Soledad Barrio & Noche Flamenca

La Plaza

Made possible, in part, through funding from the Western States Arts Federation and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Cal Performances’ 2008–2009 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo Bank.
Soledad Barrio

in

La Plaza

with featured guest artist
Antonio Jimenez ("El Chupete")

&
Manuel Gago
Emilio Florido
Salva de Maria
Amir Haddad
Sol La Argentinita
Rebeca Tomás

PROGRAM

La Plaza
The Company
Choreography by Martín Santangelo and the Company

Solo de Cante
Manuel Gago or Emilio Florido

Solea por Bulerias or Siguiriya
Antonio Jimenez ("El Chupete")

INTERMISSION

Solea or Siguiriya
Soledad Barrio
Choreography by Soledad Barrio

Solo de Guitarra
Salva de Maria or Amir Haddad

Alegrias
Soledad Barrio and Antonio Jimenez ("El Chupete")
Choreography by Soledad Barrio

Fin de Fiesta
The Company

Program is subject to change.

Noche Flamenca

Artistic Director & Producer
Martín Santangelo
Martín Santangelo, Company members
Salva de Maria, Amir Haddad

Choreography
Martín Santangelo, Company members
Salva de Maria, Amir Haddad

Music
Manuel Gago, Emilio Florido
Soledad Barrio, Antonio Jimenez ("El Chupete")
Sol La Argentinita, Rebeca Tomás

Vocal Arrangements
Manuel Gago, Emilio Florido
Soledad Barrio, Antonio Jimenez ("El Chupete")

Bailaores
Cantaores
Guitarristas

Lighting Designer & Technical Director
Ben Ferrar

Production Assistant
Rhadley Oliveira de Souza

Representation
Laura Colby, Elsie Management
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A Brief History of Flamenco

The precarious conditions of the Andalucian singer of the past made it inevitable that he or she should dwell on the more tragic aspects of existence. Even though conditions are now incomparably better, the feelings inherent in the cante are universal and timeless and represent a link between past and present.

Andalucia, the region of southern Spain which is flamenco’s home, has a strong musical tradition documented from ancient times and flamenco certainly takes its place in that heritage. Throughout the centuries, Andalucia absorbed peoples of different cultures and backgrounds, including Romans, Jews and Moors. For flamenco, the most significant arrival was in the 15th century when tribes of nomadic Gypsies settled in southern Spain. Their arrival coincided with Ferdinand and Isabella’s conquest of Granada, the last bastion of the Moors, and the subsequent expulsion of Jews and Arabs from Spain.

Historian Felix Grande, writing about life in the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries stated: “The Jews were massacred, the Gypsies humiliated and persecuted, the Arabs exterminated, the Moriscos (converted Arabs) expelled, and the Andalucians generally exploited...if we do not relate the music...to brutality, repression, hunger, fear, menace, inferiority, resistance and secrecy, then we shall not find the reality of cante flamenco...it is a storm of exasperation and grief.” It was against this background that flamenco evolved.

While earlier records suggest that flamenco was at one time unaccompanied, it is hard for us today to imagine flamenco without a guitar. In effect, the guitar forms an integral part of the song; singer and guitarist are one creating the cante. The different types of cante provide the basis for all flamenco guitars playing. Most of the cante has an underlying rhythmic structure which must be strictly adhered to—the compás. One of flamenco’s chief characteristics is the complex syncopation against the compás, with the cante being sung almost entirely off the beat and the guitarist maintaining the rhythm, adding further to the syncopation. In some forms, like the cante libre (free song), the compás is less apparent, but the singer may break into an established rhythm which the guitarist then has to follow. Indeed, the singer is at liberty to improvise, whether the toque (guitar playing) is free or in compás, and the guitarist may not know beforehand what is to be expected of him.

There is no evidence that the guitar was initially used to accompany the cante, and even today some of the most dramatic forms of cante are invariably performed unaccompanied. However, it was certainly in regular use by the end of the 19th century and the guitar has an exceptionally long history in Spain, an early version probably being brought by the Romans. The lute was extremely popular in the rest of Europe during the Renaissance, but was rejected in Spain as a foreign intrusion since it was of Arab origin. Furthermore, the vihuela (the guitar’s predecessor) was more suited to the accompaniment of ballads by strumming, since the lute requires notes to be picked more delicately. It was also cheaper to produce and more robust.

In the 19th century, there were two types of singing in Andalucia—the cante gitan (of the Gypsies) and the cante andalus. Silverio Franconetti, an Andaluz of Italian origin and an exceptional singer of Gypsy styles, was the first to bring these two styles together. This integration of both forms resulted in the cante flamenco as it has come to us—the end product being without question greater than the sum of its parts.

The wail of the cante jondo (deep song) resembles the mournful chant of the exiled Sephardic Jews. Its poetry has the existentialist angst and philosophical questioning common in Arabic poetry. The dance which evolved slowly, fully blossoming in the 1840s suggests the repetitive key symbol prevalent in Islam, the trance inducing rhythms of Africa, and the stubborn search of Jewish music.

Flamenco developed rapidly, gaining in artistic stature as well as popularity. Establishments appeared throughout Andalucia and beyond, dedicated wholly to the performance of flamenco. They came to be known as cafes cantantes, coffee theatres, where refreshment could be enjoyed while watching the performance. Although some of them survived until the middle of the 20th century, their heyday was past by the 1920s. Generally they were like cabaret theaters, with as many as four shows a day.

Dance has always been associated with flamenco. It is difficult to imagine this music without movement. While sophisticated flamenco dance companies have been touring the world for more than 50 years, it is the raw, unchoreographed dances of Andalucian Gypsies that has maintained the art form in its most creative essence.
About the Artists

Martin Santangelo (Artistic Director) founded Noche Flamenca. He studied with Ciro, Paco Romero, El Guito, Manolete and Alejandro Granados. He has performed throughout Spain, Japan and North and South America, appearing with Maria Benitez’s Teatro Flamenco, the Lincoln Center Festival of the Arts and Paco Romero’s Ballet Español. He also appeared in Julie Taymor’s Juan Darien at Lincoln Center. He choreographed and performed in Eduardo Machado’s Deep Song, directed by Lynne Taylor-Corbett. He choreographed a production of Romeo and Juliet at the Denver Theater Center. He has directed and choreographed Bodas de Sangre, The Lower Depths, La Celestina and A Streetcar Named Desire among many other productions in Spain and Buenos Aires. He has collaborated with many artists, but his most fulfilling collaboration has been with his wife, Soledad Barrio, and his two wild daughters, Gabriela and Stella.

Soledad Barrio (dancer) was born in Madrid. She has appeared as soloist with Manuela Vargas, Blanca del Rey, Luisillo, El Guito, Manolete, Cristobal Reyes and El Toleo, Ballet Español de Paco Romero, Festival Flamenco and many other companies. She has performed throughout Europe, Japan and North and South America with such artists as Alejandro Granados, Isabel Bayon, Jesus Torres, Miguel Perez, Belen Maya, Manolo Marin, Javier Baron, Merce Esmeralda, Rafael Campollo and Belen Maya. She has won awards from over 12 different countries around the globe for her excellence in dance. She recently received a “Bessie” award for Outstanding Creative Achievement. She is a founding member of Noche Flamenca and is married to Martin Santangelo. They have two beautiful daughters, Gabriela and Stella.

Emilio Florido (singer) was born in Cadiz, Spain. He began singing as a child and began to work professionally in Jerez, Cadiz and Sevilla. In addition to giving recitals as a vocal soloist, he has sung in accompaniment to such dancers as Adrian Galia, Alejandro Granados, Domingo Ortega, Luis Ortega, Rocio Molina, Sara Varas, Isabel Bayon, Rafaela Carrasco, Yolanda Heredia and Miguel Angel Espino, among others, and has worked in the companies of Cristina Hoyos, El Ballet de Madrid and La Raza. He has toured extensively in Japan, South America and Europe. This is Mr. Florido’s seventh season with Noche Flamenca.

Salva de Maria (guitarist) was born in Madrid. He is the son of Basilio de Cadiz and the singer and dancer Maria Fernandez and grandson of the legendary singer Antonio, “La Chaqueta.” He began to work in the Ballet Español de Maria Rosa and in the famous peña flamencos, “Chaqueton,” where he accompanied such singers as Carmen Linares, Jose Merce, Vicente Soto and Chaqueton and others. He moved to Barcelona and worked with Maite Martin, La Chana, Guiness Ortega and other mythic figures in flamenco. In 1996, he returned to Madrid to work with Carmen of Spain and has shared the stage with Carmen Ledesma in the National Opera of Tokyo. He has also choreographed for Yoko Komatsuabara. Jimenez has toured extensively as a featured soloist in Italy, Germany, Holland, Brazil, Japan, Mexico and New York. He continues to dance in tablao in Sevilla and Granada. This is his fourth season with Noche Flamenca.

Born in Cadiz to a family of flamenco singers, Manuel Gago (singer) began singing at the age of five. By age 14, he was singing in flamenco festivals with such well-known singers as Juan Villar, Charo Lobato and Rancapiño. Later, he began singing for dancers, including Joaquin Cortez, Isabel Bayón, Sara Varas, Rafaela Carrasco, Domingo Ortega, Adrian Galia, El Guito, Manolete, Javier Baron and Cristobal Reyes. Mr. Gago has traveled the world, singing in Europe, Asia, South America and the United States. This is his ninth season with Noche Flamenca.

About the Artists

Under the direction of Martin Santangelo, the award-winning Noche Flamenca has become Spain’s most successful touring flamenco company. Formed in 1993 by Santangelo and his Bessie award-winning wife, Soledad Barrio, the company regularly tours throughout the globe. Performance highlights in North America include Berkeley’s Cal Performances, Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival, the Ravinia Festival, the American Dance Festival, New Orleans Ballet Association, Dance St. Louis, Wolf Trap Foundation for the Arts and the Hollywood Bowl, among others. Internationally, the company has appeared on stages in Australia, New Zealand, Greece and Egypt, among other countries. With annual seasons in New York City and Buenos Aires, and return engagements at theaters around the world, the company has a dedicated global audience.

Hailed by critics everywhere for its transcendent and deeply emotional performances, Noche Flamenca is recognized as the most authentic flamenco touring company in the field today. Mr. Santangelo has successfully brought to the stage the essence, purity, and integrity of one of the world’s most complex and mysterious art forms without the use of tricks or gimmicks. All aspects of flamenco—dance, song and music—are interrelated and given equal weight in the presentations of Noche Flamenca, creating a true communal spirit within the company—the very heart and soul of flamenco.

In the 2008–2009 season, the company will premiere a new work specifically for family audiences inspired by Spanish folklore for New York’s New Victory Theater, April 22–May 3, 2009. In summer 2009, the company will be presented at the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, South Carolina, and will return to Australia for a five-week tour, performing in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth.

In support of its mission to educate and enlighten audiences about flamenco, the company offers extensive residency programs that reach out to people of all ages. With company members based in Spain, Noche Flamenca is a registered US not-for-profit with its office and representation based in New York City. Noche Flamenca’s artistic integrity has been recognized with awards from the National Dance Project (2006), the National Endowment for the Arts (2007) and the Lucille Lortel Award for Special Theatrical Experience (2003), among others.
About the Artists

Cortes and Gerardo Nuñez in the Lorca’s Yerma. Since 2001 he has been touring with guitarist Chicuelo and working with such artists as Miguel Poveda, “La Susi,” Maite Martin Chano Lobato, Israel Galvan, Isabel Bayón, Javier Latorre and “Duquende.” This is Mr. de Maria’s second season with Noche Flamenca.

Amir Haddad (guitarist) has accompanied such artists as Joaquin Ruiz, Eliseo Parra, Tomasito, Raimundo Amador, El Capullo de Jerez, Inma and Domingo Ortega, Pepe Justicia, Carmela Greco, Enrique de Melchor, Juan Parrilla, Antonio Canales, Toni Maya, Guadiana, José Menese, Rafael Amargo, Gerardo Nuñez, Lole and Naseer Shamma, just to name a few. He has toured in almost everywhere in the world, performing in venues such as the Royal Festival Hall (London), Teatro Bellini (Palermo), Le Cabaret de Sauvage (Paris), Festival de Jeréz 2007 and Festival de la Buleria Jeréz 2007, Teatro Libre (Bogotá), Tomb of the Kings (Jerusalem) and many others.

Sol La Argentinita (dancer) was born Glenda Sol Koeraus in Buenos Aires, Argentina. She studied flamenco with La Meira, Nelida Tirado, Omayra Amaya, La China, Torombo Yolanda Heredia and Soledad Barrio, among others. She is a member of the Pasión y Arte flamenco company, Andrea del Conte Danza España and Carlota Santana and Omayra Amaya’s dance companies. She recently toured Mexico and South America.

Rebeca Tomás (dancer) has studied under Manuel Liñan, La China, La Tacha, Yolanda Heredia, Juana Amaya and Soledad Barrio among others. She dances with a number of flamenco companies, including Flamenco Vivo Carlota Santana, Oscar Valero, Edwin Aparicio and Pasion y Arte, and at such tablao as Al Andalus and Las Carboneras. She recently received a grant from the Jerome Foundation to deepen her studies. She has toured with many flamenco dance companies.

S. Benjamin Farrar (lighting design) is a lighting and scenic designer based in New York City. He is proud to be working with Noche Flamenca’s incredibly talented artists. Benjamin has designed in numerous venues across the United States, including the Public Theater, Playwright’s Horizons and Urban Stages in New York, Flatrock Playhouse in North Carolina, Grinnell College and Iowa Stages in Iowa, and Bucknell University in Pennsylvania. He has worked as assistant lighting designer on Broadway for A Man for All Seasons and in many regional theaters, including La Jolla Playhouse in California, the Alley Theatre in Texas, and Long Wharf Theatre in Connecticut. Mr. Farrar is a graduate of the University of Iowa and Vanderbilt University. He would like to thank his partner in crime, Jody Marie Caldwell.

Education & Community Event

Latin Music Series: Noche Flamenca
Friday, January 23, 2009, 5–6:30pm
Zellerbach Hall Lobby Mezzanine

Jazz radio host and Latin music specialist Jesse “Chuy” Varela gives a lively talk featuring extensive background information, guest interviews and musical illustrations to complement performances by Noche Flamenca.