

Susana di Palma
**Founder, Artistic Director,
 Choreographer & Dancer**

GUEST ARTISTS

Omayra Amaya, **Dancer**
 José Vallé "Chuscales", **Music Director/Guitarist**
 La Conja, **Singer & Dancer**
 Kina Mendez, **Singer**
 Roberto Castellon, **Guitarist**

ZORONGO DANCERS

Deborah Elias
 Andrea J. Frenzel
 Colette Illarde

ZORONGO APPRENTICES (MAJAS)

Amanda Dlouhy
 Julia Hauser
 Grace Holthaus
 Eve Makiko Laabs
 Brenda Nepsund
 Hilde de Roover
 Felicia Stevens
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Zorongo Flamenco Dance Theatre

Lorca's Women

Created and Directed by Susana di Palma

WHO'S WHO:**FEDERICO GARCÍA LORCA**

Spanish poet/playwright, born in Fuente Vaqueros, Granada, Spain in 1898, his powerful female characters are sensory symbols. They evoke the sterility of desire, severe acceptance of fate, sexual and social repression.

Lorca belonged to the Generation of '27, a group of artists including such surrealists as: director Luis Buñel, poet Rafael Albertí, and artist Salvador Dalí (with whom he was in love).

Franco's Nationalists murdered Lorca in Granada at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War for his sensual writing, liberal political views and sexual orientation.

THE MOON

Kina Mendez

Probably the poet's most common symbol, la luna represents death, fertility, sterility or beauty.

DOÑA ROSITA, THE SPINSTER

Deborah Elias

(Period play)

Like the *rosa mutabile* that opens red in the morning, becomes pale in the afternoon, and turns white, shedding its beauty at night, Rosita suggests the passing of time and acceptance of fate.

THE BRIDE

Amanda Dlouhy

(the tragedy, *Blood Wedding*)

Her deception and fatal choice brought death to both her husband and lover.

PRECIOSA AND THE WIND

Zorongo Apprentices (Majas)

(Gypsy Ballad, poems)
Playing her parchment moon.
Preciosa comes along.
The wind who never sleeps,
sees her and starts to rise.

YERMA

Andrea J. Frenzel

(the tragedy, *Yerma* – The barren wife with "breasts of sand" kills her husband; "I have killed my son...barren for sure")

LOLA

La Conja

(poem *El Balcón*)
"Lola sings saetas
Pretend Toreros
Circle round. . . ."

[*Saetas: songs sung during Holy Week in Spain].

BERNARDA ALBA (a.k.a. Death)

Susana di Palma

(The repressive, conservative tyrant's house ironically transforms into Franco's fascist Spain for almost 40 years!)

BERNARDA'S DAUGHTERS

Zorongo Apprentices (Majas)

SOLEDAD MONTOYA

Omayra Amaya

(*Romance de la Pena Negra*)
"Soledad, whom do you ask for alone and at this hour? What does it matter, I ask for the one I ask for, I seek what I am searching for, my joy and myself."

LA ARGENTINA – ANTONIA MERCÉ

Colette Illarde

An innovative Spanish dancer and friend of Lorca. She spoke at the ceremony in which the Republican government awarded her the Cross of Queen Isabella. This put her in bad graces with the Fascist Nationalists who took power in July 1936. Recent research suggests that she may have been a spy. She mysteriously died (a month before Lorca's murder) of food poisoning after dining at the home of hosts who soon joined the Nationalists.

Choreography by Susana di Palma (with the exception of solos by Omayra Amaya and Colette Illarde).
 Music for Bernarda's Daughters: Sergio Monroy; Yerma music was adapted from a composition by Arcadio Marin. The running time is approximately 70 minutes without intermission.

ABOUT ZORONGO

The mission of Zorongo Flamenco Dance Theatre and School is to enrich our community by drawing people close to the beauty and energy of the Flamenco tradition and, by expanding on that tradition, create an innovative art form that explores the issues of contemporary life.

Zorongo Flamenco Dance Theatre presents both traditional programs of flamenco music and dance as well as fully-staged flamenco ballets charged with creativity and social conscience. Founded in 1982 by Artistic Director Susana di Palma, Zorongo infuses traditional forms with contemporary ideas and ecstatic live music. Zorongo productions feature an ensemble of remarkable artists – dancers, singers, and musicians – renowned for bringing the full flavor of flamenco to life in an invigorating manner. Zorongo trains the next generation of youth and adult flamenco dancers at our studio in south Minneapolis.

ZORONGO FOUNDER, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, CHOREOGRAPHER, DANCER

Unparalleled both as a performer and



choreographer, Susana di Palma is known internationally for her innovative flamenco theater works. Having spent a lifetime studying all aspects of flamenco, her choreography is rooted in the essence of flamenco tradition.

By founding Zorongo Flamenco Dance Theatre in 1982, di Palma created a vehicle for balancing her passionate love for Spain and flamenco with her urgent need to produce compelling works addressing socio-political concerns while tantalizing the imagination.

Over the years, Susana has received a number of grants and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Jerome Foundation, the Minnesota State Arts Board, and the Bush Foundation. She received an Artist Initiative grant to attend and study at El Bienal de Flamenco in Sevilla in 2012. In 2015, Susana received the MRAC Next Step grant to go to Spain to refine and further expand her expertise and knowledge of flamenco singing and dance. On May 3rd of this year, Susana will be premiering her work *PiCa* at BAM in New York for the company Flamenco Vivo.

A beloved dance instructor, Susana has taught flamenco for over 35 years. She directs the Zorongo Flamenco School, and has taught for 18 years as an adjunct instructor in the Dance Department at the University of Minnesota. Susana also enjoys teaching through the Distance Learning Program at The Cowles Center.

GUEST ARTISTS

OMAYRA AMAYA'S legacy is one of a deep and



proud gypsy flamenco tradition. The daughter of flamenco dancers Olga and Curro Amaya and grandniece of the greatest Flamenco dancer who ever lived,

Carmen Amaya. Omayra first appeared on stage with her parent's company, often interrupting their performances. Her first choreographed role came at age twelve, when she performed as her father's partner. At fifteen, she was touring and performing internationally with her parents and other dance companies. Already a seasoned performer, Omayra sought to expand and enrich her art by studying other dance forms. She attended the Boston Conservatory where she received a BFA in Modern dance and Choreography. As a student, Omayra caught the attention of numerous choreographers and respected performers. She worked with Ana Sokolow, Ann Marie Forsyth, Sam Kurkjian and Jennifer Scanlon.

Omayra founded the Omayra Amaya Flamenco Dance Company, Inc. and quickly made a name for herself at her company's premiere in 1994. Omayra and her company performed a critically acclaimed nine-month run of *Omayra y Flamenco* at the Boston Park Plaza Hotel. Due to popular demand, the show was repeatedly extended. The show garnered national media attention and inspired a PBS documentary about Omayra and a film, *Gypsy Heart*, by Jocelyn Ajami. Omayra was also an integral part of the award winning documentary *Queen of the Gypsies*, the most comprehensive video portrait to date of Omayra's legendary great aunt, Carmen Amaya. Since then, Omayra has also been the inspiration of various Spanish documentaries by Canal Plus and TVE Cataluna about her life and her great aunt.

A native of Antequera, Spain, **JOSÉ VALLÉ "CHUSCALES"** grew up in a traditional gypsy



family well known for its professional musicians and dancers. His grandmother was among those who lived in the caves of Sacromonte, one of the legendary cradles of flamenco. Chuscales recalls, "There were shows, with Gypsies from Granada who grew up in families that lived there. I wish you could see it, the families in the caves and the singing and dancing. There might be seven, eight, maybe nine caves, all with singing and dancing, and there would be more singing and dancing on the streets every day. It was unbelievable. It was very formative time in all my life. It was like a dream. This is where I learned everything — the rhythm, the beat, the guitar. I am still learning from those thousands of nights performing with my family, with my father, my grandfather, and my friends."

Chuscales began guitar lessons at age six under the instruction of his uncle Joaquín Fajardo as well as Maestro Agustinillo, two prominent masters in the region where such greats as Segovia have

studied. As a teenager, Chuscales found himself frequently in the company of Paco de Lucía, who often performed in the area and would take time to play with the talented youngster and to answer his questions. Meanwhile, he began his performing career as a dancer — an experience that provides him with a detailed understanding of flamenco's rhythmic nuances. Chuscales' affinity for dance is delightfully apparent in his artistry, blending music and movement as he does is no accident. "It's something we learn through life," he says. "A lot of people don't have my luck to grow up in the caves, learning flamenco in a gypsy family where the music comes from tradition to tradition, from legend to legend. I thank God I have been around such great musicians all my life."

LA CONJA is one of the Flamenco World's



most versatile artists. She has developed a substantial international reputation as a dancer, singer, and choreographer. Her masterful syntheses of modern Flamenco, Arab and Indian influences, illustrates the progressive direction of her art form; and creates a unique visual experience for her audience. La Conja has performed at and with many prestigious venues such as: the *Guggenheim Work and Process Series*, The Joyce Theater, the *Dance Theater Workshop* at Lincoln Center, The Teatro Albeniz in Madrid, Spain, *Dancing into the 21st Century* for Global India a Kathak & Flamenco Fusion at the American Museum of Natural History, and a collaboration piece *Solo In Time* at The Joyce Theater with Savion Glover.

Charles Jurrist of the *New York Daily News* described La Conja as "a mesmerizing singer and demon dancer," and indeed, her dancing illustrates a show of force which is the very essence of Flamenco.

KINA MENDEZ was born in the clan of the Mendez,



gypsy artists from Jerez de la Frontera. Immersed in the flamenco tradition, she started singing under the influence of her aunt, the legendary flamenco singer La Paquera de Jerez. Kina's professional career began at the famous Seville Tablao "Los Gallos" which led her to later join the company of Manuel Morao. This opportunity opened the doors for her to work with the famous dancer Mario Maya, and led her to make her artistic career in international productions touring with Sevillian dramatist Salvador Távora in *Carmen*, *Carmina Burana*, and *Don Juan*. Kina has acted and also appeared at festivals such as The Festival Bulería, The Harvest Festival in Jerez de la Frontera, the international flamenco festivals of Albuquerque (2012), of Houston (2013), and in the famous festival of Caminos Flamencos (2014) where she performed with the famous flamenco singer Juan Carrasco Soto and flamenco dancer David Paniagua. Kina was also a prominent artist at the prestigious XIV Festival de Jerez in 2010 in *The Palace Concerts* and La Biennial flamenco Sevilla.

One of the great achievements of Kina's career is her tribute to her aunt La Paquera de Jerez who she celebrated with a historic concert uniting many guitarists and other artists in the Bay Area of San Francisco. This led to the creation of her particular vision of flamenco and other various musical projects and record collaborations. Her debut recording *From Seville to Jerez* was released in 2009.

ROBERTO CASTELLON began his flamenco career at a very early age. His father, guitarist and singer, Roberto Castellon, was his first teacher. By the age of 6, Roberto Jr. was performing at the famous Chateau Madrid in NYC where he sang and played guitar accompanied by his father. By the age of 9, Roberto Jr. was performing with his father in various cultural events/festivals and touring the east coast. Roberto Jr. continued studying flamenco guitar under the great guitarist Manolo Baron. He was greatly influenced by the playing and singing of the great Sabicas, Paco De Lucia and Camaron De La Isla. By 19, Roberto Jr. began touring with many companies such as the Jose Greco Company and later with Maria Benitez Teatro Flamenco, Carlota Santana's Flamenco Vivo, The American Bolero Dance Company, Maria Serrano Alhama Flamenco Dance Company in Germany, La Tania Flamenco and many others. He has toured the U.S., Canada, Europe, Japan, India, Taiwan, Greece and South America. Roberto is also an acclaimed composer, he has composed and directed works for many flamenco productions such as *Mano a Mano* for Carlota Santana's company and *Bailaor* from the production of *Bailaor/Bailaora* which was featured at The New Victory Theater and Joyce Theater in NYC. In November of 2002 Roberto released his first CD titled *La Guitarra*. In 2009, Roberto guest starred with the Anchorage Opera in *Hot Spanish Nights* receiving wonderful reviews. And in 2013, Roberto Castellon was invited to perform with The New York Philharmonic at Lincoln Center.

ZORONGO DANCERS

ANDREA J. FRENZEL is a dancer returned to flamenco after a decade long hiatus exploring life as a mother, doula, marathoner and finance professional in New York. Her flamenco discovery began over 20 years ago in class with Susana di Palma. Before moving to NYC, she was a founding member of the Majas, Zorongo's School Director and was the recipient of a Jerome Foundation Travel-Study grant to dance in Spain. Ms. Frenzel's influential instructors include Maria Magdalena, Matilde Coral, Javier Latorre, Yolanda Heredia, Omayra Amaya, and Susana di Palma, to whom she is grateful for her years of encouragement and support. Ms. Frenzel also enjoys her time teaching at Zorongo Flamenco, sharing a love of body, rhythm, and big expression with adults at all stages of dance exploration.

COLETTE ILLARDE is originally from Chicago where she began dancing ballet with Edward Parish, and began flamenco with the Ensemble Español. Relocating to Minneapolis in 1998, she created FUEGO Flamenco and danced, designed and produced many successful shows. She has received numerous grants and awards for her work including the McKnight Fellowship for dancers. She has performed with many flamenco artists - close to home in the Twin Cities, and as far away as Abu Dhabi. She travels to Madrid each year to dance and gather inspiration from her mentors, Manolete, Manuel Reyes and Inma Ortega. Colette is currently a teaching artist at Interact Center, creating theater and dance with adult artists with disabilities. She is also an instructor at Zorongo and is thrilled to start others on their flamenco journey. She is honored to be one of *Lorca's Women!*



When **DEBORAH ELIAS** saw Carlos Saura's flamenco film masterpiece *Carmen* in 1992, the classical-musician-turned-economist knew she had unveiled her future. However, it wasn't until 1994, with a Master's Degree and nine months in South America behind her, that the native Minnesotan discovered flamenco in her own city. She immediately began intensive study with Susana di Palma, a mentorship that evolved into a strong and lasting artistic partnership. Since 1996 she has appeared in over 22 productions of di Palma's company, Zorongo Flamenco Dance Theatre, most recently *Flamenco on Fire* at The Cowles Center in 2015. In 2010, Deborah began creating and presenting her own work as Deborah Elias Danza Española, including flamenco theater pieces *Palabras al viento* (2011), and *The Moon's Desire* (2010). She teaches ongoing adult classes in St. Paul, and also teaches regularly at Zorongo Flamenco Dance Theatre and School, the Minnesota Conservatory for the Arts, and the University of Minnesota.



ZORONGO APPRENTICES THE "MAJAS"

Seeking dance deeply rooted in music and expressing our collective search for freedom and humanity, **AMANDA DLOUHY** started studying flamenco with Susana di Palma in 2013. Her instincts come from a layered dance history, including early training in ballet, jazz, and tap. She danced with Ragamala Dance from 2005 - 2013 and received a McKnight Fellowship for Dancers in 2011.

JULIA HAUSER, a recent graduate of Augsburg College, grew up immersed in flamenco through her family. She began studying with Susana when she was 7 years old until she was 16. When she turned 20, she decided she wanted to continue pursuing flamenco, thus joining the Majas.

GRACE HOLTHAUS began dancing when she was 5 years old because her sister started. But when her sister stopped, Grace kept going. At age 5 she started with ballet, tap and jazz at On Stage School of Dance. In college at the U of MN, Morris she fell in love learning cultural dances. Grace studies and performs with Zorongo in the Majas apprentice program and had the privilege of performing with Deborah Elias Danza Española in *Las Flamencas*.

Originally from Tokyo, Japan, **EVE MAKIKO LAABS** discovered flamenco at Minnehaha Falls where she saw Zorongo's 2008 production of *Romeria*. She loves flamenco for its depth, authenticity and strength that carries over to life beyond dance, through joy, sorrow and triumph.

BRENDA NEPSUND is an alumni from MSU, Mankato where she choreographed MSU's main stage production of *Carmina Burana* and performed in the Gala at America's College Dance Festival (North Central, 2014) in *War Story* by Dr. Julie Kerr-Berry. After receiving her B.S. in Dance, Brenda has been intensively training as an apprentice since June 2014 and is grateful for the opportunity to work with everyone at Zorongo.

HILDE DE ROOVER was born and raised in Belgium. And although she never had any formal dance training until she joined Zorongo about 8 years ago, she always has had a passion for movement to sound and music. Since then she's been intrigued by flamenco's complexity and history. She loves the process of discovering, understanding and feeling the intertwining of cultures, rhythms, emotions and movement.

FELICIA STEVENS began dancing at age four with CAAM Chinese Dance Theater. Her first exposure to classical ballet, modern and jazz dance came a decade later when she enrolled at the St. Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists. In 2014 she received her BFA in Dance from the University of MN. Felicia joined Zorongo as a Majas apprentice in June of 2014 and has danced with the company in *Flamenco on Fire* (2015). Outside of Zorongo, Felicia teaches ballet, tap and yoga.

MOLLY KAY STOLTZ graduated in 2009 with her UMN Dance BFA, and has since pursued rhythmic dance performance with Jump Rhythm Jazz, Chicago Tap Theater, and now with Zorongo since 2014. She is passionate about live music & dance collaborations in many forms, including with her band THE SUMMER COATS, as a tap & jazz dancer who performs with musicians regularly, and now as a student of Flamenco.

THANK YOU

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Lorca's Women is dedicated to Robert Schommer, a great leader, beloved friend, and longtime supporter of Zorongo.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Join us on Sunday, April 17th from 11am – 2pm at Mason's Restaurant for Zorongo's "Drink & Do Good" fundraising brunch! A portion of all proceeds will go to Zorongo to benefit *Lorca's Women* and its programs. Interested in learning flamenco? Take classes at Zorongo this spring! Spring classes begin April 23. Go to www.zorongo.org for more information.

