

Short Bios for *¿Preguntas?*:

**Irwin Dennis Antonyswamy - Dancer**

Flamenco art came into my life by accident. When I was introduced to Flamenco, it was love at first sight. I started learning it in 2008 from the renowned Flamenco sisters of Australia, Emma Fernee and Susi Masi (Studio Flamenco) in Adelaide. I surprised myself that, as a person without any background of classical music, I could progress quickly and could not stop learning! I guess that was thanks to my prior dance knowledge. Yes! I started learning classical Indian dance (Bharathanatyam) when I was 10. I have to admit that I was terrible at it! I tried to learn this ancient art form for about a year and then decided to leave it for good and said to myself “I am done with dance.” After a long break I got back again into Indian Cinematic dance styles (now known as the Bollywood dance style) and, after moving to Australia in 2006, I started learning Hip-hop/funk dance at the ACPA (Australian Company of Performing Arts). And then I plunged into Flamenco! It has been 7 years now and I don’t think I can ever stop. Upon moving to Ottawa and then to Montreal, I am very privileged and thankful to have learned from teachers like Juliana Pulford, Myriam Allard, Rae Bowhay and with various visiting artists from Spain. My greatest motivation comes from my quest to find the answer of why I am attracted to this art form... I am still waiting for the answer.

**Katherine McLeod - Dancer**

After training in ballet for eleven years at Richmond Academy of Dance, followed by modern dance classes during university, Katherine started flamenco dance classes ten years ago in Vancouver with Kasanda Lea at Mozaico Flamenco. After moving to Toronto, she joined the flamenco collective, Flamenguitos del Norte, and performed with this group at the Montreal Flamenco Festival (2012) and Vancouver’s Jondo Flamenco Festival (2012), among many other community and local performances. In addition to studying flamenco with Kasandra Lea in Vancouver, Carmen Romero and Esmeralda Enrique in Toronto, Katherine has studied with various acclaimed flamenco artists in workshops (La Lupi, Javier LaTorre, Belen Maya, Adela Campallo) and she travelled to Spain in 2012 for classes with Ursula Lopez and Chloé Brûlé. She has currently been studying with Myriam Allard and Rae Bowhay in Montreal. At present, Katherine is committed to developing a creative flamenco practice that combines her range of training in both dance and in poetry and that shapes her own expressive voice to speak through dance.

**Michelle Harding - Dancer**

Michelle began her flamenco career in Vancouver studying with Oscar Nieto and Kasandra “La China”. She has traveled to Jerez de la Frontera (Spain) and New Mexico (USA) to train with some of the great masters of the art and has studied extensively with visiting artists over the last fourteen years.

Michelle has been a soloist and company member with Mozaico Flamenco Dance Theatre since 2005, and is an instructor at Al Mozaico Flamenco Dance Academy. She is a favourite weekly performer at the Kino Café and Chai Lounge in Vancouver and has worked professionally with

many groups, both local and international, including Moraima, Mimbres, The Raices y Alas Flamenco Project, The Plastic Acid Orchestra, Mashregh, Zyryab (Canada/Iran), Ricardo Diaz (USA), Ricardo Garcia (Scotland), Flamenco Sur (USA/France) and Fin de Fiesta (Toronto).

### **Maria Avila - Singer**

Maria Avila has been involved in the art of flamenco for well over a decade. She has trained at all three of Vancouver's top flamenco schools; Al Mozaico Flamenco Dance Academy, Karen Flamenco, and completed Centro Flamenco's professional two-year dance program. Maria has lived abroad to train intensively at Flamenco Abierto in Sevilla, Spain and Pro Arte in Queretaro, Mexico. Over the years Maria has performed as both a Flamenco Rosario and as an Al Mozaico Flamenco Dance Theatre company member. Currently, Maria Avila has established herself as an independent dancer, choreographer, and teacher. Recent achievements include being awarded a B.C. Arts Council grant for professional development in 2013 as well as performing at the Vancouver International Flamenco Festival in 2011 and 2014. She collaborates with Calle Verde, La Triana, and Raices y Alas.

### **Liron Man - Guitar and Hang Drum**

Since the age of 18, Liron has been attracted to different instruments such as mandolin, bouzouki, clarinet, Ney flute and different percussion instruments. Through these instruments, Liron was exposed to new musical styles such as gypsy music from Eastern Europe, Oriental music, Bossa Nova, Samba, Klezmer music, reggae, various Fusion music styles, and much more. In 2006, Liron bought his first hang drum and immediately felt a connection with the instrument and the ability to play it. Due to the lack of teachers who specialize in this unique new musical instrument, Liron developed his own style. Over the years, Liron has developed a clean, harmonious technique and has influenced many hang drum artists around the world.

Without a doubt, Liron is considered as one of the leading hang drum artists in the world today, his astounding speed and accuracy combined with his rich music experience create the unique audio experience which captivate his audience. During the past years, Liron discovered and fell in love with the world of flamenco and specifically flamenco guitar. Today, Liron is living and studying in Andalusia, the core of flamenco in Spain, and is now performing with his flamenco guitar and combines the hang with the various authentic flamenco styles he has picked up.