Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

A Passion Project over 40 years in the Making

Cultural Daily · Wednesday, September 20th, 2017

Top Photo: Ashley Almada, Photo Credit: Timo Nuñez

Roberto Amaral's FUEGO EXÓTICO

A New Wave of Multi-Genre Flamenco Fusion.

He hasn't taken center stage as a singer for over 40 years, but Roberto Amaral's 'now or never' determination prevails. As a founding member of the progressive rock group CARMEN in the '70's, Amaral had an early start to his music career. Now, at 69, Amaral is working on a passion project that will feature him singing his original music in concert for the first time.

Roberto Amaral performing with CARMEN in 1974.

He began his career as a Flamenco dancer, being recruited as a youngster to join the world-renowned José Greco dance company as a featured dancer. A few years later, he took a chance with CARMEN, switching gears to collaborate with his LA friends Angela Allen Barr and David Clark Allen in London creating a Flamenco-infused progressive rock band that brought a unique sound and visual experience to the concert stage.

Once CARMEN disbanded in the mid 70's, Amaral returned to dance in Spain and tour the world with celebrated Flamenco companies. Returning to California in 1978, he established his dance studio in Van Nuys where he has been teaching Flamenco and Spanish classical dance for nearly 40 years.

With an impressive resume as a dancer and choreographer, including appearances on Oscar telecasts, variety specials with Lynda Carter, Barry Manilow, and the Tonight Show with Johnny Carson, he's always been a gifted singer and songwriter. "Music has always been a big part of my

life – ask my dance students. I'm singing for their classes nearly every day. But this new chapter of my professional life is something I've wanted to do for so long, and now I feel blessed to have this opportunity to go for it!"

The passion of Flamenco – The soul of R&B – The fire of Latin

Roberto Amaral today, doing what he does best.

Roberto Amaral brings his latest live concert project *FUEGO EXÓTICO* to the intimate El Portal Theatre in North Hollywood on Saturday, October 14, for 2 shows. He will be joined on stage by 11 world class musicians, singers and dancers. Amaral unveils the world debut of this thrilling show featuring an eclectic soundtrack of songs from his self-penned and produced album, The Freedom. Nowhere else will you find a production that features original multi-genre songs performed in both English and Spanish, and danced to with authentic Flamenco style.

When he gets behind the microphone, he's obviously a dancer – he can't help himself. The hips sway, the foot taps, the animated hands articulate each phrase punctuated with syncopated handclaps. 69-year-old Amaral is sly when asked if he'll be dancing in the show – "It's very possible," he says with a twinkle in his eyes.

"It takes many years of intense training to become a 'Flamenco' capable of dancing professionally. The complex musical rhythms, the expressive hands, the intricate footwork and castanets, and the use of props such as fans, shawls and hats makes this genre of dance incredibly difficult to master. And for this particular show, each of the dancers needs to have a grounding in contemporary dance, even ballet, to tackle my choreographic style. Because the music of *FUEGO EXÓTICO* is not pure traditional Flamenco, it's my own fusion of modern, Flamenco, Latin, R&B, Pop and Rock, the dancers need to have a Flamenco foundation but also a pop/contemporary sensibility."

A live music and dance event like no other – 2 shows only!

"When I danced with the José Greco company, we trained every day in ballet and Spanish classical dance, as well as Flamenco. It was important as a professional performer to show beautiful lines as well as being 'into the ground' for Flamenco. So, I'm happy to have these three versatile and accomplished dancers join me for this show."

The grace and beauty of Pamela Lourant.

Pamela Lourant was a 'Spirit of Fiesta', the prestigious

title awarded annually at Santa Barbara's world famous Old Spanish Days Festival, and she has an established career as a dancer, choreographer and teacher in Southern California.

Misuda Cohen came to Amaral's studio as a scholarship student when she was studying ballet and modern dance at UCLA. Flamenco was offered as an option in her BFA program. She gravitated to it as a natural and has since made a living as a 'Flamenca' both here in Los Angeles and in Spain.

Ashley Almada is making her debut with Amaral's company. "I'm so pleased to add a bright young talent like Ashley," he says while taking a break in rehearsals.

Each of the dancers will perform their own solo dance within the evening's program, as well as two group numbers and an encore. The dancers are very excited to be included in this world class production as Amaral creates choreographies uniquely suited to them and their special talents. "Maestro is really the pinnacle of Flamenco in Southern California. To be working with him again and exploring his creative style is truly an honor," says Cohen during rehearsals at Amaral's Van Nuys studio.

"It'd be difficult for me to say this is something 'brand new' – but it's definitely a unique fusion of styles which few others have ever attempted," says Amaral. "Some people might recognize the Flamenco hands, the ballet port de bras, the Chennai turns, the contemporary sensibility, and the Latin moves. That's because my music the dancers are moving to is a fusion of genres, and the dance must be too. I am classically trained, but Flamenco is and always will be in my soul, so my choreography will always reflect that"

Misuda Cohen and the art of Flamenco.

Eclectica Entertainment presents *Roberto Amaral's FUEGO EXÓTICO* for 2 shows on Saturday, October 14, at the historic El Portal Theatre in North Hollywood. Roberto's latest music video 'Anyone who had a Heart,' the Bacharach and David classic, can be found on Youtube. Show and

ticket information can be found at the El Portal Theatre website, or by calling the Box Office at 818-508-4200

SATURDAY, OCT 14

2 shows (4pm & 8pm)

The El Portal Theatre

5269 Lankershim Blvd. North Hollywood, CA 91601

www.elportaltheatre.com

Box Office: (818) 508-4200

For further info: (805) 813-7212 www.amaralstudio.com

Find the Amaral Studio on Facebook and Instagram

This entry was posted on Wednesday, September 20th, 2017 at 8:10 am and is filed under Music, Dance
You can follow any responses to this entry through the Comments (RSS) feed. You can skip to the end and leave a response. Pinging is currently not allowed.