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### **REVIEW: Chuscales in Concert**

presented by Flamenco @ MIT  
Sunday, March 1, 2009 - 8:00 pm  
Kresge Auditorium, Cambridge, MA

Featuring Chuscales - Guitar & Musical Director  
Vicente "El Cartuche" Griego - Cante  
Francisco Xavier Orozco "El YiYi" - Cante & Percussion  
Mina Fajardo "Mina" - Baile  
Juan Siddi - Baile

Introduced by spokesperson Miriam Makhoul of Flamenco @ MIT, the show could not have happened without the help of a generous grant from the university. Chuscales' show is the second offering from these fledgling flamenco promoters and aficionados.

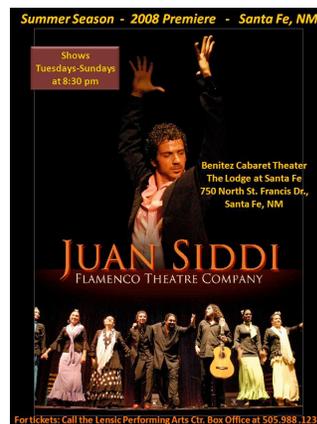


Opening with *Granaina*, Chuscales was accompanied onstage by El YiYi and the amazing Vicente Griego, whose voices rang clear and strong at the acoustically perfect Kresge Auditorium. Griego began touring the US in 1992 and has appeared with Jose Greco II and Albuquerque's Yjastros Dance Company under the direction of Joaquin Encinias.

*Tona* came next highlighting singer Vicente Griego's special style. Following that, the entire company performed a *Seguiriya*. A musical interlude, *Malagueña* came next

\_\_\_\_\_ and a lively dance number *Tarantos* finished out the first act. The dancers were entertaining, however they truly came alive in the second act.

Starting off the second act with a *Tientos/Tangos* Juan Siddi showed what stuff he's made off. This is a journeyman flamenco performer recognized throughout the industry. He's danced, directed, and choreographed around the world. Here in the US, he's directed and performed in the Juan Siddi Dance Company, as well as being principal dancer for Company Maria Benitez and La Tania in San Francisco. He's also appeared as a guest in the top flamenco festivals of Genoa, Sevilla, Venice, Qatar, and Santa Fe. His own company, Juan Siddi Flamenco Theatre has toured on stages from Berlin to New York. Needless to say, his amazing dance acumen was evident in this number.



A *Solo de Cante* featuring El YiYi highlighted his unique vocal style. Another veteran of Maria Benitez' company. He's performed with Domingo Ortega, Jose Greco II, and Alejandro Granados. He's also appeared in New York with Maria Del Conte. A true son of Andalucía, his father (singer Joselon de Jerez) trained him in cante at Peña Fosforito. Known both in the US and Spain this is NO flamenco lightweight!

Mina Fajardo's talent as a dancer truly blossomed as a "flamenquita" in the second act with *Alegrias* which made the first act seem like a "warm-up". Her command of upper body and footwork was more pronounced (this particular number appeared to be second nature). Based in Santa Fe, NM, she has performed with many artists such as Elena Andújar, El Pripí, La Tibu, Juan Siddi, and of course, Chuscales. She currently performs with Chuscales and El YiYi at Local Tablao Flamenco in Santa Fe.



Chuscales performed his *Solo de Guitarra* with the skill of a man born to flamenco (his family, prominent in flamenco from the caves of Sacromonte). The musical legacy continues, with his son, Luis Miguel Manzano, (who recently appeared with Guadalupe Torres presented by Suffolk University and Fundación Conservatorio Casa Patas here in Boston last November - see review below. Over twelve years ago, a somewhat younger Chuscales played with Omayra Amaya here in Boston at the Park Plaza in *Omayra y Flamenco*. He currently lives and works in Santa Fe, New Mexico plays in many companies (think, "Noche Flamenca").

*Solea por Bulería* contained the entire company in an enthusiastic display of all the elements of flamenco - fire, grace, passion, sorrow, anger, and desire. This was the defining number of the show. The *Fin de la Fiesta* finished the show and the audience whooped and hollared their approval. Another great show presented by Flamenco @ MIT - and a testament to flamenco's diversity and beauty. One can only imagine what's next for these dedicated devotees of flamenco.

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