



FLAMENCO VIVO CARLOTA SANTANA

"100 YEARS OF FLAMENCO IN NEW YORK"

March 12-August 3, 2013

The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Vincent Astor Gallery

The New York Times

A Spanish Dance on American Shores, '100 Years of Flamenco in New York,' at Public Library

By ALASTAIR MACAULAY

Published: March 28, 2013

flamenco have been included in other New York exhibitions. This, however, is the first of the city's own flamenco history, and it reveals how central episodes of the history of flamenco itself have often occurred in this city.

My first tour included prints, photographs, posters, costumes, castanets, programs and books. Later visits have focused on the extraordinary selections of flamenco on film. Rarest of all is 1918 footage of the dancer La Macarrona (Juana Vargas) recorded in Spain by the Russian dancer-choreographer Leonide Massine. He was preparing his own Spanish ballet, "Le Tricorne" (with designs by Picasso and music by Manuel de Falla), in which Diaghilev's Ballets Russes danced in Spanish style; Massine's film is now one of the many treasures of Spanish dance housed in the New York Public Library. Another is the oldest film of Spanish dance in America, "Carmencita," made by Thomas Edison with a Vitascope projector in 1894 and lasting less than a minute.

As these examples demonstrate, the exhibition is not focused on this city's flamenco history alone. Nor does it cover just 100 years. It ranges from the 1830s to our own century, from Europe to America, and its images of dancers include not only pure flamenco stylists but also modern dancers who adopted Spanish idioms and exponents of other Spanish traditional dance genres.

Here is the ballerina Fanny Elssler dancing her celebrated Spanish cachucha. (Her 1840-42 American tour was one of the triumphs of her career.) Here are Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn, parents to so much of American modern dance early in the last century, in their Spanish "Malagueña." And here is Shawn dancing it again with Martha Graham. These photos are black and white; also on display, however, is the splendid green jacket worn by Shawn.

Spanish dancers abound on these walls: Carmencita (Carmen Dauset Moreno) and La Cuenca (Trinidad Huertas), who both appeared in New York late in the 19th century; La Argentina (Antonia Mercé Y Luque); La Argentinita (Encarnación López Júlvez); Carmen Amaya; and Antonio Ruiz Soler; through to stars of recent decades, like Antonio Gades, Carlota Santana, Soledad Barrio, Israel Galván. I was moved to see pictures of Mario Maya, whose dance company and whose own dancing in the early 1980s did much to develop my own love of flamenco.

It's no news that New York was an important city for flamenco artists to visit, but this exhibition taught me how, in the mid-20th century, New York was an important place for flamenco's own history to develop. During the decades of fascism, many Spaniards moved here permanently; during World War II, it was here that La Argentinita, Amaya and Ruiz Soler were based. All of them, like the pivotal La Argentina earlier, emerge as distinct characters of highly individual styles.

The show also makes much of the male tradition in flamenco: Vicente Escudero, José Greco (an American), Maya, Gades and Galván. Yet if this is a tradition, it is one that has contained contradictions and corrections. Flamenco masculinity has had to be continually redefined.

It's worth studying the 16-page booklet that accompanies this show. More instructive yet is the library's new 180-page book, also called "100 Years of Flamenco in New York City," edited by Ninotchka Bennahum and K. Meira Goldberg. But neither of these

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claims to be a complete catalog. The exhibition, which has a few photographs and items reproduced in neither publication, must be seen in its own right. It contains classic recordings too; flamenco is not itself without music of equal caliber. How fascinating and instructive to see here how an American city and a Spanish dance idiom cross-fertilized each other. This vivid collection enriches our ideas of both this genre and this city.



THE NEW YORKER

The Gypsy in my Soul

By: JOAN ACOCELLA

Published: April 2013

As late as the nineteen twenties, some Spaniards felt that only Gypsies had the requisite *duende*, or soul, to perform flamenco. Soon it was discovered that many non-Gypsies had snuck under the wire. This fact is beautifully illustrated in the show “100 Years of Flamenco in New York,” launched by the famous teacher Carlota Santana and curated by the flamenco scholars Ninotchka Bennahum and K. Meira Goldberg, which is now at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. My favorite item is a 1918 film of

La Macarrona – what arms! what torso action! – dancing in a dusty Andalusian plaza. (This film was taken by Ballet Russes star Leonide Massine.) Another clip shows Carmen Amaya, billed by Sol Hurok as “the human Vesuvius,” dancing on a table and then knifing a guy who has annoyed her. A number of Americans changed their names and became flamencos. A nice example is Henriette Yedid-Halevi Lubart, from Poughkeepsie, who, having run off with a Gypsy *cantaor*, became “La Tibu.” What did her parents say?



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100 Years of Flamenco in New York

By: MONA MOLARSKY

Published: April 29, 2013

The story of flamenco in New York is a long and rich one—far too complicated to fit into one room, no matter how big. But you get a sense of the many strands in “100 Years of Flamenco in New York,” an exhibition at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. The gallery walls are covered with images of the Spanish beauties of yesteryear—some posing like matadors, others whirling in ruffled skirts or brandishing castanets, their lips painted a waxy red, or so we deduce from the black-and-white photographs.

There are also pictures of stomping men, and those wearing broad-brimmed hats. There are cases filled with newspaper clippings, green satin jackets and even a 1951 José Ramirez guitar signed by legendary dancer Vicente Escudero. Best of all are four video screens where you can watch historic footage of some of the artists, dancing and even talking about their art. These are just a few of the many evocative pieces of a historical jigsaw puzzle organized by Carlota Santana, director of the Flamenco Vivo dance company, and curated by flamenco scholars K. Meira Goldberg and Ninotchka Bennahum.

From the late-18th century until the present day, Spanish dancers and musicians have trouped across New York stages, presenting audiences with a variety of Spanish traditions of varying authenticity. Ranging from the folkloric to the balletic, many of the early shows had little to do with flamenco, nor did they pretend to. To American audiences, who knew little of Spanish culture, it was all the same. Pretty señoritas in ruffles were all they required.

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La Argentina: the mother of theatrical Spanish dance

Things got more serious when the talented Antonia Mercé, *La Argentina*, (1888-1936), made her New York debut in 1917, dancing to music by classical composer Enrique Granados. A dozen years later, she'd become the darling of New York and all of Europe, performing a repertoire of folk dances from Spain's many provinces, including the *jota* from Aragon and “the flamenco of Andalusia,” as one contemporary American critic put it.

For flamenco aficionados, quotes like that send up red flags. Flamenco is not a dance, or even a single musical form. It's a complex and varied musical tradition that may—sometimes—include dancers. To say that *La Argentina* danced “the flamenco” would be like saying that Natalia Osipova got up and “did the ballet.” Right away, you know the writer doesn't have a clue.

“100 Years of Flamenco in New York” necessarily relies on old news clips to tell much of its story. Many of them are misinformed. The curators rightly point out “the exoticizing gaze of New York critics” and suggest that flamenco developed here partly in response to what American critics and audiences expected. They also show how the flamenco scene became a melting pot of many cultures. Ballet, modern dance, jazz and Latin American traditions helped shape the shows appearing on New York stages.

The show's commentary explains that many of these dancers weren't Spanish at all. Carola Goya (1906-1994) was born Carol Weller in the U.S.A. and dyed her hair black before launching her career. José Greco (1918-2000), a world-famous star during the '40s, and '50s, was an Italian named Costanzo Greco Bucci, raised in Brooklyn. Even *La Argentina*, in many ways the mother of theatrical Spanish dance, was born—as her name suggests—in Argentina. The charmingly styled Andalusian dances she offered in her repertoire were a far cry from what most people think of today when they think of flamenco.

Carmen Amaya: a flamenco revolution

The 1941 arrival in New York of legendary Gypsy dancer Carmen Amaya (1917-1963) was a revolutionary moment. First among flamenco's dancing greats, she is still remembered with awe by those old enough to have seen her. In the library's Vincent Astor Gallery, she stares down from the red wall, looking as self-possessed as a young Rudolph Nureyev. In each pose, her features seem seized by a laser-like emotional focus.

Unlike most of the other women pictured on these walls, Amaya was not a conventional beauty by either American or Spanish standards. Her skin was bronze, her hips narrow, and she lacked the “regal carriage” expected of Spanish dancers. In fact, most Spaniards of her day wouldn't have considered her Spanish. That's because Amaya was a Gypsy, or a *gitana*, a member of a despised ethnic group that had been denied access to mainstream Spanish society for generations. While many professional Spanish dancers learned their craft in genteel dance academies to the sound of tinkling pianos, Amaya grew up in the streets of Barcelona, performing for coins, accompanied by her guitarist father. Her flamenco was the actual *flamenco gitano*.

On stage there was nothing of the “gentler sex” about her. Amaya's face alone conveyed more intensity than most dancers express with their entire bodies. Her magnificent furrowed brow, narrowed eyes and flared nostrils epitomized everything that classical Spanish dancing was not. This powerful mien carried through her every movement. When she spun, she attacked with the speed and ferocity of a leopard.

But, more than anything, it was the complex rhythms she created with her hands and feet that marked Amaya as a superb artist. Her partnership with Gypsy guitarist Agustín Castellón Campos, better known as Sábicas, was a collaboration between two great musicians who improvised within the traditional and highly proscribed structures of flamenco. The two can be heard performing an



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extraordinary *bulerías* that’s part of a tape loop playing at the exhibition. Visitors would do well to close their eyes and just listen to this tape, before feasting on the imagery in the show. First and last, flamenco is a musical tradition.

You can see Amaya dance in several of the video clips. In the music she uses, one can read the story of her career and also the story of flamenco as it left Spain and traveled around the world. In a 1939 film, “Embrujado del Fandango,” shot in Cuba just three years after she left Spain, Amaya is already dancing to orchestrated music, featuring strings, brass and woodwinds. It is far from traditional flamenco, but close in spirit to *paso doble* –bullfight music—popular among the Latin American audiences that had become her new market.

Flamenco’s mongrel nature

Every well-curated exhibition has a strong point-of-view, a series of ideas that form an argument. “100 Years of Flamenco in New York” argues for the multicultural nature of flamenco, both in this American city and beyond. It’s always been a mongrel art and always will be, is the implicit message that runs through the show.

Anyone who’s studied the history of flamenco, from its early beginnings to the present, knows this to be true. Flamenco was probably first forged in the nexus of Christian, Muslim and Jewish cultures that came together in medieval Spain; and it was likely tempered by the Gypsies who arrived in Iberia soon after. It has absorbed elements of many musical traditions in the centuries since.

In the last 50 years, some of New York’s most-respected flamenco performers have been Americans who moved to Spain, lived among that country’s “untouchables,” then brought elements of that distinctive *gitano* style home to American schools and theaters. The exhibition’s co-curator K. Meira Goldberg, *La Meira*, is one such researcher and dancer. Henriette Yedid-Halevi Lubart (1947–2003), known as *Tibu la Tormenta*, was another. The New York flamenco dance scene wouldn’t be what it is today without them—more evidence of flamenco’s international and ever-changing face.

Yet the more essential truth is that flamenco lives and breathes in Spain. It was born long ago in the patios and bars of Andalusian cities and pueblos. And it lives on there. For the flamencos of Spain, it’s more than an entertainment or a way to make a living. It’s a way of life, a musical and philosophical sensibility that permeates everything. For them, New York may be a stop on the tour, a lucrative booking. But mostly it’s just a station along the way.

Among the greatest flamenco artists of the last 100 years, the vast majority were born and bred in Iberia. Within that group, most have been *gitanos*. Many of their names are not well known in New York because they never or rarely toured. Some were so poor even Madrid seemed impossibly distant to them. If you really want to understand flamenco, their Andalusia is the place to start.

“100 Years of Flamenco in New York” is an exciting and provocative look at the history of this art on the New York stage. Soak yourself in its sounds and images. Follow some of its many intriguing threads. If you fall in love with New York flamenco, sooner or later you’ll probably end up in Spain.



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100 Años de flamenco en Nueva York

By: MARIO ANTA

Published: March 13, 2013

El Flamenco viene y va como los palos de ida y vuelta para quedarse y volver como las olas del océano Atlántico, para enriquecer un arte que se alimentó en sus inicios de la música y la danza morisca y española y que siguió creciendo con elementos de las culturas afroamericanas en épocas coloniales y en las de la era moderna a través de la globalización.

Entre Nueva York y España hace más de siglo y medio que se estableció un puente cultural para esta expresión artística, los posos de este intercambio han precipitado en forma de exposición multimedia abierta al público en la [Biblioteca Pública de Nueva York para las Artes Escénicas](#), *100 Años de Flamenco en Nueva York*.

Ahí es ná, que diría un flamenco, un siglo de la historia del amor de una ciudad por un arte que embruja a través de los elementos que posibilitaron la exhibición pública del sentimiento, la sensibilidad, la tragedia o la alegría de unos artistas ante un público que se sobrecoge escuchando una toná y que se emociona ante el desplante en un baile.

En el Lincoln Center neoyorquino se pueden ver y escuchar, desde este miércoles hasta el 3 de agosto, las castañuelas y sus trepidantes repiqueteos, los zapatos y sus resonantes taconeos, los vestuarios, programas, narraciones orales, películas, documentales rara vez vistos, grabados y fotografías de espectáculos de danza española en teatros de España y Nueva York.

Una serie de seminarios y conferencias, presentaciones en vivo y clases de flamenco en el Auditorio Bruno Walter complementarán la exposición

Primera exposición flamenca comisionada en EE.UU.

Con la colaboración de 'Flamenco Vivo Carlota Santana', escuela y compañía estable de danza flamenca en Nueva York desde hace 30 años, se ha posibilitado esta muestra, la primera comisionada en Estados Unidos de la mano de dos grandes investigadoras flamencas, Ninotchka Bennahum y K. Meira Goldberg.

Bennahum es coreógrafa, profesora universitaria de danza, autora de numerosos artículos sobre investigación cultural y del libro: *Antonia Mercé "La Argentina": Flamenco and the Spanish Avant Garde*.

'La Meira' es profesora de baile flamenco, formada en sus inicios en las academias de Los Ángeles y perfeccionada en los tablaos madrileños de los años 80. Su tesis doctoral sobre Carmen Amaya incluye numerosas entrevistas con personas que convivieron con la genial bailaora barcelonesa y que cristalizó en el libro *Border Trespases: The Gypsy Mask and Carmen Amaya's Flamenco Dance*. En la actualidad trabaja sobre un proyecto de investigación que titula: *Sonidos Negros: Meditations on the Blackness of Flamenco*.

Carlota Santana, fundadora y directora artística de la Compañía Flamenco Vivo, ha sido distinguida por el Gobierno de España con la Cruz de la Orden al Mérito Civil por "todos los años de excelencia y dedicación al arte flamenco." La medalla fue otorgada el 12 de marzo en la recepción inaugural de la exposición en la galería Vincent Astor del Lincoln Center.

Un arte de ida y vuelta

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Los viajes de ida comenzaron desde Andalucía con las compañías de baile bolero que desde 1830 llevaron el jaleo de Jerez, la cachucha, las seguidillas... a una América hospitalaria que deja constancia en los periódicos de la época.

Así en 1840 la prensa cubana refleja la actuación en Nueva York de la bailaora vienesa Fanny Elssler: “El evento presentó *Mujer de Cracovia*, *La Sílfi* y el baile español *El Jaleo de Jerez*. Después de este último, la audiencia pidió que la afamada bailaora repitiera casi cada paso y permaneció aplaudiendo hasta mucho después de que bajara el telón. Nunca en América se había saludado con semejante entusiasmo una actuación de baile.” *El Diario de La Habana*, 6 de Marzo de 1840.

“En la ciudad de Nueva York, la famosa bailaora española Pepita Soto ha regresado justamente de un viaje a California, donde en tres años ha ganado la sorprendente cantidad de 100.000 pesetas.” *El Porvenir*, Sevilla, 10 de Julio de 1858.

Dos muestras de las numerosas citas periodísticas que el investigador José Luis Ortiz Nuevo recoge en su libro *Mi gustar Flamenco Very Good* (1998), para pasearnos por los primeros tiempos de la relación.

Carmencita debutó en Nueva York en 1889 y su baile quedó registrado por el kinetoscopio de Edison, es una breve cinta muda actualmente archivada en la biblioteca del Congreso de los Estados Unidos y que se puede ver en '100 Años de flamenco en Nueva York'.

Este documento es también reflejo de la anticipación del inventor americano sobre el cinematógrafo de los franceses Lumière que rodaron *La salida de la fábrica* en 1894.

El siglo XX, el de oro

Con la llegada del siglo XX llegó el enamoramiento del público por Antonia Mercé, 'Argentina' y por su paisana Encarnación López 'La Argentinita', musa de Federico García Lorca en su estancia neoyorquina, juntos realizaron en 1931 una grabación de canciones populares españolas en discos gramofónicos en las que el poeta la acompañaba al piano. Alguna de aquellas cinco reliquias puede degustarse en la muestra.

En 1940, con el flamenco instalado en el alma estadounidense, llegó Carmen Amaya 'la Capitana' y con ella la pasión y la leyenda que acompañaron a la menuda bailaora y a su gente, de la que dicen que nació en 1913 y que falleció en 1963.

Agustín Castellón Campos 'Sabicas' era su acompañante con la guitarra y también lo fue como pareja sentimental algún tiempo. Este guitarrista, nacido en Pamplona en 1912, que posiblemente haya sido el mayor genio de las seis cuerdas flamencas, se quedó por territorio americano, a partir de 1963 hizo breves visitas a su país y falleció en Nueva York en 1990.

También los norteamericanos tuvieron su ídolo, José Greco, un bailar nacido en Italia en 1918 y nacionalizado estadounidense cuando hizo su viaje de ida con 10 años al Brooklyn neoyorquino. Fundó su compañía y giró de estado en estado. La primera aparición del genial guitarrista Paco de Lucía, con 14 años, ante el público estadounidense fue en su espectáculo en el que también bailó un joven Antonio Montoya Flores 'Farruco', fundador de una gran dinastía bailaora.

Más tarde llegó Vicente Escudero y su baile vanguardista, su impacto mediático le llevó a las páginas de la revista *Life*, en la que ya había aparecido la Amaya.

Le siguieron el incomparable 'Antonio el Bailarín', El Güito, Pilar López, Rafael de Córdoba, Mario Maya y su pareja Carmen Mora de quien nació en la ciudad de los rascacielos la excelente bailaora Belén Maya. Además de muchos otros hombres y mujeres



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que evolucionaron desde las tablas de las *vaudeville houses* (los cafés cantantes españoles) a las de las *concert halls*, cuya sala más emblemática, el Carnegie Hall, ha acogido tanto o más flamenco como el sevillano Teatro de la Maestranza.

El último gran flechazo que atravesó a la Gran Manzana fue el duende de Antonio Gades y su *Carmen*, en versión teatral junto a Cristina Hoyos y en la cinematográfica dirigida por Carlos Saura, obra intermedia (1983) en la trilogía compuesta por *Bodas de Sangre* (1981) y *El Amor Brujo* (1986).

La gran referencia para el cante flamenco moderno es José Monge Cruz 'Camarón de la Isla', un cantaor por derecho que en su disco *La Leyenda del tiempo* (1979) incorporó elementos del rock y del jazz y puso patas arriba al mundo flamenco con aquella novedad que tanto gustó a unos y tanto rechazo obtuvo de los puristas.

Camarón, nacido en 1950, llegó tarde a Estados Unidos, en 1990 se subió a los escenarios neoyorquinos y dos años después volvió para tratarse un cáncer por el que falleció en la Badalona olímpica de 1992.

Famoso sin saltar el charco

Quien nunca cruzó el charco fue el guitarrista Diego del Gastor y sin embargo tuvo tanta fama como sus colegas Carlos Montoya o Sabicas. Este genio de la improvisación residió casi toda su vida en Morón de la Frontera donde los estadounidenses comparten una base aérea desde 1953 con el ejército español.

Diego, nacido en 1908, siempre fue reacio a tocar ante el público, se sentía a gusto en las reuniones de cabaes y allí le conocieron y grabaron quienes tuvieron la suerte de escucharlo hasta que falleciera en 1973. Aquellas copias realizadas con magnetófonos de aficionados se distribuían por Estados Unidos procurando su fama internacional mientras que en España apenas era reconocido.

Uno de sus seguidores, Donn Pohren, un administrativo de la base y gran aficionado e investigador flamenco, alquiló una casa, la Finca Espartero, donde se organizaban fiestas, unas dedicadas a los turistas e ilustres norteamericanos que visitaban España en los felices sesentas y setentas y otras más íntimas, más cabaes.

Despuntando la transición española Kiko Veneno llegó a una de ellas después de que, Agustín Ríos, uno de los sobrinos de Diego le hubiera mostrado el camino del flamenco en su ida y vuelta a los Estados Unidos cuando el 'jipo' llegó allí en busca de Frank Zappa.

'Flamenco Festival USA' en el siglo XXI

El siglo XXI vio nacer en Nueva York un fenómeno muy importante, el 'Flamenco Festival USA', dirigido por Miguel Marín desde 2001. Ha conseguido la programación estable del flamenco en los grandes teatros norteamericanos: "Sara Baras (Nueva York): lleno y *standing ovation* (ovación de pie); Manuela Carrasco (Cleveland): lleno y *standing ovation*; Compañía Andaluza de Danza (Boston): lleno y *standing ovation*", relataba Miguel Mora en 2004 en *El País*.

La punta de un iceberg de fuego al que cada año acude todo el flamenco que puebla los carteles del arte, desde el más tradicional a las propuestas más vanguardistas.

Paco de Lucía, Enrique Morente, Carmen Linares, Sara Baras, Ballet Nacional de España, Vicente Amigo, Eva Yerbabuena, Estrella Morente, Tomatito, María Pagés, Manuela Carrasco, Israel Galván, Miguel Poveda, Gerardo Núñez, Muchachito Bombo Infierno, Carmen Cortés, Rocío Molina, Rafaela Carrasco, Canteca de Macao...

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...lo mejor de cada casa girando por Nueva York, Washington DC, Miami y Boston; a los que se añaden nuevos destinos: Japón (2005), París (2006), Pekín (2007), Bruselas (2008), Buenos Aires (2009), Shanghái (2010), Moscú (2011), Sao Paulo (2011), para conseguir una audiencia millonaria que financia el 80 por ciento del presupuesto de los conciertos.

En 2003 el Teatro Sadlers Wells de Londres se incorporó al circuito convirtiéndose en una cita anual ineludible en la capital británica. El próximo jueves celebra su décimo aniversario con un cartel que 'quita los sentíos': Eva Yerbabuena, Farruquito, Estrella Morente, Rocío Molina, Tomatito, Israel Galván y el Ballet Flamenco de Andalucía.

Del 15 al 27 de marzo se prevé que acudirán más de 22.000 visitantes a las veinte representaciones programadas. Otro feliz aniversario al que le deseamos un próximo centenario feliz.

En noviembre de 2010 la UNESCO calificó al flamenco como 'Patrimonio cultural inmaterial de la humanidad', un adjetivo buscado desde hacía muchos años por numerosas entidades y personas.

El investigador flamenco estadounidense, Brook Zern, fue una de ellas y se sumó a la petición con un [artículo dirigido al organismo internacional](#) en el que analizaba la relación de amor entre la manifestación cultural más representativa de España y la que más impacto emocional ha conseguido en Estados Unidos, el arte flamenco.