



50th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA RHODA RIVKIND

The celebrations in Johannesburg started off with a wonderful 5 day course given by Angel Muñoz. This being the 3rd time Angel has been here. The course was attended by about 140 dancers from the Gauteng area, West Rand, Pretoria and Sasolburg and it was much appreciated that the 3 teachers from Durban – Lynn Wesson, Pam Johnson & Penny Lundall, came all the way with their pupils, as well as Fiona Rodel from Port Elizabeth and Mavis Becker from Cape Town. It was also nice to have the dancers from Alianza.

The course finished on the Thursday and on the Friday we had rehearsals for our show all day and night.

On the Saturday and Sunday we had two performances on each day and all performances were completely sold out.

8 Teachers choreographed numbers with their students and Angel danced two solos, all of which were done to great acclaim. The show culminated with Angel and many of the dancers doing Bulerias, to the great excitement of the audience, so much so that Angel couldn't resist bringing 3 excited little boys in the front row, onto the stage to dance with him.

The wonderful thing about this show was the camaraderie amongst all the teachers and students. Everyone got on with each other, and the atmosphere on stage and back stage was electrifying.

All in all an experience we will all remember for years to come.

Straight after the show, Angel, Geoffrey, Mavis and I went to Cape Town where Angel did another wonderful course with the very talented Cape Town dancers.

This too, like the rest of the celebrations was much enjoyed by everyone and was culminated by a great party put together by all the teachers.



AND SO ON TO SPAIN FOR MORE CELEBRATIONS.....

50th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION IN VALENCIA, SPAIN RHODA RIVKIND

At the beginning of December, 12 South Africans travelled to Spain to continue celebrating our 50th Anniversary.

Geoffrey Neiman and his friend Brian Van Rheede, Rhoda Rivkind and her daughter Tanya, Mavis Becker and her daughter, Luisa. Wilcarina Yeates and pupils, Monique Saunders and Mari Briedenhann. Roslynne Van Belkum, her husband Jaco, and daughter Madison.

It was a wonderful week in Valencia – everyone from England, Europe, Thailand, Australia, Canada and South Africa stayed at the same hotel and literally took up the entire hotel.

All the celebrations in Valencia were wonderfully organised by Sherrill Wexler (England) and Maria Jesus de Bayarri (Valencia).

We were very happy that our Hon. Life President, Dame Marina Keet, who has done so much for our Society, attended the celebrations in Valencia with her husband, Mikael Grut.

The week started off with courses taught by Angel Muñoz, his wife Charo Espino and his brother-in-law Miguel Espino. At the same time Angel and Miguel choreographed 2 beautiful ballets, a Classical and Flamenco.

The show (for invited guests only) at the *Palau de La Musica* was opened with a short introduction by Theo Dantes, who then called onto the stage Dame Marina Keet, Sir Geoffrey Neiman and Maria Jesus de Bayarri, who all made short introductory speeches in Spanish and English. The show then commenced and comprised of a demonstration of the SDS syllabus in the first half, and in the 2nd half the dancers from Maria Jesus, and the 2 ballets choreographed by Angel and Miguel, and culminated with solos and duets danced by Angel, Charo, Miguel & Inma, (another teacher who has been to South Africa to teach several times.)

We were very proud that **OUR** three dancers, Mari, Monique and Roslynn were chosen to take part in these ballets. All the other dancers were from England and Europe, as well as three dancers from the other countries under the jurisdiction of South Africa – Lalita Jantaro (Bangkok), Lyn Martlew (Perth) and Maritel Centurion (Winnipeg).

Our trip wasn't all dancing, and Geoffrey, Brian, Tanya and I went on tours, we went shopping, out for coffees and meals in the sidewalk cafes, and all in all just had a wonderful time.

The highlight of our tour was a reunion in Madrid. The 4 of us, together with Mavis and her daughter Luisa got the bullet train to Madrid where we re-united with 3 dancers we had all danced with 52 years ago in Luisillo's Company. The excitement was great, and tears flowed when we saw each other. We all went out for a drink, then went out for lunch and we just talked and talked about the past. They all came to the station to see us off and it was very sad, as we wondered if we would ever see them again.

Our grateful thanks go to Luisa Mazinter (Mavis's daughter) who took the initiative to film a documentary while we were in Valencia, reflecting on the past 50 years of the Society as told by the original members of the Society and those still organising the Society.
WELL DONE LUISA ON A GREAT JOB.

This documentary can be viewed on Youtube via the URL below.
<https://youtu.be/ghRhN4rtQal>

SOCIETY MEMBERS PICTURED HERE WITH GIRLS DRESSED IN TRADITIONAL VALENCIAN COSTUME.





**MORE REFLECTIONS ON OUR 50TH
ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS
SIR GEOFFREY NEIMAN
(CHAIRMAN)**

GEOFF AND RHODA IN VALENCIA

What an incredible year the Spanish Dance Society had in 2015. We celebrated the 50th Anniversary of our Society and being a Founder Member and personally involved for so many years, it was especially meaningful for me.

It took Rhoda and myself many months of planning and organizing--- and more than once, wanting to cancel it all ---- but in the end, what a huge success it was.

At the outset, I would like to thank The Spanish Embassy, (Ambassador Juan Sell and Sr. Beltran de Aguedo in particular) for ALL their assistance both financially and encouragingly over the past few years, but mainly, to get our Celebration off the ground. We are eternally grateful.

I have to say that without the wonderful organizational skills of Rhoda, the Course and Performances would not have been as successful as they were. Thank you, thank you.

The Course in Johannesburg was attended by teachers and students from many parts of South Africa and was so well attended, that quite a few people had to be turned away. Thanks to all the people who assisted both Rhoda and myself to make this an unforgettable experience.

That brings me to ANGEL MUÑOZ ----- what a genius!!!!
Not only a brilliant teacher and dancer, but as you will read from people who did the course, a caring, giving and loveable human being.

The Show at the Fringe Theatre in Jo'burg was very well attended, in fact all four performances were sold out and was a huge success artistically both from the audience and backstage peoples' point of view. A big thank you to ALL the teachers and pupils who gave of their time and knowledge to participate in both the course and show.

The Celebrations continued in Valencia, Spain where teachers and students from many countries around the world who teach our syllabus attended a course given again by Angel Muñoz, his wife Charo Espino and her brother, Miguel Espino and were later joined by Inma Ortega for the performance.

It was totally inspirational to watch these masters of their craft not only teaching, but choreographing two pieces for the students and teachers, to be performed at the Gala at the Palau de la Musica, Valencia.

From the many phone calls and emails I received from Sherrill in England and Maria Jesus in Spain, I know what a mammoth task it was to organize and put together the Course and Performance, and from the bottom of my heart, I want to say a huge big THANK YOU for all you are doing to keep our Society alive and flourishing in England and Europe. The show went off without a hitch and we are very grateful to ALL the teachers and students from around the world who participated in the course and Gala evening and made it the huge success it was.

Rhoda, Tanya, Mavis, Brian, Luisa and myself took the Speed train into Madrid from Valencia where we met up with “ OLD “ friends from many, many, years ago, (having danced together in Luisillo’s Company) and spent many hours just talking and reminiscing about the ‘GOOD OLD DAYS “. What a fantastic way to end off an incredible 9 days in Spain.

HERE’S TO THE NEXT 50 YEARS.



OUR REUNION N MADRID



MORE REFLECTIONS ON OUR 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS DAME MAVIS BECKER

This year was a special year in the life of the Spanish Dance Society. We celebrated our 50th Anniversary.

Rhoda Rivkind, Geoffrey Neiman in South Africa, and Sherrill Maron in

London together with Maria Jesus de Bayarri and both local and International committees worked for at least a year to organise two successful happenings in both Johannesburg and Valencia.

I would like to congratulate all who worked so hard to make both celebrations the success they deserved and experienced. The teaching members who rehearsed their own choreographies for their students with the society's syllabus dances also helped enormously with their hard work towards the successes of both shows.

We were most fortunate that the course held in Johannesburg as well as in Valencia, was taught by the incredible Spanish dancer, teacher, and choreographer Angel Muñoz. I never cease to be amazed at his prowess at teaching any level of pupil, and of his excellence in making absolute beginners, which together with his charm, patience and expertise, feel like real flamenco stars.

He performed two incredible solos for both shows, firstly at the South African celebration, and later in Valencia. He polished two choreographies which were also performed at both successful shows.

Angel was joined by Miguel Espino and Charo Espino in both the teaching and performing in Valencia. Miguel choreographed the exquisite Ben Amor for all the SDS overseas teachers, plus he also danced two duets with his sister Charo.

Inma Ortega, invited Spanish guest artist, honoured and delighted the audience with two solos for the Homage to the SDS by Maria Jesus de Bayarri performed at the Palao de la Musica Valencia.

The performance at Valencia by invitation only was attended by our very own Honorary life president Dame Marina Keet de Grut with her husband Mikael Grut.

What I found by attending both celebrations was the wonderful camaraderie between our teaching and student members and it was a joyous happening,

My daughter Luisa Mazinter who joined me in Spain, managed to place on video, sections of the teaching and choreography, and recorded an excellent overview, with interviews from some of our founder members who attended the 50th Anniversary Please look at the link on the Spanish Dance Society web page.

Once again I would like to mention the amazing organisational abilities of all, mainly amongst others Rhoda in South Africa and Sherrill and Maria Jesus in Spain and I send my personal thanks.

MORE REFLECTIONS ON OUR 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS MARIA LORCA MONTOYA



'ESPAÑA 50' AND THE COURSE WITH ANGEL MUÑOZ

To say a mere 'thank you' to the Spanish Dance Society would not be enough to express the complete gratitude I feel to have once again had the honour of participating in a course with Angel Muñoz... but to have had the amazing experience of performing with this outstanding Flamenco artist on stage is

something I will treasure forever.

As a teacher, he is so patient, so full of energy and so focused on every detail... you walk away from every lesson feeling a change and so inspired and keen to do the next class. The challenge of grasping the steps and style is enormous, yet he has the ability as a teacher to encourage and inspire continuously.

To watch him perform (and from the 'wings' of the stage) was something I will always treasure... to be part of his performance and watch him LIVE every second on stage. He is a true artist, a dancer who performs from the soul.

As brilliant as he is, and as a renowned artist, he would watch each performance from the wings himself, encouraging us from backstage to do our best. How humble!

Not only did we learn from Angel as a dancer, we learnt from him as a master of his art... it's not about impressing, it's about teaching. It's about sharing with your students / dancers / audience. It's about promoting the art of Spanish dance and flamenco and teaching all who come into contact with it that it's about Soul, Beauty, Passion and Honour.

Thank you Rhoda and Geoffrey for allowing us the opportunity to learn with such a true artist.

We are humbled, inspired and craving more!

Yours in dance

Mandy-Lee Wiegmans (Maria Lorca Montoya)

MORE REFLECTIONS ON OUR 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

ROSLYNNE VAN BELKUM

THE ROSA JIMINEZ SPANISH DANCE THEATRE



Participating in a dance course with a renown flamenco dancer like Angel Muñoz and then actually performing alongside him on the same stage is one of those surreal experiences that every dancer dreams of but never actually experiences.

I have taken many courses with well known flamenco dancers from Spain but Angel has that rare and special combination of charisma, sensuality, technical skill and warmth not only as a performer but as a **dancer. Every participant in the course receives the same amount of unadulterated attention,**

consideration and patience. There is no pretence of being someone more superior even though he clearly is as a performer. He displays no need to show off what he knows in class! He sincerely wishes to impart his hard earned knowledge with anyone willing to learn!

The 50th Anniversary in Johannesburg was an unexpected celebration not only of the SDS's achievements but of the camaraderie between dancers and teachers from all over South Africa. Everyone came together not only to demonstrate their love for dance but to honour and acknowledge the fact that the SDS had created something very unique and special , a metaphorical pool of knowledge and lifelong friendships that we would never have experienced in any other institution of dance. It was wonderful dancing alongside other studios and their students and jointly celebrating our passion for Spanish dancing. The cherry on the cake for everyone was getting the opportunity to get to dance with Angel.

I was also fortunate enough to be able to join the 50th celebrations in Valencia, Spain. There I had a chance to train with Angel Muñoz, his wife Charo Espino and Miguel Angel Espino. Miguel taught us the most beautiful Ben Amor that I hope to dance for the rest of my dancing career. It was wonderful to see that the SDS is also a strongly knit family elsewhere. There were students and teachers from Thailand, Russia, Australia, the UK, Malta, just to name a few and it was wonderful to know that even though we came from different parts of the globe we had one major thing in common-the SDS syllabus – it became a kind of language on its own. The pinnacle of my experience in Spain was performing the Ben Amor alongside fellow teachers from all over the world at the Palau de la Musica in Valencia. It was an experience that I will never forget. I am grateful to the SDS and its valuable members who created a lasting legacy that we can share with our own grandchildren in the future! May the SDS go from strength to strength!

MORE REFLECTIONS ON OUR 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

FIONAL RODEL (PORT ELIZABETH)

What a sheer delight and honour it was to be a part of all the excitement and build up to the spectacular performances at The Fringe, Jo'burg Theatre.

The celebrations commenced with an amazing course from 11th to 15th October given by Angel Muñoz. On conclusion of the course, one could feel the excitement of the 'build-up' to the performances in the theatre. We were most fortunate to have Angel as guest artist and from the moment the curtains were raised, one sensed being in a professional domain. Congratulations to all the cast who gave of their very best at all times.

An enormous amount of time has gone into the preparations, organising, running around etc. etc. in making this celebration the success it was. THANK YOU SIR GEOFFRY NEIMAN and DAME RHODA RIVKIND for all the endless hours you both spent – working for days and through the nights. You were both (and are) amazing.

I would also like to thank ANGEL MUÑOZ who was always so loving to everyone and very professional in every way. To the CAST – thank you for a wonderful show. I thoroughly enjoyed all four exciting performances.



FIONA & VON SCHÉLE

SPAIN DAY AT AMBASSADOR'S HOME IN
PORT ELIZABETH