

**Artist names:**

Amity Skala (dance)  
Estelle Kurier (dance)  
Jake Lee (guitar)  
Jan "Juanita" Bate (singing)

**Bios:**

Amity Skala has been active in Victoria's dance community since 1984 and has studied and taught a wide range of dance forms. Her skills have earned many guest appearances as a teacher locally and internationally.

Amity's passion for Flamenco began in 1994 when she started taking lessons that led to her current status as a company member and instructor with Victoria-based Alma de España, under the artistic direction of Veronica Maguire and the late Harry Owen.

Having traveled to Spain many times, Amity has studied with top Flamenco artists Eva Yerbabuena, Belén Maya, Rafaela Carrasco and others.

Amity has performed professionally with Alma de España throughout the Pacific Northwest. Other performance credits include appearances with the Victoria Gilbert and Sullivan Society, Victoria Symphony, Butchart Gardens "Spanish Passion" Summer shows, and as a soloist with Peña Flamenca. She is an inspiration to many, bringing a rare dedication to everything she does.

\*\*\*

Estelle first discovered Flamenco in Woodstock, New York and began her Flamenco dance training in Victoria with Veronica Maguire of the Alma de España Flamenco Dance Company. On her many trips to Spain, Estelle studied Flamenco in Jerez de la Frontera, Sevilla, and Granada in workshops with numerous instructors, including Flamenco legends Eva Yerbabuena, Rafaela Carrasco, Juana Amaya, and Belén Maya. Estelle has performed extensively in Victoria with Alma de España and as a choreographer and dancer for Peña Flamenca, Corbett & Lauchbaum at the Passion for Tango Festival, and Alboa at the Butchart Gardens and the Metro Theatre. She was also the classical Spanish dance special guest soloist at the Civic Orchestra of Victoria's "Celebrating the Performing Arts" concert and the Strathcona Symphony Orchestra's "España" concerts in Courtenay. Estelle is currently an instructor and PhD candidate in the Department of Hispanic and Italian Studies at the University of Victoria.

\*\*\*

Guitarist Jake Lee began training as an accompanist for dancers in 1997 under Harry Owen and Veronica Maguire. Drawing influences from both traditional and modern toque, Jake has played for many of BC's flamenco ensembles including Monique Salez, Alma de España and Mozaico Flamenco. Since 2013 he has also been a regular collaborator with various ensembles participating in the Victoria Flamenco Festival.

\*\*\*

While living in Tofino in 1999, Jan Bate attended a flamenco concert in which Harry Owen and Veronica Maguire were supporting local dancers. She was struck with the insatiable desire to learn to sing those gorgeous melodies and to play palmas to the foreign and exciting rhythms. Since then, in Tofino, Victoria, Havana and Jerez, Jan has studied with cante teachers to whom she is forever indebted for their skills, inspiration and very long patience, including: Veronica Maguire and the late Harry Owen, Oscar Nieto, Luis de Pacote, Paco Peña "Gasolina Hijo", Miguel Rosendo, Miguel Chávez, Matias López "El Mati", Ezequiel Benítez, and Vicente Griego. Jan is also most grateful to her fellow flamencos in Victoria, for it is only through those many hours of practice that the art of flamenco reveals itself. Hopefully there will be many more hours, for life is short and flamenco is very long.