

Study Guide for Teachers

Alborada Spanish Dance Theatre

A Taste of Spain

presented by
Young Audiences New Jersey & Eastern PA
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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

From Sevillanas, the famous lively dance from Seville, to powerful Flamenco, the dance and music from the Gypsy enclaves of Granada, join this prestigious New Jersey company in its celebration of the dance and music of Spain. Students explore the culture and history of Spain and its impact on other Hispanic cultures with live guitar accompaniment, colorful traditional costumes, festive dances, and an opportunity to learn elements of these dance forms through spirited interaction with the artists on stage.

Alborada Spanish Dance Theatre is dedicated to the preservation and cultivation of the rich variety of dance forms and music from Spain. Through dances, drama, and music, Alborada's passionate artistry reveals the many diverse and historical threads that comprise the multicultural fabric of Spanish culture. Both entertaining and educational, the variety of its repertoire runs the artistic gamut from Spanish Gypsy Flamenco and traditional dances, to Hispanic, Celtic, and Moorish cultural influences and beyond.

LEARNING GOALS

Students will

- Appreciate Spanish art and culture.
- Understand the relationships between Spain and other world cultures.
- Learn elements of Spanish dance.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

Spain has four main dance forms: Folkloric, Escuela Bolera, Classical, and Flamenco.

Folkloric or regional dances are indigenous to various regions of Spain and reflect the cultural traditions of the populations that settled in these areas over Spain's history.

There were French and Italian influences on the Bolera and Classical dances, as these combine ballet technique with Spanish footwork and castanets.

Flamenco developed from the influence of Gitano (Gypsy), Moorish (Moroccan Arabs), Jewish, and Christian cultures on the dances of southern Spain. The ancestors of the Gypsies migrated from India through the Middle East into Spain.

Other dances include the Jotas, which reflect the Celtic population endemic to northern Spain's Galicia and Aragon regions. The Fandangos are from Huelva and the colorful Verdiales celebrate the green olives from the mountains of Malaga.

RESOURCES

www.alboradadance.org

Claus Schreiner, ed., *Flamenco*.

George Ancona, *Olé Flamenco*.

Matteo Marcellus Vittucci and Carola Goya, *The Language of Spanish Dance*.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

1. Coordinate the arrival of Alborada Spanish Dance Theatre with a study unit that explores the cultural history and ethnic roots of Spain.
2. Music and dance are passed down and preserved through many generations. Discuss how cultural history and ethnic traditions are protected and handed down within a family. Have students share any stories, songs, or special customs particular to their own families or cultures.
3. Get the music teacher involved! Explore the music of some of the dance traditions of Spain. Study the rhythmic differences and how these affect the movements of the dances. Have students learn to clap and/or use rhythm instruments to experience the variety of music.

VOCABULARY WORDS

Aguas: A polka from northern Mexico.

Alegrias: A *Cante chico* (light song) form of Flamenco characteristic of Cadiz.

Bejuquito: From the Huasteca region of Mexico, this dance is typically done by a couple and becomes a competition as to which person can hold a bottle the longest on their head.

Escuela Bolera: A fusion of popular dances and classical ballet. Now one of the most popular dances in Spain.

Fandango: A lively couples dance, traditionally performed by a man and a woman, accompanied by guitars, castanets, or hand-clapping.

Flamenco: A style of dancing characteristic of the Andalusian Gypsies that is strongly rhythmic and involves vigorous actions, such as clapping the hands and stamping the feet.

Guajira: A dance of sixteenth-century Cuban origin.

Me Pogera Colorada: A traditional dance from the city of Barranquilla in northern Colombia.

Otavalenia: A traditional dance from Imbabura in the Andes region in central Ecuador.

Zaragueros: A traditional dance from Loja in southern Ecuador.

AFTER THE PROGRAM

1. Get the visual arts teacher involved! Explore the visual art traditions of Spain and the countries that influenced its dances and music. Explore the traditional dress used for the dances that the students experienced in the performance. Is there significance to the colors of the costumes? What is the significance of the fans used in some dances? Have the student create their own fans.
2. Get the music teacher involved, again! Have students explore music of various cultures that influenced Spanish music and dance. Compare Bolera music with music from France and Italy, compare the music of the Jota with Celtic music, etc. See the "Background Information" section for other connections. What are the similarities between the music of these cultures and that of Spain? What are the differences?
3. Discuss with students the elements that help make a creative art form stand the test of time. Ask students to decide what current songs and dance styles could be popular with audiences in the years to come. What artists, musicians, actors, and dancers do they think will still be popular in the future, and why?

ARTIST INFORMATION

The Alborada Spanish Dance Theatre was originally founded in 1965 by María Alba, known to many aficionados as being the greatest exponent of the *seguriya* and many other Spanish dance drama pieces in the U.S. Maria and current director Eva Lucena worked to set the company apart by bringing to the stage dance dramas such as *El Amor Brujo* and dramatizations of the poetry of Federico Garcia Lorca. *Granada—The End*, Eva's original choreography dramatizing the death of García Lorca, was nominated for a National Endowment for the Arts dance award.

Ms. Lucena began performing at the age of three. She spent her youth between Wales (United Kingdom) and in Granada (Spain), where she lived among the caves of Sacromonte and the gypsy quarters of Albaicin. She received her dance training in New York, Great Britain, and Spain.