



Desde Sevilla Flamenco Dance Company

Biographies

Jill Tanner-Lloyd

My fascination with flamenco began when I was six. I saw a short clip of a gypsy dancing in a dark cave in some obscure movie and I was hooked. At secondary school I had the opportunity to explore Spanish dance in its broader sense with an ex-ballerina art teacher from Chicago. The introduction led to a great relationship with Palmerston North flamencos' who taught me all they knew. Flamenco was one of the reasons I travelled to England in the 1980's and I spent short periods of time dabbling in flamenco workshops and summer schools in Madrid, Sevilla and Jerez over the years that followed.

Now in New Zealand for the past 12 years, I have loved teaching and sharing flamenco with eager people of all ages and abilities. The group's combined skills and dedication has enabled us to build creative productions that tell the flamenco story from a range of perspectives, and ultimately capture the imagination of our New Zealand audiences. Being far from its epicenter has both been a hindrance and a help for our group. The distance has allowed us to have the freedom to explore the artform in a way that resonates more closely with our kiwi audiences, with artistic integrity.

This latest production builds on that integrity. It is a collaboration that draws us closer to that epicenter – providing the opportunity to work with talented flamencos in a way that enriches us all.

Helene Garland

I first became intrigued with flamenco when I read about it as a ballet-mad adolescent but was truly captivated in the 60s when I saw the legendary Luisillo perform in what was probably the first flamenco company to tour New Zealand. From then on, flamenco's primeval rhythms and vibrant expression of human emotions are impossible for me to resist. I have studied, taught and performed flamenco dance for more years than I care to remember in New Zealand and Spain, and know that this is an art form that will always be part of my life.

Paul Knight

I became entranced with Flamenco some time in the 1950s but was then playing the flute in orchestras and chamber music groups. Eventually the power of Flamenco won. I stopped playing the flute and bought a guitar. For about three years, I attempted to teach myself how to play Flamenco but to little effect. In 1968 I found a teacher close to where I was then living in Japan. I also found many Flamenco nightclubs and touring stage performances to feed the addiction, which has continued to the present.

In 1981, in Palmerston North, I advertised to see if there were any people interested in learning to dance and eventually to perform. Three women appeared initially and in time we had graduated to being a performing group named "Fiesta Flamenca", which continues still after 30 years, with a history of many performances.

Kathryn Taylor

I discovered flamenco in 1999 and have been dancing and appreciating its music and song ever since. As a child I danced ballet and modern jazz but flamenco spoke to me in a way that these other forms never did. Flamenco's driving rhythms, its challenge and intensity has fueled my determination and passion for the art form.

While in New Zealand I have trained under and performed with the group Desde Seville, including the shows '*The House of Bernada Alba*' and '*Espiritu Flamenco*'. I have also spent time in Jerez, the 'cradle of flamenco', visiting the many tableau and outdoor performances put on by local gypsy families and studying under the late Tibu 'la Tormenta'.

Raymond Biggs

Heavily influenced by exposure to world music at an early age, I studied jazz and Brazilian rhythm with some of New Zealand's top drummers and percussionists before discovering flamenco by chance at a live concert.

Instantly captivated by its form and beauty, I abandoned kit playing to focus exclusively on the mastering of the Cajon and the intimate rhythmic language of flamenco. With a style described as modern and vibrant, my playing draws upon the latest styles of contemporary flamenco rhythms found in Spain today.