



# Flamenco Voice

## La Voz del Flamenco Newsletter



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Flamenco Voice informs members about local, provincial, and national flamenco issues and events, promotes flamenco culture and inspires participation in the flamenco arts scene.

### OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

In October of this year, Flamenco Rosario will take the award winning *Mis Hermanas* show to Mexico. Rosario and Victor have been working towards this for several years – the first international tour for the company.

It has been quite an undertaking. Along with developing the concept and working through the complex creative process with its elements of dance, music, character development, photos, movie clips, narration in English and Spanish and more have been such things as negotiations with presenters and theatres in Mexico, contracting the artists and making travel arrangements.

Funding had to be secured from various sources for the development of the show - the first performances in 2008, the 2010 remount in preparation for the tour and finally for the tour itself. In the midst of all this, Victor's heart attack in January 2008 was a terrible shock! Happily, he recovered rapidly and completely, The 2008 premiere shows went ahead as planned.

Flamenco Rosario has generally been well supported by the BC Arts Council, the City of Vancouver, the Simons Foundation and some other local and provincial funders. But it has never been easy. What the organization does with limited funds is truly amazing. There is never any slack in the budget. For this reason, the sudden cancellation of Gaming Grants and other reductions in provincial arts funding in 2009 were a great blow. They caused the cancellation of some Flamenco Rosario events and have made it difficult to make ends meet. The cancellation of a federal funding program for arts tours and lack of support from the Canada Council for the tour in 2009 caused a delay to 2010. A round of consultations and a renewed application to the Council this year brought success, finally putting the tour within reach.

But there was important encouragement too. When Rosario's production of *Mis Hermanas* and her contribution to dance in BC earned her the **2009 Isadora Award for Excellence in Choreography**, it was tremendous validation of her work and vision. This helped inspire Rosario and Victor to carry on.

"Mother Nature" has thrown another difficulty in the way now. In early July, a hurricane swept through parts of Mexico, leaving the city of Monterrey and nearby areas devastated.

You can follow this link on YouTube [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sEKotS\\_9efc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sEKotS_9efc) to see dramatic photos of the damage caused by flooding. Monterrey is one of the most important stops on the Flamenco Rosario tour. Although this is a fairly prosperous area, it is not surprising that most public resources are being diverted to repair the extensive damage to the city's infrastructure. Arts funding has been cut as a result.

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The Monterrey Flamenco Festival came close to being cancelled but organizers decided it was more important than ever to continue. However, they have had to drastically reduce the fees they had contracted to pay Flamenco Rosario and other performers. Other venues also cannot guarantee their original commitments. In Rosario's home province, the **Mis Hermanas** show is being converted into a fundraising event for flood victims. It will be held outdoors to allow for increased attendance.

Rosario, Victor and all the other artists involved are totally committed to the tour and will make it happen this year no matter what. They have come so far - there is no turning back. The Flamenco Rosario tour of Mexico will be a great success not only because it is a fully realized artistic creation but also because of the years of work, dedication and perseverance that have gone into it. Rosario's resilience and positive outlook through all of the ups and downs is nothing short of amazing. The life of an artist is not an easy one. Running an artistic enterprise in BC in these times is especially challenging. Everyone who loves flamenco is grateful for the work Rosario and Victor continue to do to present the highest calibre of flamenco to stages here and elsewhere. We can also take inspiration from the way they have overcome every obstacle to realize their dreams – dreams they share with all of us.

## HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT FLAMENCO ROSARIO

**Become a Member:** By becoming a member of the Flamenco Rosario Arts Society, you support Flamenco Rosario and help bring outstanding flamenco shows to the stage with local, national and international stars. You receive discounts on workshops and concerts with your membership and have access to members only events and services. Download a membership form from [flamencorosario.org](http://flamencorosario.org) or pick one up at Centro Flamenco.

**Become a Donor:** Funds are needed now for the **Mis Hermanas** tour to Mexico. We accept all funding donations or services donations with thanks. To donate, visit the Flamenco Rosario website, scroll down to the "Donate Now" button, click on button and follow the steps.

**For more information, call 604-737-1273.**

## NOTICIAS (WHAT'S HAPPENING)



### Mexican Tour

Yes! It's really happening! After years of work and many ups and downs caused by the poor funding climate for the arts in Canada and in BC in particular (especially for touring), the tour of **Mis Hermanas** to Mexico is going ahead this October. Performance dates and locations:

#### **MONTERREY, N.L.**

Festival Flamenco de Monterrey  
Teatro de la Ciudad - Friday, October 22, 2010.

Universidad Autonoma de Nuevo Leon, Monterrey, N.L.  
Teatro Aula Magna - Saturday, October 23, 2010.

#### **MONTEMORELOS, N.L.**

Museo Valle del Pilon - Sunday, October 24, 2010.

#### **MEXICO CITY**

Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes (INBA) Ciclo del Flamenco, in Mexico City  
Teatro de la Danza: Thursday, October 28; Friday, October 29; Saturday, October 30; Sunday, October 31.  
We know this show will be a smashing success in Mexico and we wish the entire company a great trip.

#### Tour to Orcas Island, USA

Orcas Island Centre - Saturday, November 20, 2010.

#### Cuadro Flamenco

Jazz Cellar: Friday, December 3 and Saturday, December 4, 2010.

Vancouver East Cultural Centre: Saturday, December 11, 2010.

With guest singer Momi de Cadiz. Featuring company members and recent graduates of the Professional Training Program.

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## EVENTS REPORT

### Artist in Residence 2010

Every year in July, Flamenco Rosario and Centro Flamenco brings a top flamenco artist from Spain or Mexico to demonstrate choreography. This gives West Coast flamenco students and professionals a chance study one or more of the flamenco forms intensively for two or three weeks. The program was developed by Jennifer Simons and is funded by the Simons Foundation. The Artist in Residence for 2010 was Andres Peña. He challenged local dancers to respond to the cante using bulerías and solea por bulería. It was a challenge! Added to the necessity of listening closely to the singing and identify places where the song calls for certain responses from the dancer, we also had to try and absorb the more relaxed and naturalistic Jerez bulería style. In the advanced classes, complex choreography was added. Like all the Artists in Residence we have had (Miguel Angel, Mariano Cruceta, Sabos Santos and Isabel Bayon), Andres was skilled at imparting his deep knowledge and love of flamenco. He was endlessly patient with the questions and limitations of those attending workshops. Our thanks to Andres for an exceptional and fascinating two weeks and to the Simons Foundation for their ongoing support of this excellent educational program.

### IN THE OFFICE: Janet Buckle

I first saw flamenco at the Vancouver Playhouse around 1992. Students made up the first half of the show with Rosario, Victor and their guest the second half. From then on, I was hooked. The students put on an impressive performance but seeing Rosario dance and hearing Victor's beautiful guitar playing sealed the deal. The whole spirit of flamenco appealed to me - its expressions of sadness, humor, joy, courage and daring. From then on, I attended every performance whether it was professional or student.

Having had no dance experience, it didn't occur to me that this was something I might do. As time progressed and I saw that it was a very inclusive art form, I decided to give it a try. I took my first class on a Tuesday morning in 1998, feeling extremely self-conscious, trying to be invisible, I needn't have worried. I soon felt very much at ease and enjoyed the class immensely. Tuesday mornings became the highlight of my week. The dance studio was a world apart, a true escape from the realities of everyday life. As time progressed, I started another class. I now take two classes a week, still on Tuesday mornings with some of the same people that were there on that first day.

My interest in flamenco has led to an interest in all things Spanish and two trips to Spain. In 2008, I went to Seville for the Biennale and to take classes. This was a wonderful experience that I will never forget.

I joined the Flamenco Rosario Board of Directors as Treasurer in 2004. The Board is made up of a group of dedicated volunteers who do an excellent job supporting Rosario and Victor and the Flamenco Arts Society in their quest to provide first class flamenco to audiences in Vancouver and promote the art of flamenco. They work hard but also have fun. The Board often hosts a reception for visiting artists which provides an opportunity to meet and mingle with the greats and partake of wonderful food and company. I enjoyed my time on the Board immensely.

My position as Board Treasurer grew into a part time position in the office - one day per week assisting Rosario, the Executive Director, with the business of running the Society. This brings me to Rosario and Victor. I feel we are lucky to have such a high level of professional flamenco available to us in Vancouver. Rosario is a beautiful dancer as well as an astute businesswoman who understands the business of flamenco as much as the art of flamenco. This unusual combination together with Victor's excellent musicianship and his role as Musical Director has grown the Society into what it is today - a professional company celebrating its twenty-first year of success in spite of seemingly insurmountable challenges along the way. Rosario and Victor, supported by the Flamenco Rosario Board of Directors keep at it. I am eternally grateful for this. May they never stop.



Janet Buckle at the office

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## TRAVELS WITH ROSARIO: Dawson City Music Festival, July 25, 1997



Dawson City Music Festival, July 1997



Dawson City Music Festival, July 1997

“Another Music Fest has passed, marking Dawson's 19th year of festing. The sold out concerts played host to musicians, dancers and comedians from all over Canada and even the world. This year's show varied from doing the jig with Natalie McMaster, and moshing with The Smalls to doing the flamenco with Rosario. Music fest organizers and volunteers who made the show happen this year received huge praise from performers for the organization of the festival.

Rosario, who put a little flamenco into the hips of a large crowd of festers said that she had only one problem with the Fest: 'The only negative is that from here on in when we go home, we will have to do our own cooking. We have been really spoiled.' Rosario has a flamenco school in Vancouver where she teaches during the winter. 'I have been in many Festivals but this is the best. It is a historically fascinating place. The people here really appreciate music. We had an unbelievable welcome. The organizers were great, as were the billets and the people of the city.'

She was even impressed with the first time flamenco dancers that attended her workshops. 'We had a very good crowd. Most of the people had a good ear and followed instructions. They did very well. We loved it.' “

### Source:

[http://www.yukonweb.com/community/dawson/klondike\\_sun/aug8-97.html#music](http://www.yukonweb.com/community/dawson/klondike_sun/aug8-97.html#music)



Rosario Ancer and Victor Kolstee  
at the Arctic Circle, August 2003



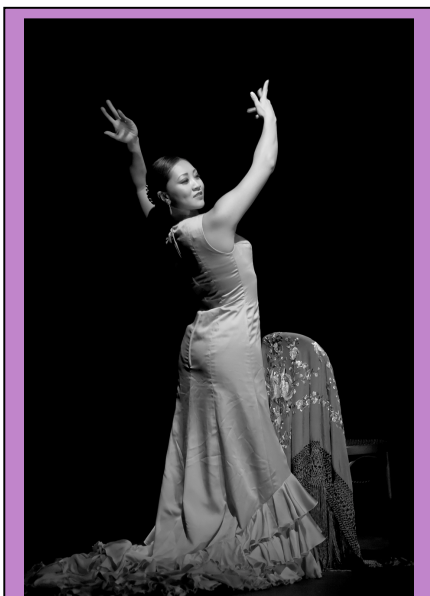
Rosario Ancer Dog Mushing  
in Dawson City, February 2004

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## A PASSION FOR FLAMENCO: *Nanako Aramaki*



*Nanako Aramaki, Flamenco Festival  
Waterfront Theatre, 2007*

We all have our reasons for pursuing our passions. Some people choose to sing, some to write and some to dance. Even further, some of us choose to dance flamenco! While most of us believe that we are in control of our passions, I believe that sometimes our passions choose us.

My parents always knew I was meant to dance after they saw me swaying my tiny nubile hips to Stevie Wonder at just a year old. However, my *official* leap into the dance world began at the age of three with ballet. I pursued ballet without thinking about it much, and eventually hip-hop and jazz, until my early teens. Then, out of the blue, I was introduced to flamenco by my mother, Noriko, who had been taking classes at Centro Flamenco for some time. Being a stubborn teenager, I didn't think flamenco was "cool" enough at first. I finally caved in after years of persuasion from my mother as did my sister, Mariko, shortly thereafter.

I was sixteen when I took my first flamenco intro class with Melanie Meyers. My opinion of flamenco changed dramatically. I was so utterly challenged by the unfamiliar rhythms and complex coordination required by the dance that I sought to overcome my frustration by enrolling in regular classes at Centro Flamenco. It was so challenging yet so rewarding that it wasn't long before I had quit all my other dance classes to concentrate on flamenco.

I'm not sure when my frustration turned into passion. I was scouted by Rosario to join the Intensive Program after only a year of classes. It was terrifying being surrounded by the best flamenco dancers in Vancouver – dancers that I looked up to and saw in all the professional shows. My fear was short lived as I soon learned that my idols offered only support and, more importantly, inspiration for me to pursue my goals as a dancer. Under Rosario's mentorship, something that had been just a hobby turned into training and, eventually, performing. Rosario invited me to join the Flamenco Rosario dance company and I began dancing solos in the Cuadro Flamenco series by the age of 20. Without even noticing, my hobby had flourished into a full-fledged obsession. I couldn't stop and wanted more. I knew I wouldn't find it anywhere other than the birthplace of flamenco.

Taking part in the 2005 Festival de Jerez was a huge eye-opener. It made me realize there was a whole world of flamenco out there that needed to be explored. Flamenco wasn't the same to me thereafter. I knew I had to find my way back to where it began. I kept on hearing and asking about everyone's stories of Spain. Rosario's tale of selling everything and leaving her life in Mexico to pursue her dream in Madrid really inspired me. I didn't sell everything but I did take all of my savings and drop everything to move to Seville for most of one year. I did some research and, with Rosario's recommendation, enrolled in an advanced dance training program at The Cristina Heeren Flamenco Foundation.

For nine months, five days a week, I pounded my feet into the tough rubber dance floors of the school. The faculty there was stellar - all renowned artists and flamenco celebrities. My instructors included Milagros Menjibar, Rafael Campallo, Ursula Lopez and Carmen Ledesma. I danced until my feet became disfigured and my knees were rubbing raw on my kneecaps. During my time in Spain, I witnessed two flamenco festivals and countless shows. I was fortunate enough to be invited by Carmen Ledesma to her nephew's gypsy communion party with Concha, Aurora Vargas, Pepa de Benito, Curro and Esperanza Fernandez. They were all playing, dancing and singing for their families just like in one of those documentary movies. I had to pinch myself to make sure it wasn't a dream. When I look back now, my life in Seville feels like a dream. It was the best dream I've ever had and the best decision I've ever made.

I was anxious to come back on completing the course and share my new found passion for flamenco with everyone in Vancouver. Arriving back in 2007, I was asked to be a featured soloist at the Flamenco Festival and started teaching regular classes at Centro Flamenco, specializing in bata de cola.

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One of the greatest things about flamenco is that, when you perform, you're not alone. You are part of a family. This family of artists – singers, guitarists, percussionists and fellow dancers – is behind you supporting your every move. These are the most rewarding moments for me as an artist – the times when everyone speaks the same language called flamenco. I get a similar feeling when I see my students dance wonderfully in the student show knowing how complex the choreography is and how hard they've worked throughout the year. I feel fortunate to have had the opportunities to experience such things. I hope these experiences are as exhilarating for everyone else as they are for me.

I've enjoyed every minute of this flamenco journey and believe there's no end to it. It's been ten years since my first flamenco class. I feel the more I learn, the more I realize how very little I actually know. I long for the day when I can go back to Spain and drown myself in the art of flamenco again. It doesn't matter where you're from, what you do, how often you dance or how long you've been dancing – flamenco can take hold of you. I dance because it's a necessity for me. I chose flamenco because flamenco chose me.

## FLAMENCO IN JAPAN: *Nanako Aramaki*

Did you know that Japan has the most flamenco academies per capita in the world – including Spain? There are numerous tablaos in Tokyo and Osaka. Many professional and semi-professional Spanish flamenco artists have worked in at least one of them. Many Spanish flamenco dance companies tour Japan. These shows are listed in a monthly Japanese magazine called "Paseo" which is dedicated solely to the art of flamenco. Anyone who has been to the Bienal de Sevilla or Festival de Jerez knows there are many Japanese flamencos visiting, living or performing in Spain. Out of all the countries in the world to be fascinated with flamenco, why Japan?



Almost everyone in Japan during the 1970s became familiar with the word "flamenco" thanks to Japanese flamenco icon Yoko Komatsubara. Flamenco became a popular trend by the 1980s and the boom of flamenco academies began. To this day, no one really knows why flamenco continues to be so popular in Japan. It's true that the Japanese become easily amused with the latest trends from all around the world and are attracted to new obsessions. But their interest in flamenco has not died down. One possible contributing factor is that traditional Japanese "minyo" singing sounds are very similar to flamenco singing. Some of the flamenco folk songs use the same flute sound as Japanese folk songs. Perhaps it is this inherent connection to the songs of flamenco that attracts the Japanese to flamenco. Maybe they can identify themselves in flamenco. They link flamenco to the Japanese culture in doing so.

### Other Sources:

<http://www.flamenco-world.com/magazine/about/japon/japon15062004-1.htm>  
<http://www.esflamenco.com/scripts/news/ennews.asp?frmIdPagina=315>

### TASTY TREATS RECOMMENDATIONS:



**Cafe Barcelona:** 1049 Granville Street, Vancouver, 604-909-2223.

Open Monday, 5pm-12am; Tuesday-Friday, 12pm-2:30pm, 5pm-12am; Weekends, 12pm-3pm, 5pm-12am.

This is Vancouver's newest Spanish tapas restaurant offering traditional tapas and pintxos. The food is fresh and price range is under \$10 per tapa. Some dishes are typical of Barcelona such as bread with fresh tomato, garlic prawns and baby squid. The décor is simple, the atmosphere friendly and casual. They offer flamenco on Thursday evenings starting at about 8:30pm. Flamenco Rosario dancers are usually there every second Thursday (e.g. October 7, 21, etc.).

The owner of Cafe Barcelona is Beatriz Gil Garzon, a former honorary Spanish Consul General to BC. Benat Ormaetxea, winner of Spain's Young Chef of the Year Award in 2001, set up the menu.

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## FLAMENCO HEROES: *Sabicas*

"I learned that flamenco dance and music are very different from any other style of dance and music in as much as the dancer doesn't follow the music, but rather the music follows the dance. .... That's why taped music won't work in flamenco. It would force the dancers to follow the music – the dancer would lose their freedom – and without freedom they couldn't dance flamenco." Victor Kolstee.

Source: [www.flamencorosario.org/DanceCentral\\_1995\\_FlamencoRosario.pdf](http://www.flamencorosario.org/DanceCentral_1995_FlamencoRosario.pdf)

Augustín Castellón Campos was born in Pamplona in 1913. As for many gypsy artists, there is speculation over his birth date and some think it may have been 1907. His parents bought him his first guitar for 17 pesetas when he was only four. Soon after, he began playing in public. Sabicas earned his nickname from his early fondness for eating raw broadbeans, or "habas" - el Niño de las Habicas (the broadbean kid).

When he was ten years old, he moved to Madrid. His development as a guitarist accelerated there. He was discovered by Manuel Bonet who arranged for his debut in the Eldorado theater with the flamenco company of Chelito. Sabicas was related to the guitar maestro Ramón Montoya, a relative of his mother. In his early professional career, he was greatly influenced by Montoya. In the thirties, he was exposed to a broader range of flamenco artists which caused him to change more and more dramatically. He accompanied many of the most important singers of the day - Juan Valderrama, Carbonerillo and Antonio el de la Calzá. He began making recordings under the name "Niño Sabicas". After one concert in the Maestranza bullring in Seville in 1934, he was carried out on the shoulders of his adoring fans. This was an honour never given to any other flamenco guitarist and was usually reserved for the bravest of bullfighters.

After the outbreak of the Spanish civil war, the young Sabicas left Spain in 1937. He was never to return there to live, although much later he began visiting Spain to perform. At that time, he performed with and was romantically linked to the great dancer Carmen Amaya. He was also her flamenco company's first guitarist. Their first tour was to South America. Later, they toured and performed in the United States. He settled in Mexico and lived there for twenty years.

In the mid-fifties, Sabicas was working in New York giving solo guitar recitals. He tried working with jazz and rock musicians during those years and was well acquainted with great jazz artists such as Charles Mingus, Ben E. King, Thelonius Monk and Miles Davis. In those days, Sabicas was regarded by the record companies as a member of their roster of recording artists and his records were distributed worldwide. But he was never satisfied with the attempts to blend flamenco with other forms of music. Nevertheless, he was highly innovative in his flamenco playing. His recording with the great cantaor, Enrique Morente, is still considered one of the finest flamenco recordings ever made.

Sabicas has been described as the greatest flamenco guitarist in the world, completely steeped in the flamenco tradition. Despite years of living abroad, his playing style always maintained an authentic sound that conjured visions of Andalucía and gypsy flamenco. As a flamenco concert guitarist, he brought the music of flamenco to the attention of the wider world with his incredible artistry. He is known for creating techniques that have since become an integral part of flamenco guitar playing. An example is the Alzapuas, hitting the strings in a percussive manner using just the thumb. His technical skills are legendary: blazingly picados (scales), fast but clean arpeggios, high quality composition for the many forms of flamenco and infallible "compas" which is absolutely essential to playing for a dancer. It is also said that he had perfect pitch – a rare gift in any musician. Sabicas played in true jondo style and said that he never played a piece the same way twice. In March 1972, famed guitarist Chet Atkins told Guitar Player Magazine "The finest technique around has got to be Sabicas, the flamenco player". In the words of la Niña de la Puebla, whom he accompanied on numerous occasions before the war, his perception was uncanny: "Whenever I would do something new with the cante, he would read me with a single look".

Sabicas returned to Spain from his voluntary exile in 1967 when he attended a tribute held for him in Málaga. In 1982, his home city of Pamplona dedicated its San Fermín fiesta to him. He returned to play in Spain many times in his later years.



*Sabicas in Buenos Aires, 1939*

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Sabicas died in New York on April 14, 1990. His genius lives on in his many recordings and in the influence he has had on all the flamenco guitarists who have come after him. He was a genius and a master of technique who combined that technique with an astonishing inventiveness and creativity. Throughout his long and illustrious career, he never stopped living the spirit of flamenco and striving to perfect it.

His legacy can be heard in the playing of many outstanding contemporary players such as Paco de Lucía, Tomatito, Serranito, Juan Manuel Cañizares, El Viejín, Vicente Amigo, Gerardo Nuñez and many more. They are quick to acknowledge the influence that the flamenco guitar playing of Sabicas has had on their music.

## Sources:

Ayer y hoy del cante flamenco, Manuel Rios Ruiz, 1997  
<http://www.andalucia.com/flamenco/musicians/sabiacas.htm>  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sabicas>  
<http://www.flamenco-world.com/artists/sabicas/sabicas.htm>

## LOS PALOS: *Tango - Tientos*

When many people hear the word “tango”, they think of the sultry, sexy dance for couples born in the brothels of Buenos Aires in Argentina. The tango in flamenco, while it has some common roots with its Argentine cousin, is different.

There are many theories about the origin of the tango because this word has been used to describe a variety of songs and dances over time. The word “tango” suggests that it may have been of North African origin. The earliest written reference to it dates back to 1814. Tientos is a slower and more solemn version of the tango. Some say that tangos evolved from the more serious tientos, while others believe that tientos were developed from tangos by a number of flamenco cantaores in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The flamenco tango we see today shows Afro-Cuban influence, whatever its origin. Arriving in Spain from Cuba, the tango apparently later immigrated back to the Americas where a distinctive Argentine version evolved, beginning about 1850.

The tango is considered one of the most basic music and dance forms in flamenco and is extremely versatile. The rhythm of tangos is 2/4 or 4/4, making it very accessible and easy to follow. While it is considered to be part of the lighter style of flamenco song (cante chico), it can be serious in character and the words are not always cheerful. Tientos allow for more serious material in the words and there is a greater range of interpretation and expression possible, making tientos more of a cante intermedio.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, tangos became very popular in the cafes cantantes where they were enjoyed for their infectious beat, saucy and provocative dance moves and general lively tone. Tangos flamencos took hold in Cadiz first where they were especially popular and took on a particular style. Singers in other locales soon developed their own variants of this popular flamenco form. We can find tangos characteristic of Jerez, Sevilla – especially Triana – Granada, Malaga and a form that was developed by the gypsies of Extramadura.

Like all flamenco forms, tangos and tientos are danced primarily as solo dances. As with the song, the dance is expressive and can be highly flexible and varied so that interest and excitement build. It can be danced “por fiestas” style, like bulerías, with each dancer taking a turn to show his or her particular version with an air of spontaneity and friendly rivalry. With tientos, the dance starts out slowly and is serious in character. A wide range of emotions can be portrayed. It is customary to finish tientos by increasing the tempo and moving into tango so that the piece ends on a happier or more positive note. This custom has become so common that it sometimes robs the tientos of the full expression of its dramatic possibilities.

Tangos continue to be popular and to evolve. It is a testament to the versatility of the form that so many new tangos are being created and performed. There are many examples of flamenco fusion using the tango. Every flamenco singer, dancer and guitarist must master the tango, which they then feature in recordings and performances.

## Sources:

The Art of Flamenco – D.E. Pohren, 1962  
Ayer y hoy del cante flamenco – Manuel Rios Ruiz, 1997  
Cante por cante: discolibro didactico del flamenco. Juan Manuel Gambon, 2002  
Conocer el flamenco – Juan Verigillos, 2002

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