

Performing Arts Series

presents



Flamenco Passion

Dame Libby Komaiko, Founder & Artistic Director

Irma Suárez Ruíz, Associate Artistic Director

Guest Artists

Paloma Gomez and Christian Lozano

Former principals of the National Ballet of Spain

Guest Musicians

Manuel Palacin, vocals

Paco Fonta, vocals and guitar

Mateo, guitar

Javier Saume Mazzei, percussion

Company Dancers

Sara Samuels, Principal Dancer

Julia Hinojosa

José Torres, Principal Dancer

Sean Arana

Jorge Pérez, First Dancer

Olivia Serrano

Claudia Pizarro, Principal Dancer

Omar Roman, Apprentice

Crystal Ruíz

Abigail Ventura, Understudy

Israel Sánchez

Irma Suárez Ruíz

Jorge Pérez

Margaret Nelson

Laura Girard

Associate Artistic

Director

Stage Manager

Production Assistant

Rehearsal Mistress

Rehearsal Master

Friday, February 3, 2012

Yardley Hall

Johnson County Community College

Underwritten in part by the

Arthur and Alma Yardley Endowment in the JCCC Foundation



In residence at Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago

Act 1

Escencia de España

Romance de Triana

This neo-classical dance portrays *Triana*, the gypsy district across the Guadaquiver River in Sevilla. Incorporating the deep exotic feelings and mysterious atmospheres of Andalucía, this creation for the Ensemble was derived from Dame Libby's original solo, *Sevilla*, also by Albéniz. This favorite work from the company's extensive repertoire has been performed throughout the U.S. and internationally, including with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Choreography and Lighting Design (1977)

Revision 2006 for the Ensemble Español's 30th anniversary: Dame Libby Komaiko

Music: Issác Albéniz (1860-1909) Iberia #6 (1905-1909)

Costume Design: Dame Libby Komaiko, Paco Alonso

Dancers: Company

El Albaicin

Choreography and Lighting Design (2007): Paloma Gomez

Music: Isaác Albéniz (1860-1909) Suite Iberia: # 3

Dancers and Costume Design: Paloma Gomez and Christian Lozano

Danza del Fuego

The *Danza del Fuego* (Dance of Fire) is from La Zarzuela (Spain's light opera) *Ben Amor*. This romantic 20th century dance combines two styles, Ballet Español and Flamenco. It portrays the mysterious moods and great Eastern influence of the Moors in Spain during their 900-year rule.

Choreography and Lighting Design (1979): Dame Libby Komaiko

Music: Pablo Luna (1879-1942)

Costume Design: Ann Rossi

Dancers: Company

La Boda de Luis Alonso

Truly in the classical style, this dance from popular Spanish zarzuela (Spain's light opera) depicts the elegance of the late nineteenth century.

Choreography and Lighting Design (1979): Edo

*Music: Geronimo Gimenez (1854-1923) from the zarzuela
"La Boda de Luis Alonso o La Noche del Encierro" (1896)*

Costume Design: Paco Alonso

Dancers: Company

Sentimiento y Soledad
(Sentiments and Solitude)

This dramatic duet in the Flamenco *cante jondo* (deep song) combines the Flamenco *palos* (styles) of Martinete & Sigüiriyas. The Martinete is sung with no accompaniment; however, for this stage performance, the singer will be accompanied by the haunting sounds of an anvil and percussion attributed to Gypsy smiths. The Sigüiriyas is a deep, expressive style considered to be among the most important in Flamenco.

Choreography and Dancers (2011): Claudia Pizarro and Jose Torres, Principal Dancers
Music: Manuel Palacin, Paco Fonta, Mateo, Javier Saume Mazzei
Costume Designs: Luz Creations and Soledad Designs
Lighting Design: Elias Morales

Veneno
(Poison) (Taranto)

Dancer and Choreographer (2011): Christian Lozano
Music: Manuel Palacin, Paco Fonta, Mateo, Javier Saume Mazzei
Costume Design: Miguel Crespi
Lighting Design: Margaret Nelson

Ruinas

Ms. Paloma Gomez dedicates this dance to Dame Libby Komaiko for her love and dedication to the artform of her country, Spain. “*It is with great honor and admiration I dedicate this dance to Dame Libby for her lifelong commitment to Spanish dance, music art and education. Gracias, Dame Libby.*” – Paloma Gomez

Music: Rodrigo Leao
Choreographer, Dancer and Costume Designer (2009): Paloma Gomez
Lighting Design: Joshua Preston

Viva Galicia - Folkloric

From Spain’s northwestern province of Galicia - the dancer’s steps look Scotch/Irish and were brought to Spain with the Celtic invasion during the 14th century.

Choreography (2008): Paloma Gomez and Christian Lozano
Costume Design: Nana Lorca
Costume Production: Christine Fransen
Lighting Design: Margaret Nelson
Dancers: Company

– Intermission –

Act II
Flamenco Passion

All music by: Manuel Palacin, Flamenco singer; Paco Fonta, Flamenco singer and guitarist;
Mateo, Flamenco guitarist; Javier Saume Mazzei, percussionist

Zapateado

A portrayal of the herders, herding the bulls to the fields on horseback - Dance of the Shoes.

Choreography Section 1 (1976): Dame Libby Komaiko and Paco Alonso

Costume Design and Production: Paco Alonso and Dolores Decano

Lighting Design: Dame Libby Komaiko and Michael Mix

Dancers: Company

Zorongo Gitano

The Zorongo Gitano music, written and recorded in 1931 by Federico Garcia Lorca, one of Spain's greatest poets, dramatists and theatre directors, was originally accompanied by La Argentinita. In this creation the choreographers display the poet's words of love and desire to the contrapositions of darkness and death.

Choreography, Dancers and Costume Designers (2009): Paloma Gomez and Christian Lozano

Anhelo del Alma

(Longing of the Soul)

With Moorish and Arabic origins, this song/dance in the Tientos and Tangos Flamenco styles derived from the Zambra and Caribbean influence in the 19th century through the province of Cadiz. It is in the Cantes Chico (light songs) and Cante Intermedio (intermediate songs) style in the *compás* (rhythm) of four.

Choreography, Dancers and Costume Design (2010): Claudia Pizarro,

Crystal Ruiz and Olivia Serrano

Costume Production: Luz Creations

Lighting Design: Margaret Nelson

Una Obra de Arte

(A Work of Art)

This rhythmical dance in the *compás* of four is traditionally danced by men.

Choreography and Costume Design (1999/ Revised 2010): Jorge Pérez

Choreographic Collaboration (1999): Joel Maisonet

Lighting Design: Jorge Pérez and Margaret Nelson

Dancers: Jorge Pérez, Jose Torres, Israel Sanchez, Sean Arana and Omar Roman

No Me Olvides

(Do Not Forget Me) (Romerías)

Choreography and Costume Design (2008): Irma Suarez Ruiz

Costume Production: Luz Creations

Lighting Design: Joshua Preston

Dancers: Company

Feria Andaluz

(Sevillanas)

Depicting the “Ferias of Andalucia” Sevillanas is one of Spain’s “national dances” in the Cante por Baile (song for dance) style, in the *compás* (rhythm) of six, from the province of Seville.

Choreography (1976): Traditional

Staging and Lighting Design: Dame Libby Komaiko

Costume Design: Dame Libby Komaiko, Irma Suarez Ruiz and Paco Alonso

Costume Production: Paco Alonso and Luz Creations

Dancers: Full Company

Anda Jaleo

(Bulerias)

Choreographers (2010): Carmela Greco, Paloma Gomez, Christian Lozano and Dancers

Costume Design: Dame Libby Komaiko, Irma Suarez Ruiz, Paco Alonso,

Paloma Gomez and Christian Lozano

Dancers: Company, Paloma Gomez and Christian Lozano

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Dances of Spain: Classical, Folkloric and Flamenco

The history of Spain is rich with foreign cultures - the Greeks, the Romans, the Moors, the Celts - to name a few. Pride, elegance, passion, the wide range of emotions, the lively *tacaneo* (footwork), the singing castanets and hypnotic rhythms - all of this is seen in the dance of Spain. The origin of all dances of Spain is regional or folk. Spain has 49 provinces, each province having at least 15 dances of its own. The dances are divided into three basic types: Regional, Classical and Flamenco. The Regional dances depict the Spanish people and their diverse provincial customs and styles. The Classical dances portray the varied styles of the Renaissance, Baroque, Court Dances, *Escuela Bolera* (Bolero School) and Semi-Classical (Twentieth Century, Contemporary) dances and music. Flamenco is a culture unto itself.

The theories of the origin of Flamenco are never agreed upon, even by the experts. The guitar and singing (*Cante Flamenco*) represent the Andalusian Province, a combination of ancient Arabic, Indian, Hebraic and Moorish styles. The word *Flamenco* originally meant “Flemish,” after the band of gypsies, tall and thin like the flamingo that came to Spain in the 18th century. Flamenco consists of the *cante* (singing), *palmas* (hand clapping), the guitars and the dancers. There are five basic types of Flamenco song: the *Cante Jondo* (deep song), *Cante Chico* (light song), Cante Intermedio (intermediate), *Cante por Cante* (song for singing) and *Cante por Baile* (song for dancing). Today, Flamenco is associated with Andalusia - its contradictions, its dynamics, its sorrows and its joys.

Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Theater and Center

Mission

The Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Theater, under the artistic leadership of Founder Dame Libby Komaiko and Associate Artistic Director Irma Suárez Ruiz, is the premier Spanish Dance Company and Center in the United States to have “in residence” status at a university, Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago. The Ensemble Español is a not-for-profit arts and education corporation. The company’s mission is the preservation, presentation and promotion of the classical, folkloric, flamenco and contemporary traditions of Spain, which includes the exploration of the country’s history and identifies its influence on Latin American art and heritage as living sources of cultural pride and education. Dame Libby, Professor of Dance in the Department of Music and Dance at Northeastern Illinois University, is also the Co-Founder and Artistic Director of the Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Youth Company and the founder and originator of the first and complete academic program for Spanish dance in America.

History

The company, founded in 1976 by artistic director Dame Libby Komaiko, comprises 40 dancers, singers and musicians representing a mosaic of cultures from around the world.

The Ensemble Español celebrates *Spain in America* by presenting and promoting cultural pluralism at the community, state, national and international levels, and at the annual American Spanish Dance Festival administered by the Ensemble. The company shares a rich history and mission of commitment to inter-American and inter-Hispanic world cultures. Within these cultural contexts, the Ensemble represents classical, ethnic, folkloric and contemporary traditions as living sources of cultural pride and education.

Today, the Ensemble Español is praised by educators, social agencies, the professional arts world, journalists, and American and Hispanic world governments.

The Ensemble appears in a broad range of formats, such as television, opera, film, symphonic, including with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and works in cultural and educational arts programs developed with state, national and international government agencies. The Ensemble Español has performed throughout the United States, including Hawaii, the Midwest, Mid-Atlantic and Puerto Rico, and on four continents in the countries of Mexico, Costa Rica, Poland, Australia and China, and at every major theater and university in Chicago and Illinois. The company maintains a touring program, nationally and internationally.

An extraordinary repertoire of over 125 works (Spanish ballets, traditional folkloric suites and Flamenco dramas) by Dame Libby Komaiko, Edo, Maria Alba, Victorio Korjhan, Roberto Lorca, Irma Suarez Ruiz and Spain’s legendary dancers and choreographers; Juan Mata and Ana Gonzalez, founding members and former first dancers of the National Ballet of Spain; Timo Lozano, Paco Alonso, Carmela Greco, Paloma Gomez, Christian Lozano, Juanjo Linares, foremost authority on folklore; and Flamenco master Manolete, to name a few, exemplifies the Ensemble’s dedication to its cultural and artistic mission.

The Company's remarkably rich history includes . . .

- over 90 company dancers representing nearly 20 countries and cultures
- over 160 youth dancers from ages 12 to 18
- over 60 international guest artists and musicians from Spain and the Americas
- over 125 full-length choreographies created for the company
- over 2,600 scholarships awarded to talented aspiring dancers and musicians
- tours of Illinois, the Midwest, Mid-Atlantic, Hawaii, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, Poland, Australia and China following the Olympics in 2008
- over 1.4 million in concert audiences
- over 6 million television viewers worldwide watching the Ensemble Español perform at the opening ceremonies of the 1994 World Cup in Chicago

Artist Biographies

Dame Libby Komaiko, *Founder and Artistic Director*

Dame Libby's innovative, unique and visionary career has encompassed art, education and culture. Her passionate pioneering creations are respected and hailed throughout the Americas and internationally. In 1983 she became the first American artist in history to be decorated with Spain's highest honor, the "Lazo de Dama de Isabel la Católica" by Juan Carlos I, King of Spain, for her superlative work in spreading the cultural and artistic values of Spain throughout the United States.

Dame Libby began her dance training and performance in classical ballet and character dance as a young child with Elisa Stigler at the Chicago Musical College of Roosevelt University. As a teen, she studied and performed Jazz, Modern and Musical Theater with Gus Giordano. At the age of 18, she was discovered by the legendary José Greco and given the opportunity to learn and perform with his world famous Spanish Dance Company.

Her beloved journey into the Spanish dance world also led her to the company of Lola Montes. Dame Libby's career includes musical theater, opera, television, film and orchestra, including guest performances with Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops with the Ensemble Espanol as well as performances with the Detroit Symphony, the Evanston and Skokie Valley Symphonies, and repeated performances with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. She has been the choreographer and coach for several Chamber Opera Chicago performances. She studied in Spain and the United States with Elisa Stigler, Gus Giordano, Maria Alba, Nana Lorca, Lola Montes, José Greco, Edo, Manolo Vargas, Paul Haakon, María Magdalena, Pedro Azorin, Ciro, Pacita Tomas and Roberto Lorca, with whom she partnered for several years.

In 1975 Dame Libby created and founded the *Ensemble Español*, the premier Spanish Dance Center and Company in the United States to have "in residence" status at a university, Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago. Today, what began with a company of seven is now a full company of 40 dancers and musicians. She choreographed half of the company's extensive 125 plus choreographic works and produced their major international Flamenco ballets and dramas, folkloric suites and classic modern interpretations with guest artists from Spain and the Americas: Juan Mata, Ana Gonzalez, William Carter, Manolete, Paco Alonso, Juanjo Linares, Carmela Greco, Timo Lozano and Paloma Gomez.

As Professor of Dance in the Department of Music and Dance at Northeastern Illinois University, where the *Ensemble Español* has been in residence for 36 years, she created and developed the first complete academic program for Classical, Folkloric and Flamenco dance and music in the U.S.

Paloma Gomez, *Guest Artist, Dancer, Choreographer, and Founder and Artistic Director of De Lunares Danza*

Paloma Gómez was born in Málaga, Spain. She started her training at the school of the Ballet Nacional de España (National Ballet of Spain), under the direction of María de Ávila, at the age of 12, and later moved on to study classical ballet, contemporary dance and Spanish dance at Lola de Ávila's school. In 1989 she entered the BNE under the direction of José Antonio. With the BNE she toured several of the most important stages in the world: Argentina, Tokyo and the United States. In 1998 she was invited to interpret the main role in the production *Federico* at the Joyce Theatre in New York. In 2000 Paloma created her own company, De Lunares Danza, traveling throughout Spain as well as to the United Kingdom, Holland and Venezuela.

In 2006, she was invited by the Taipei Arts International Association to choreograph the musical *Carmen 2006* before 8,000 spectators. Dame Libby, the Ensemble Español, Northeastern Illinois University and Siegel Artist Management are honored to welcome Ms. Paloma Gomez to this performance, her fifth appearance with the company.

Christian Lozano, *Guest Artist, Dancer and Choreographer*

Christian Lozano was a member of the Ballet Nacional de España (National Ballet of Spain) from 2000 to 2006 under the direction of Aida Gomez, performing in the choreographies of *Grito* by Antonio Canales, *Concierto de Aranjuez* by Pilar Lopez and *Leyenda* by Jose Antonio, as soloist. As First Dancer, he was featured in *Elegia* by Jose Antonio; *Taranto* by Antonio Canales; Jason in *Medea* by José Granero; Frondoso in *Fuenteovejuna* by the legendary Antonio Gades; and in *El Loco*, choreographed by Javier Latorre.

Christian is currently a guest dancer in Ramón Oller's Metros Company and principal dancer in Aida Gomez's Company. He has also been a guest artist in the Adelaide Dance Festival 2004 in Australia. Other guest residencies include with the Manuel Nuñez Spanish dance company, José de la Vega Company, Color Danza Company and the Nuevo Ballet Español. Dame Libby, the Ensemble Español, Northeastern Illinois University and Siegel Artist Management are honored to welcome Mr. Lozano to this, his fifth appearance with the company.

Irma Suárez Ruíz, *Associate Artistic Director, First Dancer, Rehearsal Mistress, Instructor, Teacher, Choreographer, Director of Education and Community Outreach, Professor of Dance at NEIU*

Ms. Ruíz was born in Chicago, and then moved to Mexico City to live with her family. Her formal dance training in classical ballet and Spanish dance began with Dame Libby Komaiko in 1979. She graduated with honors from NEIU with a BA in Foreign Languages and Literature and a minor in Dance. Irma has been honored with the Artistic Ambassador Award from the Ruth Page Foundation and NEIU in recognition of her artistic achievements and contributions to dance internationally. Irma is on the dance faculty of NEIU and was a guest choreographer for the Civic Ballet's production of *Black Tights/Spanish Rhythms* presented by the Ruth Page Dance Series. Irma is married to

Antonio Ruíz and they are the proud parents of five children, Crystal, Tiffany, Brandon, Tyler and Collin.

Jorge Pérez, *First Dancer, Assistant to the Directors, Rehearsal Master, Teacher, Choreographer, Executive Director*

Mr. Pérez was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He began his formal study of Spanish dance with Dame Libby Komaiko in 1985 after receiving a scholarship apprenticeship. Jorge is a graduate of NEIU with a BA in Speech Communication/Performing Arts and a minor in Dance. Jorge has been honored with the Artistic Ambassador Award from the Ruth Page Foundation and NEIU in recognition of his artistic achievements and contributions to dance internationally. In 2002 he received an Appreciation Award from Richard M. Daley, Mayor of Chicago, for his exceptional contribution to the arts in Chicago. In 2004, Jorge Pérez and Irma Suarez Ruiz were honored with the Twentieth Anniversary Award from the St. Louis Cultural Flamenco Society. His accomplishments are listed in *Who's Who Among Hispanic Americans*, *Who's Who Among Business Leaders of America* and *Who's Who in Dance*.

Sara Samuels, *Principal Dancer, Teacher, Assistant Artistic Director of the Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Youth Company*

Ms. Samuels, a native of Chicago, began ballet training at the age of 6 with Lilette Rohe of the Lilette Rohe School of Ballet in Evanston. Sara received an NEIU Talent dance scholarship from the dance program of the music department at NEIU. She began her Spanish dance studies with Dame Libby Komaiko in 1991. Sara toured with the company to Puerto Rico in 1994 as production assistant. In September of that year she was awarded a scholarship apprenticeship to the Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Theatre and became a full company dancer in 1996. Sara has taught Flamenco dance classes for Northwestern University's Dance Department in Evanston, is on the faculty of the Ensemble Español Flamenco dance workshops for the community, and NEIU's Summer Transitional Program.

José Torres, *Principal Dancer*

Mr. Torres is from Bayamon, Puerto Rico, and began his formal dance training with Dame Libby Komaiko as a member of the All-City Jr. Ensemble Español at the age of 16 in 1995. In 1997 he was promoted to the professional company and in 2002 was promoted to Principal Dancer. José has taught Spanish Dance for the Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Theatre community outreach and education programs. He was also a guest teacher for the Midwest Cecchetti Council of America at the Lake Forest Dance Academy during the fall of 2006. Through NEIU's Enlace program, José taught Flamenco at Casals Elementary School in Humboldt Park for the Family Focus after-school program. José traveled to Australia in 2007 and 2008 on the invitation of Danza Viva Spanish Dance Company as a guest performer, choreographer and teacher to rave reviews. He spent this past summer furthering his Spanish dance studies in Spain.

Claudia Pizarro, *Principal Dancer*

Ms. Pizarro was born in Chihuahua, Mexico. At the age of 12 she moved to Chicago with her family. She was introduced and began studying Flamenco in 2002 while attending the Summer Transition Program of Northeastern Illinois University. In the fall of 2002 she began her formal dance training with Dame Libby Komaiko. In January of 2003 she was awarded a scholarship apprenticeship to the Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Theatre, and in January of 2004 was promoted to full company dancer. Claudia has also studied

in the American Spanish Dance Festival with Juan Mata, Ana González, Timo Lozano, Edo, Vida Peral, Manolete, Carmela Greco, Paloma Gomez and Cristian Lozano. Claudia graduated in the spring of 2008 from NEIU with a major in Finance. Last year, Claudia was promoted to principal dancer.

Israel Sánchez

Mr. Sánchez, native of Chicago, began his dance training with Ballet Isleño Puertorriqueño at the age of 12 while living in Puerto Rico in 1979. In 1989 he transferred to Northeastern Illinois University to complete his degree in Speech and Performing Arts with a minor in Dance, graduating in December 1993. While attending NEIU, he began his Spanish dance study with Dame Libby Komaiko and the Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Theatre. He became a company dancer with in 1994. In 2004, Northeastern Illinois University presented the Excellence in Fine Arts award to Israel. Partnering with Sara Samuels, Israel taught at the Joyce Kilmer School for the Ensemble's residency program, funded by the Illinois Arts Council, and at Linne Elementary School via NEIU's Hispanic Serving Institute Title V grant.

Crystal Ruíz

Ms. Ruíz of Mexican-Puerto Rican descent was born and raised in Chicago. She is the daughter of Irma Suarez Ruíz, the company's Associate Artistic Director. She began her formal dance training as a small child with Dame Libby Komaiko, and first performed at the age of 4 with the Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Theatre. She has studied in Spain at the Amor de Dios Flamenco Dance Academy with Candela Soto. Crystal has also studied at the American Spanish Dance and Music Festival with many guest artists throughout her career. In 2002, Crystal was promoted to apprentice after dancing with the All City Jr Ensemble Español since 1997. In 2003 she was promoted to Company Dancer. Crystal is a graduate of Northwestern University and is currently pursuing her master's degree in Child Development at Erikson Institute. Crystal spent this past summer furthering her Spanish dance studies in Spain.

Julia Hinojosa, Assistant Artistic Director of the Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Youth Company, Teacher, Arts Education Program Coordinator

Ms. Hinojosa, of Mexican-Puerto Rican descent, is a native of Chicago. She began her Spanish dance studies with Dame Libby Komaiko in the fall of 2000. In May 2004, Julia graduated with honors and received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and a Dance minor from NEIU. She recently graduated from Columbia College with her master's degree in Arts Management. Julia is currently working as an instructor with the NEIU Community Children's Dance program and on the faculty of the Ensemble Español's community dance workshops. She will be joining the faculty at NEIU's El Centro campus teaching Introduction to Spanish Dance. Julia spent this past summer furthering her Spanish dance studies in Spain.

Olivia Serrano

Ms. Serrano of Puerto Rican and Mexican descent was born and raised in Chicago. Olivia began taking dance classes at the age of 10 at the Chicago Park District studying ballet, modern and jazz dance for six years. In 2003, she auditioned for the All City Jr Ensemble Español and began her formal dance training with Dame Libby Komaiko. In 2004, Olivia was promoted to apprentice and in 2005 was promoted to full company dancer. Olivia has also studied with Juan Mata, Ana Gonzalez, Carmela Greco, Manolete, Paloma Gomez, Christian Lozano and ballet with Anna Czjaun. Olivia spent this past summer furthering

her Spanish dance studies in Spain. Olivia is a graduate of the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Sean Arana

Mr. Arana of Guatemalan descent was born in Chicago. Sean began his formal Spanish dance training in 2005 with Dame Libby Komaiko and the Ensemble Español. In 2006 he auditioned for the Ensemble Español and was awarded a scholarship apprenticeship. In 2009 he was promoted to full company dancer. Sean has also studied with guest artists from Spain at the American Spanish Dance and Music Festival. He has performed with the Flamenco Company, Soleo. Sean graduated from NEIU in May 2010 with a BA in Spanish Education and a Dance minor.

Omar Roman, *Apprentice*

Mr. Roman of Mexican descent was born and raised in Chicago. He began studying ballroom dancing at the age of 17 at his community YMCA. In the spring of 2008 he began his formal Spanish dance studies with Dame Libby Komaiko and in June of 2009 performed with the Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Theatre for the American Spanish Dance Festival. That year he was awarded a Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) dance scholarship from the Music Department and the Dance program studying ballet and jazz. He has also studied with Irma Suarez Ruiz, Jorge Pérez, Carmela Greco, Paloma Gomez and Christian Lozano. He recently graduated from Northeastern Illinois University with a major in French and minor in Dance.

Abigail Ventura, *Understudy*

Ms. Ventura of Puerto Rican and Dominican descent began her Spanish dance training in the After School Matters (ASM) Spanish Dance Theater outreach program at the age of 17 at the Ensemble Espanol Center at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU). She has also studied ballet, lyrical, step and tango. Abby auditioned for the Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Youth Company program immediately following the AFM program and after one season received a scholarship to the professional company as understudy. She is a student at Northeastern Illinois University on a dance talent scholarship via the Department of Music and the Dance Program and is the recipient of the Brommel-Komaiko-Pérez Spanish Dance Scholarship.

Musicians

Manuel Palacín, *Guest Artist, Flamenco Singer*, was born in San Miguel de Jerez de la Frontera, Spain. Manuel Palacín began singing in the theater at the age of 5. In 1972 he performed throughout Madrid in all of the major *tablaos* including the Torres Bermejas, Corral de la Moreria, Coral de la Pacheca and Venta del Gato. Throughout his long career he has worked with many great artists including Manuel Vargas, Merche Esmeralda, Eva la Yerbabuena, Sara Lezana, Blanca del Rey, Juan Mata, Jose, Carmela and Lola Greco, and Joaquin Cortes to name a few. He has performed in the companies of Ballet Conchita del Mar, Ballet Siluetas, Compañía de Fernando Belmonte, Jose Antonio y los Ballets Españoles and the Ballet Nacional de España performing on five continents.

Paco Fonta, *Flamenco Singer and Guitarist*, is internationally recognized as an outstanding Flamenco guitarist singer, and composer. He has been praised as an accomplished singer of *cante jondo* (deep song), the most authentic, profound and difficult of Flamenco styles. Born in a small town near Jaen in the Andalusian region of Spain, he began his professional career performing in *tablaos* and festivals accompanying

singers and dancers such as La Nina de la Huerta and Antonio Molina. He later toured Europe with the Kurt Savoy Trio. He has won numerous awards including first place at the Cante Flamenco Festival in Jaen, Spain. Mr. Fonta came to Miami in 1986 with his wife Celia, a well-known Flamenco dancer, to open the famous Cacharrito's Place Tablao in Miami. Mr. Fonta's guitar can be heard on Gloria Estefan's hit record *Cuts Both Ways*, the hit song "Tu Amor" by Olga Tañon, David Beisbal's *Bulerias* and many other recordings with Latin artists. Mr. Fonta has been a guest artist with the Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Theatre since 1979.

Scott Mateo Davis, *Flamenco Guitarist*, began studying guitar at age 9. Upon completing high school, he traveled extensively for four years, performing as a folk singer in diverse venues in London, Casablanca, Stockholm and New Delhi. After returning to Minneapolis, Davies founded the pop group The Rogues, touring the Midwest for 11 years. While on the road, he began playing classical guitar. In 1982, Davies moved to Madrid where he began intensive study of the flamenco guitar. He returns to Spain each year to perform and continue his studies. Two of his performances have been broadcast on Radio Nacional de España. From 1986 to 1998 Davies was the featured guitarist and 'ud player for Voices of Sepharad, a musical group dedicated to performing the music and dance of Spanish Jewish culture. In May of 1995, Voices of Sepharad received the prestigious Robert and Adelle S. Blank Jewish Arts Award, at a special awards ceremony in New York. Mateo has been the featured guitarist for Chicago's Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Theater since 1989 including national and international performances with the company in Puerto Rico, 1994 World Cup and most recently China in the cities of Shenyang, Qinhuangdao, Anshan and Beijing, following the 2008 Olympics.

Javier Saume Mazzei, *Percussionist* is a native of Caracas, Venezuela. He began playing percussion at the age of 8. He holds a BA in Music from Chicago College of Performing Arts, Roosevelt University, where he studied classical percussion with Ed Harrison, drum set with Phil Grateau and Paul Wertico, and latin percussion with Ruben Alvarez. Javier has performed with Rhonda Richmond, Reginald Veal, Herlin Riley, Cassandra Wilson and the Symphony Orchestra Sistema de Orquestas Juveniles de Venezuela. Javier has performed internationally in concerts, master classes and residencies in Beijing, China, and at the Kennedy Center of the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, and Carnegie Hall in New York City with Sones de Mexico Ensemble. He has recorded with Middle Eastern jazz artists Omar Al-Musfi and Hi Jazz. Javier currently records and performs with Sones de Mexico Ensemble, the only group in NARAS history to be nominated for the Latin Grammy and Grammy in the same year.

Technical Production

Margaret L. Nelson, *Stage Manager, Technical Director/Lighting Designer*, USA 829, has received two Ruth Page Dance Achievement Awards for Lighting Design and Stage Management in the dance community and a Joseph Jefferson Citation for Lighting Design at the Organic Theatre. Margaret's design projects and production management have taken her to every state of the USA and six continents. She has taught Lighting Master Classes from Northwestern University to Duluth, MN, to Montevideo, Uruguay.