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Fiery Flamenco Coming to the PAC March 20

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CALIFORNIA – The flamenco art form is complex: mysterious, primal, poetic, and passionate.

NOCHE FLAMENCA, led by group founder Soledad Barrio, travels from Madrid to bring the heart and soul of flamenco to the Performing Arts Center.

Cal Poly Arts presents the fiery production on Thursday, March 20, at 8 p.m. in the Christopher Cohan Center.

Since 1993, Spain's hardest-working flamenco company has become its most successful and award-winning – in large part due to the combined artistry of director/ choreographer and co-founder Martin Santangelo and leading lady Barrio.

Newsday's Gia Korlas elaborates: "When Barrio crosses her arms overhead in the shape of a sharp-angled box, she seems trapped inside the cave of her heart. When she jerks her head to one side, it's as if she hears a spirit shouting her name.

"Even when she does something as innocent as pull up her dress to make her pounding feet visible, it looks for an instant as though she might plunge her hands into her guts. With Barrio, it's all guts: the courage to turn herself inside out and the instinct for how. This gift isolates her... If only there were more such danger in theater."

The New York Times agreed: "Soledad Barrio...can make a believer out of the most jaded spectator. If you assume that flamenco is all phony histrionics, you've probably never seen Ms. Barrio in action. Her performances start with a quiet, silky grace, but by the end she is more creature than human."

Santangelo has successfully brought to the stage the essence, purity, and integrity of flamenco without the use of tricks or gimmicks. All aspects of flamenco – dance, song, and music – are interrelated and given equal weight in the presentations of Noche Flamenca, creating a true communal spirit within the company.

One of the highlights of the evening will be "La Mujer Del Mar" (Lady from the Sea). Santangelo explains:

"I became drawn to 'The Lady from The Sea' and all of Henrik Ibsen's plays because I feel a similarity between the messages in his plays and the reason flamenco exists...The intense 'cry' or 'scream' that lies dormant and develops inside of many of Ibsen's characters reminds me again and again of the intense and savage expression of flamenco song, dance, and music."

Through its educational outreach and residency programs, Noche Flamenca's mission is to educate and enlighten persons of all ages, races, and economic backgrounds in the authentic form of flamenco – a form born of ancestral cultural repression and racial expulsion.

Anna Arias Rubio of Dance Insider concluded that "the successful sold-out appearances of Noche Flamenca prove that well-presented, unadulterated flamenco can move, inspire, and entertain audiences from all cultures."

The group's artistic integrity has been recognized with awards from the National Dance Project (2006) and the Lucille Lortel Award for Special theatrical Experience (2003), among others.

Noche Flamenca's tour highlights in North America include Berkeley's Cal Performances, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, the Ravinia Festival, the American Dance Festival, Wolf Trap, and the Hollywood Bowl, among others.

Internationally, the company has appeared on stages in Australia, New Zealand, Greece, and Egypt, among other countries. With annual seasons in New York City and Buenos Aires and return engagements at theaters around the world, the company has a dedicated global audience.

General public tickets for the performance range from \$32 to \$44, with student discounts available on all seats, and may be purchased at the Performing Arts Ticket Office, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays.

To order by phone, call 805/756-2787; to order by fax: 805/756-6088.

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