usually as a matter of luck. Outside the tablaos, the gypsies are notoriously nomadic. The local tourist office may know if there just happens to be an important appearance during your stay. Because it takes a lot of money, especially in Madrid, to support the cuadros in tablaos, there's a cover charge, and prices for food and drink are elevated. Typically, two people will pay about \$35, including cover charge and one drink apiece, in Madrid. There usually are two shows, beginning around 10:30. First to Madrid.

The Café de Chinitas (7 Calle Torija; telephone 248 5135) is near the heart of the Gran Vía, Madrid's Broadway. Here you almost have to dine to get a seat close to the stage in the ornately decorated room. The cuadro is two dozen strong and headlined by La Chunga, a legendary Barcelonan gypsy who can make as much noise with her bare feet as others with shoes. She's small, dark-haired, burnished, hard-bodied and equally comfortable in the largeness of movement, the generous, the tragic, as she is in the small, with the details of things, the feet that murmur, the control of their intricacies. And she has a saucy side, hip-swinging, provocative, a cross between Carmen and Hedy Lamarr, which may alarm the purists but charms the rest of us into laughter and wonderment.

In the quiet Cava Baja in Madrid's old city and not far from the opera house is the Corral del Moreria (17 Calle Moreria; 265 1137), a large cellar, simply furnished with long wooden tables and a cathedral ceiling supported by hefty wooden pillars. Here Blanca del Rey lives up to her name: she

reigns. She is no gypsy; she is from Córdoba and regards Manolete, also from Córdoba, as having inspired her shawl dance. Like Chunga, she's a mature woman of great physical beauty, who reminds us that experience, and lots of it, on and off the stage, counts for a Great deal in Flamenco.

In her shawl dance she transforms her long, ornate, pale blue shawl with blue fringes into a snake, a lover (she may mean they are the same), a bullfighter's cape, a curtain to hide behind, a ceremonial dress in which to marry and in which to die. She is also the mistress of the bata de cola, that long ruffled train that is sometimes donned to impede movement. Del Rey behaved as if she didn't know it was there, manipulating it out of her way, catching it in midair to prevent it from distracting her, and somehow going through the whole routine without tripping.

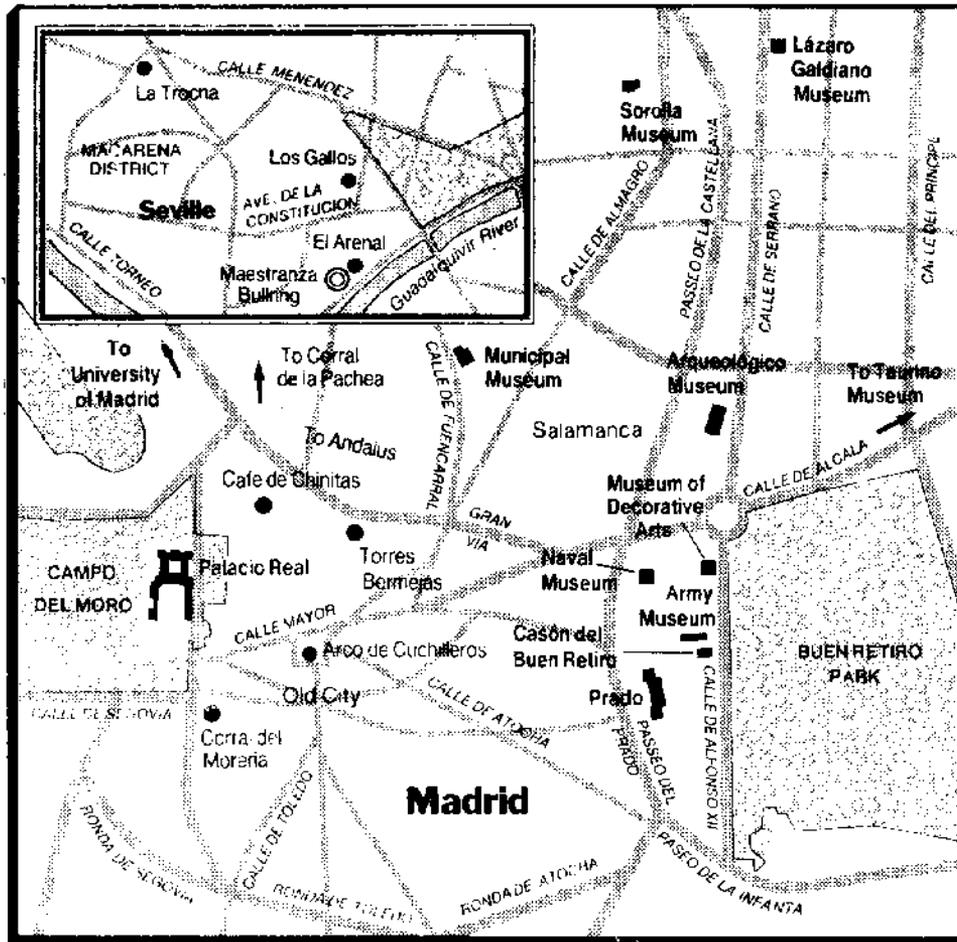
Arco de Cuchilleros (7 Arco de Cuchilleros; 266 5867) is a stone's throw from the elaborate gate leading to the Plaza Mayor. There is something operatic in the classic cuadro, in the chorus of clappers and singers, the arias of soloists, both vocal and dance, in the male-female duets, and in the prima



BLANCA DEL REY, AT THE CORRAL DEL MORERIA, DOING HER SHAWL DANCE, WHICH SHE SAYS WAS INSPIRED BY THE BULLFIGHTER MANOLETE. photo Robert Royal

donna personified here by Carmen de Juan, in white, harmonizing fan, castanets, and the bata de cola. The soubrette, Maria Luisa Sevilla, is piquant in red and evocative of Bourbon Street.

In the theater district, just off the Gran Vía, Torres Bermejas (11 Mesonero Romanos; 231 0351) offers a table d'hôte menu for \$40, for which there is not only a rather tepid cuadro, but also an ambitious flamenco



POINTS OF INTEREST IN MADRID AND SEVILLA

drama in which an old man reminisces about the women in his life. He probably exaggerated.

Corral de la Pacheca (26 Calle Juan Ramón Jiménez; 458 2672) is well north of the old city, near the Plaza de Castilla. This is an example of what the purists despise, and with some reason. The tablao itself is enormous, two stories high, with a huge stage. First the loudspeakers blared a lengthy introduction, repeated in 12 languages, including Russian and Mandarin and, for all I know, Swahili. A cast of what seemed thousands started off doing Ravel's "Bolero." Only after that did the headliner, Antonio, come out and sacrifice his substantial talent on the altar of crowd-pleasing.

About five miles north of Madrid on the road to Burgos, Venta del Gato (202 3427) is an easy taxi ride, and worth it. Upstairs the restaurant includes a large terrace and comfortable garden. Drinks were about \$8, all inclusive. And the show was first class, led by a dancer called La Kika with a lusty technique. But what was especially captivating and genuine here was the singing, which was given full scope. One of the singers, wearing tasseled loafers instead of boots, suddenly began to dance, and he was terrific even if his enthusiasm exceeded his skill.

Al Andalus (19 Capitán Haya; 456 1439) is also near the Plaza de Castilla, in the north of the city. The tablao is beautifully designed, like a Sevillian caseta, with a colorful tiled floor, chairs of wood and cane and an atmosphere of unquenchable gaiety. The audience is the show. The Madrileños get up and show off their sevillanas, their rumbas (flamencan) and their fandagos. It heats up very late, is open until dawn and attracts el todo Madrid.

The tablaos in Seville are distinctly superior to those in Madrid. For one thing, almost every performer is a gypsy. There is a roughness to their performance, an air of informality and of having a good time that is rare in Madrid. Every hotel sells tickets to the tablaos, uniformly about \$12.50 for entrance and a drink. Even so, the percentage of tourists is very low; the places are packed with Sevillanos, all of whom seem to know each other.

El Arenal (7 Calle Rodo; 216492) is in the heart of Moorish Seville, near the Maestranza bullring and the Guadalquivir River. The cuadro is like one extended family and, rather than operatic, the impression was of a jam

session. There were two singers, one old, with a voice like sandpaper, and one young, all honey, and you couldn't decide which one you liked more. Toro, Silvero Amparo, Lupe and El Lorenzo, all gypsies, and all of Seville. And Lucretia, the 10-year old daughter of El Lorenzo, who came out at the end and showed off the sevillanas corraleras of her native city.

What begins to be heard more and more clearly at Los Gallos (Plaza de Santa Cruz, in the old Jewish quarter; 216981) is the gypsy strain in the music, artless and forceful. The dancing, especially of La Faraona and Remi Beina, has become a vehicle for feeling and self-absorption.

La Trocha (23 Ronda de Capuchinos, near the modern Macarena district; 351272) is a large crowded room where the vision is often obstructed by pillars. But that neither dimmed the enthusiasm of the largely Sevillian audience or entirely Sevillian cuadro. Unexpectedly, one of the great flamencan singers, Beni de Cádiz, appeared the night that we went. He sang songs of Lorca and of Triana, the gypsy barrio on the other bank of the Guadalquivir. Be sure to reserve ahead; then get there early and hang on to your seats so you don't land behind a pillar.

In Triana, and in the adjoining Los Remedios, are a series of bars in which the old traditions of the cafe concertante flourish. Each has its stage and every night volunteers, amateurs and professionals from the audience, play the music, sing the songs and perform the dances, all extemporaneously. Stop in at La Garrocha on the Calle Salado or, nearby, Las Tres Faroles or La Canela Pura, which means, literally, pure cinnamon, and idiomatically, super. That's about right.



PILAR LOPEZ

[from: *Correo de Andalucía*, May 21, 1986; sent and translated by The Shah]

by Luis Caballero

"The light is buried
by chains and noises
In unholy defiance
of science without roots.
The people of the neighborhoods
dazed and tottering
Like sleepwalking refugees
from a ship wrecked in blood."

--García Lorca

I don't know why a copy of *The Poet in New York* accompanied me during that trip to Granada, but I do know that on one of its pages I left written, deeply impressed by the events, these few lines that today return me to the happy memory of those unforgettable days in the company of the great dancer, Pilar López.

"Today has been, for me, perhaps the happiest day of my thirty-five years of existence. I visited Fuente Vaqueros with Pilar López and listened to Doña María talk about her cousin Federico (García Lorca), I visited the house and the room in which the poet was born, and finally the mountain where they shot him. We left him some carnations, some magnolias and some tears." June 29, 1954.

All this began because, along with the guitarist Eduardo el de la Malena, the enthusiastic Rafael Delmonte, and half the age I presently possess, offered two ladies of the high Spanish aristocracy a long recital in a beautiful room of the old headquarters of the National Radio in Seville. The younger lady, very elegant, announced to me at the end, "You, Sir, are going to go to the Festival of Music and Dance in Granada." And I went. In a blessed hour I went.

Amongst us were the cantaores Juan Varea, Luis el de las Marianas, El Pili, Ramón de Loja, Pepe el Culata, Albaicín and

myself. Dancing were Paquita Rodríguez, Teresa Amaya, Adela Borja, Delia Montenegro, Curro Veléz, Paco Aguilera, Fernando Terremoto, and Mariano. Guitars were Luís Marañilla, Juan Hidalgo, Manolo Amaya, Miguel el Santo and Juan Amaya.

"Granada, serene and refined, encircled by her mountains and definitively anchored," enclosed as always in her color and warmth of Upper Andalucía, but for those days of the third Festival of Music and Dance of 1954, she was distinguished with a solemn aura.

From among the organizers of the flamenco portion of the festival, I struck up a friendship with a great personality, Andalusian par excellence, intelligent aficionado and pretigious doctor of medicine Fernando Lastra -- a friendship which endures to this day. He, along with my old companion of escapades and adventures and myself went up to the Hotel Washington Irving, where Doña Pilar was waiting to practice with Fernando the "Baladilla de los Tres Ríos" with the music for this being por tientos. Doña Pilar, I only had known, from a spectator's seat, as a dancing figure. I had enjoyed the serene delicacy of her dance and her sense of choreography. Now we were going to speak together, perhaps even to strike up a friendship. After a very short practice, a long conversation revealed to me a cultivated woman, simple, elegantly flamenca, and the owner of a sharp sense of humor. She had finished performing in the festival, but remained for several days in Granada, savoring it to the last drop like an exquisite cup of nectar. She spoke of her sister Encarnación (La Argentinita), of Lorca, of Sánchez Mejías, of baile... Baile flamenco with depth and art is from the lowlands. In the mountainous regions, they dance upwards, vertically, with less use of arms -- the arms are the part of the body that dances -- and more footwork... Federico could make a drama out of any historic occurrence, using a handkerchief for a curtain... Federico was a born musician, a genius even when speaking of the most simple, mundane, and commonplace."

"Doña Pilar," I said, "it so happens that tomorrow I'm going to Fuente Vaqueros. I want to see the village where García Lorca was born." She thought for a moment and said for me to wait.

That night in the Arabian Corral del Carbón, we debuted along with an unannounced guest artist dancing the Baladilla de los Tres



NEXT TO THE SPOT WHICH MIGHT BE THE EXACT GRAVE OF FEDERICO GARCIA LORCA, WE POSED, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: LUIS CABALLERO, ANTONIO DIAZ, PILAR LOPEZ AND JAIME CARRION - MONTES DE VIZNAR 1954

Ríos. "Pilar danced this accompanied by the very flamenco composition and well executed interpretation of Fernando Lastra, a student at the time. A tremendous success it was!

The public that filled the Corral that night contained such sociopolitical importance that the next day, ABC featured on its front page a large photograph, at the foot of which read: "The wife of the head of state, in Granada. Partial view of the Corral del Carbón, during the fiesta of cante and baile offered to Doña Carmen Polo de Franco, with the presence of the ministers of Finance and of National Education, the undersecretary of state, the ambassadors of Great Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland, the mayor of Granada and other authorities who happen to be in Granada." But above all this bombastic sounding assembly, I maintained one fixed and unwavering idea -- to visit the village and house in which Federico García Lorca was born.

The next morning there were seven of us who boarded a taxi and headed towards Fuente Vaqueros; Pilar, the journalist Miguel Utrillo, the psychiatrist Urquijo, Lieutenant Jaime Carrión of the Air Force, Fernando Lastra, Antonio Díaz and myself.

The inhabitants of Federico's hamlet were accustomed to the most diverse types of outsiders enquiring after him and his traces, and though "nobody knew anything" some elderly ladies showed us the entire house. The most ancient of these ladies repaired, not without a certain affection overcast with sadness, to a certain room, showing us where on the fifth of June, 1898 at twelve midnight, doña Vicenta Lorca brought into the light of the morning star a child which thirty-eight years later would astonish the world with love, culture and art by his death and his work.

After visiting doña María García, cousin of Federico, we returned to Granada. But Pilar and Utrillo continued repeating the names of certain places -- Viznar, La Fuente, Los Olivos. In another taxi we arrived at Viznar at the lunch hour, and in an old inn, Pilar herself prepared us a delicious salad.

At no time did the taxi driver have the slightest idea of our intentions, but when we asked him to continue on upwards, he did so until we reached the shade of a tree where he parked and addressed us. "Where are you all going? To where García Lorca is? I don't like the idea, but let's go. It so happens that I know where he can be found. Almost no one knows. But I do. You will see. During the war, as a driver, I was bringing back from the front two big chiefs and passing a certain spot up there, 'Stop here a moment, Paco,' and to the other he said, 'Look there's where Lorca is buried.'"

I kept the site in mind and when the war was over, I mentioned this to Lola Medina, and ever since, she has sent me here many strange people from over there. I obligated myself to do it because... because before the war I was the driver for Don Federico senior."

We spent the afternoon there and discovered a strip of land that appeared to have been sown with a tough and fine grass, different from all others that grow in the region. Perhaps someone sowed it as a marker of the exact spot where they buried Federico? So I suggested to Rafael Alberti when I still lived in Buenos Aires.

Fuente Vaquero, Viznar, Huerta de San Vicente, where Fernando read Alberti's prologue to El Romancero Gitano. Terremoto was just starting out as a cantaor and I recommended El Farruco to Pilar who later met and hired him. Pilar, intelligent, cultivated, down-to-earth, a little bit of a faded Venus de Milo and very much like the play of water and dance in the Gardens of the Generalife, thirty-two years ago.



GAZPACHO DE GUILLERMO

"TOP 8" FLAMENCO RECORDS

Most radio stations use the term "top ten" for popular music charts, but here is a list of what could be considered the top eight albums of the latter part of 1986 to mid-1987. The list does not include re-releases of old albums by old masters, but is restricted to currently available living artists making their mark in today's changing flamenco world.

The records are listed in order of my personal taste, not to be confused with their ultimate value in flamenco history, nor with the number of sales. Agree or disagree with the list, it has value as information if nothing else; more comments about that after the list is presented:

No. 1 "Sonakay-Oro Gitano" Juana la del Revuelo Pasarela PSD-2053 (1986)

After each listed album I'll give a brief description rather than an in depth review. Juana is a heavyset gypsy singer who dances a bit in her live performances. I got to see her in a festival given outdoors in the "Reales Alcázares" in Sevilla. She uses her four brothers (or was it four members of her family) to do palmas both live and on this album. There are three guitarists: Raimundo Amador, Rafael Riqueni, and Miguel El Rolo. In her live performance, the guitarist was Carlos Heredia. Carlos was standing next to me in line chatting with some of his friends before the festival. Then, as the performance began, he came out and accompanied Juan Peña "El Lebrijano" and Juana la del Revuelo. I was quite surprised that the fellow standing next to me in line smoking a cigarette was going to blow me away with his guitar a half hour later.

Anyway, this album by Juana la del Revuelo struck me as the best one currently on the market. Try to get ahold of it somehow!

No. 2 "La Fuente De Lo Jondo", El Pele Pasarela PSD 2052 (1986)

El Pele is a gypsy from Córdoba named Juan Moreno Maya. He won the prizes "La Serneta" y "Pastora Pavón" in the national flamenco contest in Córdoba in 1983. On this fantastic album he shows a great variety of things that his voice can do. The two guitarists, Isidro Muñoz and Vicente Amigo play as well as anyone could imagine: excitingly, with "mucho aire" and "duende". If this record is no. 2, as I rate it, it was a photo finish with the Juana album for first and second place.

No. 3 "Juego De Niños", Rafael Riqueni Nuevos Medios cassette I4-179c (1986)

Rafael Riqueni is pretty incredible on his debut album as a flamenco guitar soloist. Apparently, he has no limitations in technique or creativity. As with most modern soloists, one can hear the influence of Paco de Lucía in Riqueni's playing, but Riqueni takes it into new areas. This guy will be one of the top guitarists for many years to come!

No. 4 "Te Lo Dice Camarón", Camarón de la Isla Phillips Stereo 826 818-1 AF with Tomatito

This record was mentioned in a back issue of Jaleo. If I hadn't heard so many of Camarón's records before, I probably would have chosen this as the number one album. You can't go wrong with these two quality artists. Camarón has recorded three or four records with guitarist Tomatito and a bunch with Paco de Lucía. Some people don't like Camarón because of his modern tendencies. I think maybe those people wouldn't like any of these albums mentioned here.

No. 5 "Amargo" Un Espectaculo De Mario Maya Pasarela PSC 6,000 (cassette version) (1986)

This is to my knowledge the third such album by dancer Mario Maya. His productions feature almost all aspects of flamenco, including gypsy choruses, recitation of poetry, etc. His other albums are titled "Camelamos Naquerar" and "Ay, Jondo". "Amargo" is based on texts of the poet García Lorca. As with all dance productions, the visual element is missing on

records or tapes. Nonetheless, this record makes for an excellent listening experience.

No. 6 "Aljibe", Manolo Franco
Pasarela PSD 6001 (1986)

This was the only other solo guitar album released recently, aside from Rafael Riqueni's. Manolo Franco plays very flamenco, perhaps the most traditional of the modern style players who have recorded solo records. Aside from this album by Manolo Franco and the one by Riqueni, the only available solo guitar albums were Paco de Lucía's, one by Victor Montje "Serranito", and one by Pepe Hahichuela. A record called "Calahorra" by the flamenco soloist José Antonio Rodríguez is already out of print and nowhere to be found.

No. 7 ". . .De Azabache", Manuel de Paula
Pasarela PSD 5020 (1986)

Manuel de Paula has recorded some excellent albums with guitarists Pedro Bacán and Enrique Melchor. Here he sings very capably with the guitars of Manolo Franco and Manuel de Palma. Palmas and choruses were provided by "La Familia Fernández", a whole family of very, very flamenco people. This is a topnotch record but maybe the guitars could have been a bit louder in the mixdown; or am I prejudiced? Viva la guitarra flamenca!

No. 8 "Los Cantos De Ida Y Vuelta"
Luis de Córdoba con Enrique de Melchor

For those unfamiliar with the terminology, the so called "cantos de ida y vuelta" are those songs having some relationship to the "new world": guajiras, rumba, colombiana, vidalia, and milonga. The high pitched voice of Luis de Córdoba is well suited for this type of record. When I listen to this recording, I turn the bass knob all the way to the left, in the off position. There is entirely too much echo or booming reverb in the guitars otherwise. This does not seem to affect Luis' voice very much. When listened to in this way, the record comes in last place even so, due to the lack of variety. The artists are some of flamenco's best!

So, if you must, weed out the information from the opinions! The nice thing about *Jaleo* is that the readers have been exposed through the years to many flamenco writers and the American scene is no longer repeating verbatim the viewpoints of Donn Pohren. I picked up a copy of Donn's latest revision of *The Art of Flamenco* and re-read it. Still, I find the book to have a certain snob appeal, with a heavy prejudice against the guitar soloists. More than a few American flamenco dancers have asked me "don't you like flamenco dance?" only because I told them I like guitar solos. Now if one examines the matter closely, just the opposite is true: The stereotypical American flamenco dancer (with exceptions of course) is the one who cannot pay attention during a flamenco performance unless a dancer is on the stage! Permítame chillar un poquito más, señoras y señores. In the end, to be flamenco is to live in contradiction. Opinions and gossip are the favorite pastimes of all us flamencos, yet to stay sane we also must have moments of clarity and weeding out of excess opinions and gossip. Donn Pohren is no more guilty than anyone else who writes about flamenco.

So then, to tie this in and summarize: Of the eight so-called top flamenco albums I've chosen, two are guitar solo records. Believe me when I say dogmatically that Manolo Franco and Rafael Riqueni have more flamenco in their little fingernail than anyone sitting at a typewriter could ever have, including myself!

Part II Hay Más

Sevilla FM radio station Radio Cadena Flamenca is still on the air. Broadcast hours have changed from mornings to late at night. During the daytime the station is called Radio Cadena Compás and broadcasts Spanish music and even some flamenco. The flamenco is heard from 11pm until 2am and the format is mostly rebroadcasts of live performances of festivals. Previously there was more variety with each artist getting two or three cantos, but now entire performances are heard leaving room for only two or three cantos per night. Recorded flamenco from albums is played between festivals. Saturday nights are exclusively reserved for "cantos de Cádiz".

The large department store, El Corte Inglés, remains the store with the best selection of current flamenco records. There are branches in Madrid, Sevilla, Málaga, Barcelona and Valencia. Still one of the best selections of cassettes can be found at the flea market in Sevilla every Thursday on "Calle Feria". Also, Barcelona has many new and used shops with very good selections largely untouched by foreign flamencos. I saw many items there that I had never seen before.

Mario Escudero and Sami Martín have closed their school for guitarists in Sevilla. "Centro Triana de Guitarra Flamenca" lasted for almost two and a half years but had to close when Sami Martín went to Germany and Escudero had to do some concertizing in the U.S. Mario Escudero is currently teaching flamenco guitar at the studio in his home in Sevilla and once a week at the Peña Flamenca in Huelva. He can be reached at 61-06-36.

On Saturday April 25, a flamenco festival was held in the outdoor grounds of the "alcázar" in Sevilla. The artists who were present: El Lebrijano, El Chocolate, El Nano de Jerez, El Cabrero, Juana la del Revuelo, La Familia Fernández, Manuel Molina (without Lole), and guitarists Carlos Heredia and José Luis Postigo. Of those advertised, the following were no shows: Camarón de la Isla, Rancapino, José de la Tomasa, Tomatito and Pedro Bacán. At the very end of the festival there was a surprise visit by "cantaor" Chiquete who announced that Camarón would not sing. The rowdy audience burst into shouts and whistles protesting Camarón's absence.

Price of tickets was 1000 pesetas and was to be donated to the "Carbonería", a long time Sevilla establishment.

—Guillermo Salazar

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SEVILLANAS ARTE, AIRE Y GRACIA

What! Over one hundred sevillanas clubs in Bilbao, the heart of the Basque country. One hundred and fifty sevillanas clubs in Barcelona, the heart of Catalonia and hundreds more from Madrid to Galicia, from Asturias to Cádiz. This all seems a bit amazing considering that twenty years ago while touring Spain in the "Festivales de España," with Pilar López, we had to have three different concert programs depending where we were in Spain, as Spain is one of the most regional countries in the world and it was *jotas* in the north and *flamenco* in the south and all of the different regional dances for the specific regions that we went to.

Sevillanas in the 1980's has become one, if not *the* one, universal popular dance of not only the festivals and ferias, but of the social populus, the doctors, lawyers, merchants and housewives and everyone else. This phenomena, after experiencing dancing sevillanas does not seem so amazing, as sevillanas, with all of its built-in "aire y gracia," has captured the new mood of an international Spain that crosses all regional borders and gets to the heart of all of the people of Spain.

One of my most memorable experiences dancing sevillanas happened in the middle 1950's. José Greco and company had come to Los Angeles for a series of concerts. This was one of his first tours of the U.S. and with his superb company of artists, he was enjoying that tremendous success that only a few artists have experienced in the world of dance. It was Spanish and flamenco dance that was making waves of popularity wherever they went. This particular day began for me when I went to see a matinee of Greco's concert at the Wilshire Ebell Theatre in Los Angeles. Following this concert I was invited to a party given by a friend of mine for the Greco Company. I had been studying for a few years and had learned a few "dances". That is the way that I started out when I began to study with José and Eduardo Cansino, Paco Lucena, the Trianas and others in Los Angeles. They mainly taught "routines" and did not deal much with technique or what could be considered "flamenco" flamenco, but mainly school dances. Of course one of these dances taught by José Cansino was a nice old version of four coplas of sevillanas. The Cansinos were very famous in their days in the theatre, and sevillanas was one of their main dances. I had learned it by following along and learning the steps, for that was what was taught, steps, not much explanation about *aire*, technique, history, interpretation, just steps and hopefully the awareness of what they all were supposed to express. It all worked, for there was a lot of joy in class, and everyone in the big Saturday classes really got into it.

I was excited to be invited to the party where all of these fine dancers and musicians of the Greco Company were the guests of honor. After seeing these professionals in concert a few hours before, I had been left in awe. Each artist was great and exciting, and getting to meet Teresa and Juanele Maya, who were real standouts in the concert, was especially exciting to me, for they were the best flamenco dancers that I had ever seen. After every one had eaten and had a few drinks, one of the guitarists took out his guitar and, in that beautiful late afternoon in my friends garden, he began to play, to play sevillanas. Some of the dancers got up and

began to dance. The mood was happy and alive and the atmosphere had a special energy that was affecting everyone. All of a sudden Teresa Maya was standing in front of me with that fantastic smile and said, "Quieres bailar?" My knees almost buckled. Before I knew it I was dancing sevillanas with her. To this day, all I remember was that I never felt so good, like I was finally dancing the way I always wanted to feel it. She just looked at me while we were dancing and by some magic the sevillanas danced me and I danced it and this whole combination of dancing with a great artist, dancing this magic dance that symbolizes the cradle of flamenco, was the combination that let me know that I was a dancer. This was the inspiration, to search for *that feeling* all my life. I was addicted. From that time on I have always had a special feeling for sevillanas and have never gotten tired of dancing them. Over twenty years later, while dancing at the Café de Chinitas in Madrid, I walked up to Teresa Maya who was featured there and she looked at me for a minute and asked if she knew me; I reminded her of that day in Los Angeles and she smiled and I asked her to dance sevillanas with me and it was still as exciting as ever.

What is sevillanas; why is it a very special dance in Spain and how does it fit into the world of flamenco? First of all, sevillanas have gone through a lengthy evolution to arrive at what they are today -- a dance, song and music that not only captures a flamenco mood, the total *aire* and *gracia* of all Andalucía, but the hearts and feelings of Spain and all who experience Spain. Sevillanas today are heard with almost any type of musical arrangement, from jazzy renditions with organs, flutes and orchestras of all sorts, to the tapping of a stick, to the solo singing of the coplas. All of this originated from a more classical form known as *seguidillas*, *seguidillas sevillanas* and forms of the *seguidillas boleras* which were popular in the nineteenth century. *Coplas* of the *seguidillas boleras* are still taught by teachers such as the Pericets, a family that specializes in the Bolero School of dances. The sevillanas boleras have the same *copla* or verse form and structure, but are classical in nature with a balletic form, using various beats, jumps and the total look of a classical bolero dance style. The four coplas of sevillanas that are so popular today, the mainstay of the *feria* [fair] of Sevilla, for example, have had the influence of flamenco and the *aire* of all of Andalucía to make this a very earthy dance style that fits into a very flamenco category and at the same time having that flow, pulse and feeling of a floating classical mood. Like the *fandangos* which are danced in Andalucía evolved from classical origins, the sevillanas, for all purposes of some type of category, are not only a regional folk dance, a school dance but a flamenco dance when interpreted that way. That is one of the rare beauties of this great dance, song and music. It can be interpreted in an infinite array of moods, feelings and interpretations, from theatre to a social dance and everything between.

One of the many unique qualities of this dance is a beautiful mixture of their classical *aire*, the floating quality, and the earthiness of flamenco, along with the total movement of both styles. This dance has become the jewel of Sevilla, the *feria* of Sevilla and many other ferias, the universal dance of Andalucía and fast becoming the fad of all Spain. Sevillanas has evolved into a set series of coplas and basic steps and movements. If one knows this dance, he can dance with anyone else who knows the dance coplas, even if their styles and technique are different. It can be danced solo, by couples or even by groups. Each of the four *coplas* has three variations and each *copla* ends with a pose, and definite stop. It is in 3/4 or 3/8 time and the speed varies. Many people like to play the castanets while dancing sevillanas or do finger-snapping, but often the people who dance it at the spur of the moment in *juerga* or *fiesta* just dance it with whatever is available at the moment, which could be guitar and singer, palmas, or orchestra or cassette player in the park. Sevillanas are not the easiest dance

[FOLLOWING ARE PHOTOS SENT BY GEORGE RYSS WHICH DID NOT APPEAR IN THE LAST ISSUE]

*de cosas
a la revista
afecto con recuerdos
H. Salmerón*



PHOTO OF CANTAOR SALMERO DEDICATED TO JALEO

BACKSTAGE WITH FLAMENCO PURO



MANUELA VARGAS AND JUAQUÍN AMADOR



"GÜITO", "EL FARRUCO", THE SHAH, CHOCOLATE



GUITARIST ARTURO MARTÍNEZ WITH "EL FARRUCO"



FARRUCO WITH JALEO STAFF MEMBERS
JUANA DE ALVA & JEANNE ZVETINA



FARRUCO, GEORGE RYSS, CHOCOLATE

City round trip, worth 65 miles, at frequent intervals; Savannah (Georgia, where I worked) to Spoleto at Charleston, So. Carolina. . . and what a change it was to have a flamenco Company 300 yards from your own home performing in concert!! This happened March 21, 1987 presented by the Freeport Arts Council and featured the Spanish Dance Arts Company: Carlota Santana and Roberto Lorca with La Concha, the talented cantaora and bailaora, all the way from Los Angeles. On guitar was Kuni Ochiai, top rated Japanese pupil of "Marote" whose musicality and musical inventions seemed to have astounded many listeners in the audience. The other guitar was played by Basilio Georges who gave excellent support to the flamenco rythms. Carlota Santana, immensely improved of late, must now be considered the top bailaora on the New York circuit. She performs her classical numbers with the knowledge and the support of, probably, the greatest of the partner dancers, Roberto Lorca. They excelled in the "Petenera", "Luz y Sombra" and the "Bolero" and various other classical numbers. Spanish Dance Arts Company stresses arts; Recorded classical music by Turina, Bizet, Ravel told the story here. The classical Spanish dancing was brought back from its heyday along with the castanet playing of yesteryear. Santana and Lorca, as everybody knows, were equally efficient on the flamenco dance scene, probably better than any others. Lorca was not satisfied in renderig only a common farruca; he chose the most difficult of the male dancers repertoire--Por taranto. And how well did that cuadro perform to the strains of the guitars and the cante of La Conch--a superb concert of Spanish dancing in my own back yard, at the grammar school, two corners from my home.

The Spoleto Festival this year is NOT going to be without Spanish/Flamenco dancing. Last year (1986) Ballet Nacional de España under María de Avila performed at the Spoleto, Charleston, So. Carolina. This ballet company, the biggest in Spain, has, of course, the Royal blessing and performs works such as "Seis sonatas para la Reina de España" and the Greek Opera MEDEA, featuring Manolo Sanlúcar's guitar and orchestra. I was told that MEDEA will be performing in May this year with the Royal National Ballet in New York City. Yes, Spoleto this year will have Spanis and flamenco dancing: PILAR RIOJA and company will be in the Spoleto Festival May 22 to June 7, 1987!!

--George Ryss



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REVIEWS

San Antonio Native, Symphony Set for Sunday Performance

(from: San Antonio Express News, sent by George Ryss)

by Ed Conroy

Not every day does one of José Greco's proteges present a full program of Spanish dance.

For Eduardo Montemayor, this Sunday afternoon will mark a major point in his career when he appears with the Fantasía Española Dance Ensemble in conjunction with the San Antonio Symphony.

When the curtains part at 2:30 p.m. in Trinity University's Laurie Auditorium, Montemayor will be demonstrating for his home town, the fruits of his years of training and performance in both the United States and



EDUARDO MONTEMAYOR

Spain. The choreography for seven dance numbers, costuming and lighting for this performance are all under his direction.

Although this symphony performance is billed officially as "Concert for Kids #3," Montemayor's dance selections should prove memorable for a wide audience.

Even so, Montemayor, who became a principal dancer with Greco in 1978, three months after leaving McCollum High School, has further professional aspirations. "I invited some agents to see me," he said in an interview this week. "I need an agent."

Having lived with Greco's family in Madrid and absorbed the length and breadth of Spanish dance, Montemayor is determined to go on the road, perhaps in conjunction with the members of Fantasia Española Dance Ensemble.

Joining Montemayor are several artists who have appeared with him at the Olé Restoran y Cabaret -- Pearl Montoya, José Perello, Sylvia Perello, Andres Stegman and Peggy Bruce, who serves as the company's director.

The orchestra will open the concert with a jota, Chabrier's "España," to which there will be no dance accompaniment. "It's a little too French for my taste," said Montemayor.

The whole company comes on stage, however, to perform the intermezzo from Gimenez' "La Boda de Luis Alonso," one of Spain's most famous zarzuelas. "The rhythm is flamenco, but since this is with an orchestra, many dancers use escuela bolera, which is classical ballet in a Spanish way," he said. "I mix both."

In addition, the program contains "The Miller's Dance" and the final dance from Manuel de Falla's "The Three Cornered Hat." The former piece provides Montemayor with an opportunity to display his dynamic solo style, while the latter is a full company work which dramatizes a fateful flirtation.

Pearl Montoya and Andres Stegman make an amorous duo in the intermezzo from Granados' "Goyescas." "I choreographed this piece from the story of Goya's 20-year love affair with the Duquesa of Alba," said Montemayor. "She wanted to live forever, so she saw to it her likeness was painted everywhere. This is a courtship piece, very sweet."

Peggy Bruce and Andres Stegman will perform the first Spanish dance from Manuel de Falla's "La Vida Breve," a work they have become known for at the Olé Restoran y Cabaret in Fiesta Plaza.

Sylvia Perello will take the stage in a driving siguidilla rhythm (in the Macheegas style) in Albeniz' "Castilla," from "Suite Española."

Of course, the program will feature a "Bulerías," a fiery flamenco showpiece with José Perello on the guitar, in which each dancer will display his or her virtuosity.

In between dance numbers, resident conductor Andrew Schenck will conduct the symphony in Lecuona's "Malaguena" and Bizet's "Aragonesa" from Carmen.

Though the menu is distinctly spiced towards the Spanish, this Sunday's symphony concert sounds too intriguing to be enjoyed by the under-18 crowd alone.

BALLET HISPANICO AT THE JOYCE THEATER

[from: The New York Times, December 3, 1986, sent by George Ryss]

by Jack Anderson

Ballet Hispanico of New York offered six works by five choreographers last night when it opened a week's engagement at the Joyce Theater. It was certainly an evening of abundance. Yet there was unity within the variety on a few basic themes.

Several of these themes were stated in the evening's world premiere, Ralph Lemon's "En Su Llama Mortal." Set to a tape collage by C. Hyams Hart that was based on 12th-century Spanish medieval music, the dance evoked both the worldliness and the asceticism of the Middle Age.

Five women (Rachel Lahela Berman, Elisa Morris, Kathryn Ross, Marijtra Marie Sanabia and Nancy Turano) entered in a stately fashion wearing long gowns. They could easily have been court ladies. Next came three men (Pedro Ruiz, Marcial Gonzalez and Christian Canciani d'Este) in costumes by Catherine Zuber that made them resemble monks. Whereas the women looked naturally elegant and assured, the men vacillated between moments when they tried to assert themselves and moments when they struggled to maintain their restraint.

The dance conveyed a sense of strong emotions that could easily erupt, yet were kept in check, and Mr. Lemon's sculptural poses were attractive. But the work never really built to an effective climax and some of the transitions from scene to scene were awkward. One could not always tell what point was being made when the lights were lowered and what was the reason for bringing them up again.

If Mr. Lemon deserved praise for avoiding bombast and melodrama, he nevertheless failed to make the contrasts between freedom and restraint as strong as they might have been. One felt there were details in the piece that,

through meaningful to the choreographer, were not fully communicated to the spectator. However, the work's genuine, though mysterious pride and passion made one keep watching it with interest.

Like "En Su Llama Mortal," Vicente Nebrada's "Group Portrait of a Lady" had a cast of five women and three men. It was, both musically and choreographically, a theme and variations. The score was Albertos Ginastera's "Variaciones Concertantes." And the choreography consisted of variations on the theme of retrospection.

The dance began with a yearning solo for Ms. Morris in which she appeared to be looking back upon her past. Then her thoughts came to life as other dancers did some yearning of their own. They also turned playful and even coquettish. Although there was a stormy love affair, everything ended happily.

Ms. Morris wandered among the other dancers, as if confronting her memories. At other times, she simply paused and let her past swirl about her. At all times, she held the attention with her concentration. Choreographically, this set of variations contained many effective moments. But between them there were moments when Mr. Nebrada ran out of ideas before the music did.

The most engaging of the evening's offerings was William Whitener's "Tito on Timbales," in which dancers promenaded across the stage as if across a dance floor. Inspired by the recorded percussion music by Tito Puente, the dancers cut loose with sinuous wiggles and abrupt, snappy gestures. Nevertheless, they always retained a sense of decorum. Their promenades were decidedly exuberant, but never merely crude.

Two solos resembled strong emotional statements. Both when she turned slowly in a pool of light and when she raised her arms assertively, Mari MacKenzie was a commanding presence in Mr. Whitener's "Llamada." Sandra Rivera was equally commanding in "Sacromonte," a Spanish solo choreographed by Roberto Lorca. Stamping her feet and clapping her hands sharply, Ms. Rivera indicated she was a fiery presence. And when she gestured in a way that implied she was beckoning the audience to join her, she could have been casting a spell on the viewers.

The evening concluded with Talley Beatty's "Recuerdo de Campo Amor." Tomorrow night, the company will offer Mr. Nebrada's new "Bernarda" in place of "Group Portrait of a Lady."

MARIA ALBA AND IBRAHIM FARRAH

[from: The New York Times, March 9, 1987; sent by George Ryss]

by Jennifer Dunning

Avery Fisher Hall is just about the least congenial showplace imaginable for folk dance, but the companies of Maria Alba and Ibrahim Farrah managed to make that large, bleak stage seem a good deal warmer in a shared bill Friday.

Miss Alba is a superb performer who fills the stage with her earthy, teasing presence, the precise but heated quality of her heartbeats and even moments of utter stillness. Victorio, the other star of the Maria Alba Flamenco Dancers, has a similarly sophisticated command of the art of performing. And the two stood out, appropriately enough, in two solos each in "En Las Calles Andaluzas," a suite of eight dances performed by a company that also included Maria Constancia, Meira, a dancer who tore passion to rather messy tatters, and Liliana Morales, a dancer of perhaps too cool a passion. The musicians were the singer Paco Ortiz and the guitarists Ricardo Amador and Arturo Martinez.



IBRAHIM FARRAH AND HIS DANCERS SHARED FRIDAY'S BILL AT THE "INTERNATIONAL DANCE SPECTACULAR 1987" AT LINCOLN CENTER.

KIKO VENENO

[from: El País, August 1, 1986, translated by Geromimo]

by Nacho Sáenz de Tejado

Kiko Veneno and Martirio de Pasion, the most explosive duo of the modern style flamenco, are presenting their show "Suave La Canoa" in the Plaça del Rei of Barcelona. Kiko is an unusual composer and singer, originator of an abrasive style based on flamenco and in close co-operation with two excellent flamenco gypsy guitarists, Rafael Amador and Raimundo Amador. With his group "Veneno", he was one of the pioneers of the new Andalusian musical trend.



KIKO VENENO

DANCE CELEBRATION OF
CAREER OF CRUZ LUNA

[from: The Los Angeles Times, April 13, 1987; sent by Ernest Lenshaw]

by Shelley Baumsten

"A tribute to Cruz Luna" featured some very good Spanish dancing, but lacked focus as a celebration of the work of this well-established local dancer/teacher/former company director. No background on Luna was presented in Lola Montes' short welcoming speech Sunday at Pasadena City College or in the printed program, and no explicit connection was drawn to Luna's style or repertory.

But if the afternoon fell short as a tribute to his career, it succeeded as a stirring tribute to his courage when Luna—who is afflicted with AIDS—crowned the finale by coming on stage for a brief solo and then leading the triumphant procession off stage.

Flamenco dominated the program and, in a general way, that art form always serves as a tribute to individuality. More specifically, the afternoon could be construed as a tribute to superb male dancing, as embodied by Juan Talavera and Roberto Amaral.

In "Por Solea" the suave, commanding Talavera fairly sailed through demanding footwork and just as smoothly partnered Maria Bermudez (also excellent) through the unison and counterpoised rhythms of their beautifully paced duct. Then Amaral brought down the house in his electrifying solo, "Romera".

If Talavera danced like an angel, Amaral danced like a demon—or at least like a man possessed. But even at top speed, his movement had great clarity and definition. Completely in control, he punctuated a passage of furious footwork with a perfectly executed double pirouette *en attitude*.

The women were represented admirably by the fiery "Canastera" of Irene Heredia, Valeria Pico and Isabel Campos (choreography by Amaral), and the elegant, sinuous "Seguiriya" solo of Yaelisa and Linda Vega (whose varied footwork and all-out back-bent exit were splendid). Vocals and guitar were fine, though sporadically overamplified, as was the tiny piano.

EVERYTHING CLICKS IN NIGHT OF FLAMENCO

[from: The San Diego Union, June 9, 1987]

by Anne Marie Welsh

If "Las Noches de Cadiz" is any evidence, flamenco is flourishing in San Diego.

A dozen dancers and musicians, led by celebrated guitarist Paco Sevilla, created this new dance-theater work that had its premiere Sunday at El Centro Cultural de la Raza in Balboa Park. The two hours simply fly by, so impassioned and spontaneous are the performances.

Sevilla took a pie-shaped slice of El Centro and, with clever curtaining and minimal sets, converted the awkward space into a tavern in Cadiz. A few more adjustments during intermission and we were transported to a gypsy camp outside the Andalusian city.

The first-half tavern dance were more cheery and public than the middle-of-the-night Gypsy stuff. In both sections, the dramatic illusion was strong and made more so by the intimacy of the setting. The waiter at the fictional La Privadilla tavern might have served sherry to the audience as easily as he did to the singers.

The program notes were a model of their kind in distinguishing the origins, the various moods and rhythms of the songs and dances. What transpired on stage was perfectly clear, however. And often wonderful.

Two Gypsy singers inspired most of the dancing, while the intricate music of guitarist Sevilla and Rodrigo seemed later additions to the flamenco form. Everybody seemed an old pro, tuned to each other and the audience. Still, the program had none of the self-conscious slickness that can congeal the spirit of folk dance in the theater.

A half-dozen episodes and as many dances spilled seamlessly from one to the next joined by competitive banter, the usual shouts and stomps, and such sweet inventions as a waiter accompanying one little girl's dancing with the beat of his broom.

The standouts in the tavern were singer Remedios Flores, whose rich, dark, deep voice seems a cry of the earth; dancer Juanita Franco, whose mature style is rhythmically incisive, expansive and subtle; Carla Heredia, whose beautifully controlled dancing exudes melancholy and sensuality; singer Marysol Fuentes and the very tall, aristocratic dancer Victor Soto.

In his physical grace and simple heel-work, Soto is no José Greco. Yet he moves with confidence and he projects authentic virility rather than macho. His contribution to "Las Noches" is all out of proportion to his dance technique.

In the Gypsy camp, the mood was more introspective. Heredia has an other solo, this one both noble and unabashedly erotic. Franco danced three festive numbers that unleashed a wild spirit -- this lady has been around since before the Spanish Civil War, yet she can arch and spin and jump, seeming to improvise while looking fabulously sexy.

Then the children joined in for a circle dance that led to a spirited final fiesta with everyone showing his stuff.

In these days of Iranscam and Tammygate, it's good to remember the non-Puritanical cultures where grown-up men dance -- as well as children, older people, chubby musicians and Gypsy singers who share the same values.

This Cadiz may never have existed, of course. But at El Centro, it has a vividly imagined life of the spirit. Sevilla wrote the script and directed, with Tom Sandler serving as acting director and the performers creating their own choreography and costumes.

"Las Noches de Cadiz" is a good show, and, with so much live music, it is also a bargain.

FUEGO ESPAÑOL

by Fredric Alexson

The art of Spanish dance is alive, well and thriving in Wilmette, Illinois. Out of a small coach house studio tucked neatly away in a charming backyard of this northern suburb, it is being lovingly fostered by dancer/teacher, Teresa. Her hard work over the years has resulted in the formation of an impressive Spanish dance company entitled TERESA Y LAS PREFERIDAS which continually delights audiences everywhere.

TERESA Y LAS PREFERIDAS' latest concert, "Fuego Español" presented at the Weinstein Center for the Performing Arts, was no exception. It was one of the most uplifting and completely engaging dance/theater experiences of the year. It was everything you should expect a Spanish dance concert to be, elegance, grace, fire and passion on all levels.

The two hour program dedicated to Michael Fredrics was beautifully diversified and so well paced that it seemed to come to a finish much too soon. Also featured in this performance was "LILA DOLE'S SPANISH REFLECTIONS", another neatly managed dance troupe based at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb. The combined work of these two companies was deservedly endorsed and encouraged and completely augmented by the

impressive appearance of six internationally recognized guest artists, dancer María Alba and Roberto Lorca, flamenco singers Paco Alonso and Pepe Culata, all accompanied by flamenco guitarists Greg Wolfe and Luis "El Primitivo". It is easy to say that this was one concert that left me and the rest of the enthusiastic audience wanting more.

The first half of the program concisely exemplified the incredible reams of material, both regional, folk and classical, that fall under the heading of Spanish dance. I, regrettably because of previous commitment, was late for the concert and missed the first piece, "Galician Suite". I learned, however,



MARIAM AGO-LUGHOO OF THE FUEGO ESPAÑOL

from a most respected source in the dance community and one of the leading exponents of Spanish dance in the United States, Dame Libby Kimoko Fleming, that this ballet was not only an appropriate opening, but also that its five sections, choreographed by Nana Lorca, were impeccably restaged for this company by this foremost authority and beautifully executed by the dancers.

This was followed by "Puerta de Tierra" performed by Lila Dole and two 18th century dances, "Panaderos de la Flamenca" and "Sevillanas Boleras", showcasing Dole with Kathryn Lynn Terry and Randy Newsom. I have seen these two works before and they were just as fresh and handsomely danced as ever, leaving the dancers reputations for technical proficiency intact. In "Jota Argonesa", Gwyn Norris, Rene Gonzalez and John Kowalski made Edo Sie's choreography as delightful to watch as I am sure it was to dance.

Spanish dance is so intensely personal at times cutting sharply into the many layers of raw emotional feelings that it almost seems like a violation of privacy to watch, even with permission. If it can be considered a violation, it is a delicious one, especially when the spectator experiences the masterful interpretation of the smooth building "Encounter" by María Alba in the hands

of Teresa and John Kowalski.

Singer Paco Alonso also demonstrated remarkable versatility in his own "Baile del Fundador". He wooed the audience with his robust and deftly light-footed movement and quick humor. What would have been a moment of sheer disaster for any other dancer, Alonso used to his advantage. Midway through this charming regional folk dance, the red sash of his costume began to unravel and become entangled around his legs. Without missing a beat, he quickly freed himself and with a sweeping flair flung the yards of material around his neck as if it were really intended as a scarf. As in his dance, Alonso was as beguiling in his bow. As he knelt on one knee to accept his applause with a humble apology, he good-naturedly chastized the scarf.

The second half of this star-studded concert was all flamenco glorifying the gypsy soul of Spain. The effect of the exquisitely designed costumes, dazzling colors, magnificent sounds and the flurry of sensuous movement was stunning against Terry Dole's meticulously crafted sets. The curtain opened with one of the most spirited and perfectly staged sevillanas I have seen in a long, long time. The dancers not only stood out individually, but as an ensemble they filled the stage with electrifying, well-channeled energy. With precise foot work, coupled with the articulate use of castanets, fans and shawls, the "Fandangos de Huelva", the "Bulerías" and the "Rumba Flamenca" created by the combined efforts of several choreographers, the company once again proved their abilities. Especially outstanding were Sue's-in Zaher-Emig, Mariam Abu-Lughod, Gwyn Norris and Mirna Maldonado. Each of these ladies always gave that little bit extra which made every movement and symbolic gesture emotionally rich and crisply succinct in meaning.

The real beauty of Spanish dance is not only that it is all expressive, full and rich in heritage and a virtual melting pot of rhythms, steps and themes, but that it is also one art form that dignifies and celebrates a dancer at any age. Living proof of this is the ageless Maria Alba. Her dancing is indisputable testimony that maturity enhances the Spanish dancer's artistry and appeal.

Her "SEGURIYAS" was the most singular performances of the evening. Watching Maria Alba dance is always like waiting for the fireworks and its finale on the fourth of July. The anticipation of each well planned movement is tantalizing beyond description. The total effect on her artistry, from beginning to end is outrageously more magnificent than one could possibly hope for -- it burns a hole in your memory. Maria Alba is truly one of today's greatest artists and certainly one of the greatest Spanish dancers in all time.

Two more highlights of the program where I could actually close my eyes and let my imagination be stimulated by what my ears heard came with the playing of flamenco guitarists Greg Wolfe and the singing of Pepe Culata. Their music danced thru the air creating wonderful images of one of the Mediterranean's most culturally intriguing jewels -- Spain.

"FUEGO ESPAÑOL" was more than just sound dance and theater, it was a very inexpensive trip to Spain and is highly recommended.



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SAN DIEGO SCENE

GUEST ARTISTS PERFORM IN SAN DIEGO

This winter San Diego was visited by prestigious exponents of flamenco. The exciting trio -- guitarists Paco Arroyo, dancer Yolanda Arroyo and singer/dancer Antonio Sánchez -- appeared at the Tablao Flamenco. It was hard to believe that the explosive energy which radiated from the stage was produced by only three people. This group, previously at El Cid restaurant in Hollywood, may currently be seen at the Barcelona restaurante in Santa Monica. After the performance, the stage was thrown open to other performers in the audience.

* * *



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DANCERS OF THE FUTURE: TWO YOUNG STUDENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE PERFORM SEVILLANAS

Among the guest artists who presented mini-concerts at Hajji Baba's over the winter were dancers Teo Morca and Roberto Amaral and *cantaor* Manuel Agujetas. The following are photos taken during Agujetas concert and the *fin de fiesta* that followed.

If anyone has pictures of these or any other local events and would like to share them with Jaleo, it would be greatly appreciated. Photos are not damaged and will be promptly returned.



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LEFT TO RIGHT AGUJETAS, RODRIGO, DEANNA SOUTAR, PILAR MORENO, MALENA, AGELITA,



LEFT TO RIGHT: LUANA MORENO, PACO SEVILLA, PILAR MORENO



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A juerga was held at the home of Victor Soto in honor of Teo Morca during his stay in San Diego.

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PERSONALITY HIGHLIGHTED

We wish to welcome Jan Huidobro as our resident artist. You will be seeing her drawings adorning the pages of *Jaleo* and in juerga flier designs.

Jan is easy to spot at juergas... She's the lady with the British accent and the warm friendly smile -- and sometimes armed with pen and sketch pad. She has studied a little flamenco guitar and also *does Highland dancing*. She taught art in England and Canada where she met her partner in life and crime -- an Andalucian gentleman by the name of Rogelio. Together Rogelio and Jan run a school of languages where *Jaleistas* is presently holding its board meetings.

We appreciate Jan's contributions (sometimes done by rush order) to the magazine and our juergas and wish to thank both Jan and Rogelio for giving us such a hospitable and central location for our meetings.



JAN HUIDOBRO



Junta Report



Junta meetings (the steering board of *Jaleistas*) are again being held on a regular basis. Recent meetings have been dedicated to improving our juergas and getting more members "actively" involved.

Some ideas to be tried in future juergas are:

- teaching how to cook a typical Spanish dish
- having a contest for the best "Tapa" (hors-d'oeuvre)
- teaching , *palmas, letras, sacetas or pasos*

Meetings are usually held the first Thursday of each month at 7:00pm at the language school of Rogelio and Jan Huidobro, 3339 4th Avenue (half block south of Upas. Phone 298-8229 to verify time and date.

All members who have ideas to share or talents to contribute please come! We need your input! (Bring snacks or drinks to share.)

-- Juana De Alva

JUERGA SITES 87'

JANUARY	Victor Soto	JULY	Frances Padilla
FEBRUARY	???????????	AUGUST	Lynn Schroeder
MARCH	Malena	SEPTEMBER	??????????
APRIL	Carmen Monzon	OCTOBER	??????????
MAY	???????????	NOVEMBER	??????????
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MISCELLANEOUS



WATER FESTIVAL IN SANTANDER 'JUERGA FLAMENCA' IN THE HEART OF THE DAY



[from: El Diario de Jerez; sent by El Chileno]

Editors Explanation: This cartoon shows Juanito Valderrama and Dolores Abril, two ancient holdovers from the era of the ópera flamenca, at one of their present day performances. Only 50 people have shown up to witness the spectacle. Even some spanish speaking readers may have difficulty understanding the heavy Andalusien dialect that is used and is part of the humor. Juanito says, "Dolores, this proves that our art is for the minority." Dolores asks, "And if I were to come out in a bikini, Juan?" The guitarist thinks to himself, "Please no...for the honor of your mother! It would be even worse!"


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ANNOUNCEMENTS

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UPDATES

- RENE HEREDIA NOW PLAYING AT THE TAVERN DENVER, CO,** in the Café Promenade Larimer Square
- FLAMENCO AT DON ALBERTO'S RESTAURANT BROOKLYN, NY,** Now appearing: Lilitana Morales, Luis Vargas & Arturo Martinez
- FLAMENCO AT THE GOLDEN PALACE NEW YORK, NY,** Now appearing: Josefina, Barbara, Paco Ortiz & Roberto Reyes
- FLAMENCO AT CAFE FELIPE - BI-MONTHLY SEATTLE, WA,** Featuring La Romera, Gerardo Alcalá, José Lara, Angel Juarez and guest artists such as Roberto Zamora, Teo Morca & Oscar Nieto
- MARIANO CORDOBA IN CONCERTS JUL 18**
- HALF MOON BAY, CA** Douglas Beach House. Call 415/726-4143
- 3RD ANNUAL ETHIC DANCE FESTIVAL - JUL 11 & 18**
- SANTA ROSA, CA,** featuring dances from India, Spain & Morocco, Stanroy Music Center. Call 707/545-2073.
- 7TH ENCUENTRO FLAMENCO & 5TH CURSO DE GUITARRA CLASICA CORDOBA, SPAIN,** Jul 14-24, For inf. write: Centro Flamenco Paco Peña, Plaza del Potro, no. 15, 14002-Cordoba, Spain.
- FIRST ANNUAL FLAMENCO FESTIVAL - JULY 18 - 25**
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- SECOND ANNUAL SPANISH DANCE WORKSHOP JUN 15-JUL 3:** WASHINGTON D.C., George Washington University under the direction of Marina Keet. Call Nancy Diers Johnson 202/994-6629.

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