



# SPAIN'S DANCING RHYTHMS

*Art Form:* Dance

*Style:* various Spanish styles

*Culture:* Spanish

## *Technical Needs*

- ❑ stage/floor dimensions: 25 x 25 maximum / 12 x 12 minimum
- ❑ wood floor; must not be slippery
- ❑ sound system: CD or cassette player/monitor on stage
- ❑ costume rack (or coat rack); 4 chairs; 2 tables
- ❑ changing room close to performing area, and drinking water for 4-5 dancers
- ❑ 30-minutes minimum set-up time

## *Meet the Artists*

**The Ensemble Espanol Spanish Dance Theater** dancers introduce students to the study of Spanish life, arts and culture via the dance discipline using the program they call Spain's Dancing Rhythms. The Ensemble was founded in 1976 as a not-for-profit corporation to share the rich traditions of the dance, music, literature and culture of Spain with all communities. The company and **Dame Libby Komaiko**, its founder and artistic director, encourage artistic creativity within the framework of Ibero-Hispanic experience.

Composed of forty dancers and accompanied by singers and instrumental musicians, the Ensemble is a magnificent mosaic of world cultures. **Irma Suarez Ruiz**, the company's First Dancer, teacher, choreographer and assistant artistic director, along with **Sara Samuels**, a Principal Dancer with the company, teacher and associate artistic director of the junior **Ensemble Espanol**, include in the program the history of Spanish dance and music and its influence in the world.

## *About the Performance*

**The Ensemble Espanol Spanish Dance Theater** dancers present the music, songs and dances of Spain in a variety of innovative ballets, traditional folkloric suites, and fiery Flamenco dramas from medieval times in Iberia to twenty-first century Spain.

Students are introduced to professional dance-class experiences and develop a combination of visual, auditory and kinesthetic skills using analysis, memory, and techniques.

Teaching methods include the use of storytelling, question and answer periods, visual and auditory stimuli, dance demonstration and group evaluation.

The musical instruments that accompany Flamenco (castanets, cajón, and tambourine) and the hand-clapping (palmas) are introduced. Dancers are authentically-costumed with shawls, fans, toreador capes, appropriate to the three styles of Spanish dance—clásico español, folkloric (regional) and Flamenco.

## *Contextual Information*

Dances from Spain are lively and spirited, representing a diverse and intriguing culture. They reflect Spain's colorful and dynamic history and traditions, influenced over the centuries by the Visigoths, Moors, Berbers, Sephardic Jews, Celts, Romans and North Africans (Moroccans, Egyptians).

Dances from Spain can be classified into three types: Classical, Regional, and Flamenco.

**Classical dances** are schooled, highly stylized, ballet-like, set to Spain's classical music, and can combine Regional and Flamenco dance, too.

**Regional dances** are folk dances; each of Spain's 50 provinces has at least 15 distinctive dances and accompanying music!

**Flamenco dance** is, to many people, the Spanish dance. Flamenco is widely known for its rapid heelwork, flashing movements, and sinuous hand, finger, and wrist movements. Flamenco is a dance form, but also a culture in itself. As in other dances around the world, Flamenco arm and hand movements help to tell a story. Another important aspect of Flamenco is cante (song). The singer passionately reveals many kinds of emotions; the sound is clearly influenced by the Moorish cultural history of Spain. Cante is usually accompanied by the

Flamenco guitar, rhythmic clapping of the hands (palmas), finger snapping and, often, shouts of ¡Olé!

## Vocabulary

**Abanico:** a fan

**Baile:** dance

**Braceo:** arm movements

**Cajon:** percussive box-type drum used in Flamenco; originated in Peru

**Cante:** song

**Castanets:** a percussion instrument consisting of a pair of hollow pieces of wood or bone, usually held between the thumb and fingers, made to click together in rhythm with the dance

**Compas:** rhythm

**Copla:** a section of the cante por baile

**Gitano:** a Gypsy from Andalusia in the south of Spain

**Jaleo:** shouts of expression and encouragement, like ¡Olé!

**Jondo; Intermedio; Chico; Por Baile; Por Cante:** types of Flamenco song (cante)

**Letra:** the lyrics or verse of the song (cante)

**Manton:** the large shawl used by female Flamenco dancers

**Palmas:** hand claps;

**Palmas Claras:** sharp clapping

**Palmas Sordas:** muffled clapping

**Pasos:** steps

**Payo:** a person who is not a Gypsy, although from Andalusia

**Pellizco:** a sharp movement of the body: the head, shoulder, arm, etc.

**Pitos:** finger snaps

**Roma, or Romani:** although the Romani people are often referred to as Gypsies, not all 'gypsies' or nomadic peoples are Roma; the Roma are descendants of the ancient warrior classes of Northern India, particularly the Punjab, and they are identifiable by their language, religion, and customs, which can be directly linked to those of the Punjabi in northern India

**Tiempo:** tempo

**Vueltas:** turns

**Zapateado:** foot movements, or stamping; heelwork