

CHISPA FLAMENCA - REVIEW

Winter Flamenco Fiesta

Casa de Flamenco, Seaview Downs

Caliente Guitar Duo, Chispa Flamenca and Guests

Saturday 11 July, 2009

I ventured south of the city to see the Caliente Guitar Duo, Chispa Flamenca and guests performing cabaret style in the Casa de Flamenco studio, a tastefully converted Scout Hall on a hillside overlooking the city and ocean in Seaview Downs. The journey proved to be well worth the effort and confirmed that gypsy culture and a high degree of artistic accomplishment are alive and well in the suburbs of Adelaide.

The program was in two acts with the Caliente Guitar Duo, Al Valodze on guitar and cavaquinho, and Dylan Woolcock, guitar and mandolin, performing first. The attentive audience was seated at tables around the softly lit studio, with wine and tapas available from the bar. Caliente took the audience on something of a world safari of guitar from Tunisia to Brazil and back again, with some hints of the South Australian coastline and jazz influences for diversions. The set began with various combinations of mandolin (known as bandolin when used in Choro music), guitar and cavaquinho (a smaller steel stringed instrument from South America). Aloysius Leeson joined to make a guitar trio for the finale. A highlight of the set was the hypnotic and meditative *Rockpool* composed by Al Valodze.

Chispa Flamenca turned up the heat in the second act with the fiery and passionate Roshanne Wijeyeratne and the powerfully elegant Kristy Manuel, dancing tightly coordinated duos, and each performing a riveting solo. The dancers were accompanied by El Titi Algeciras (song), Aloysius Leeson (guitar) and Adrian van Nunen (percussion). The singing added greatly to the intensity of the performance and anyone in the audience would have felt this resonance. El Titi Algeciras is one of the jewels in the Australian flamenco scene, and it is great to see fine musicians such as Leeson and Algeciras working together with dancers across a number of groups to sustain their art-form.

Adelaide is blessed with a number of flamenco groups, so if you are thinking of taking a class or getting along to a performance consider the following: Kristy Manuel's *Casa de Flamenco* in Seaview Downs, Emma Fernee's, *Studio Flamenco* in Goodwood, Veronica Vargas' *Triana Flamenco* in Prospect, Liana Vargas' *Teatro del Mundo* in Aldgate, and Areti's *Flamenco Dance Areti* in Norwood.

Phil Callaghan

Dancer, Kristy Manuel

Guitarist, Aloysius Leeson

