

Sevillanas - Katerina Tomás © 2002/2008

Derived from the ancient dances *seguidillas manchegas*, the *Sevillanas* have gone through a lengthy evolution. Today, hundreds of *Sevillanas* dance and music clubs exist throughout Spain, particularly in Madrid and Seville. *Sevillanas* are heard and seen in many contexts, from the classical Spanish dance style with castanets, called *Escuela bolera*, often performed to the music of the *bandurria*, to renditions that include pianos, flutes and percussion instruments. The song and dance are also performed with the tapping of a stick, as solo songs, and as part of the *Romería del Virgin Rocio*, an annual pilgrimage that takes place in the late spring from Seville to the town of Huelva.

The four *coplas* (verses) popular today are the mainstay of the *Féria de Abril* (April fair), and are influenced by flamenco and the *aire* (ambiance) of Andalucía. They have the feeling of both flamenco and ballet clásico - classical Spanish dancing. Each danced *copla* includes *taconeol/zapateado* (footwork), *paseos panaderos* (panaderos passing steps), *pasadas/paseos* (passing steps), and the *sevillanas* dance step.

STRUCTURE:

The four popular *coplas* performed today have the same structure with different variations. All begin with the *cante* or an introduction by the guitarist. Many begin with the guitarist performing a *falsetta*, and the singer coming in at a cue. The singer sings an opening phrase that is 3 sets of 3 counts each. On the 3rd set, the dancer performs a turn, which is either a spin (pirouette), or a Spanish turn, generally a *vuelta normale* (front or back turn performed without a “break” in the upward stance of the dancers body). Each of the four *coplas* has three variations and ends with a turn, pose and stop.

Each *copla* begins with the *sevillanas* step and then branches out into a variation, though each *copla* includes the *pasada* (passing step) followed by 1 *sevillanas* dance step twice in each *copla*, performed at the same moment in all 4 *coplas*. This allows dancers to work with each other independently of differences in variations. In essence, if one knows the basic structure of the *sevillanas*, the dances can be performed with anyone else who knows it, even when styles and techniques vary.

Sevillanas can be danced solo or in groups, but are generally performed as a duet. Tempos vary, and the dance is performed in 3/4 or 3/8 time. Many professional dance groups perform *sevillanas* with castanets. At *juergas* (flamenco parties) or at the *feria* in Seville and other Spanish cities, people perform the dance at the spur of the moment with or without castanets, guitars, singers, *palmistas* (persons who perform by clapping their hands), orchestras, or cassette players. Traditional *sevillanas coplas* that we learned in class:

SEVILLANAS

1. Manuela de mis amores, Olé con ole y olá
Manuela de mis amores
Eres tú de noche y día
Un jardin lleno de flores
Olé con olé, olé con olé y olá

Morena y maravillosa
Del rosal de Andalucía
Eres tú la mejor rosa
Olé con olé, olé con olé y olá

Tus labios tras las cancela
Son pa mi sentrañas mias
Al igual que una candela
Olé con olé, olé con olé y olá.

2. Manuela cariño mio, Olé con olé y olá
Manuela cariño mio
No me des pares y nones
Que sin ti pierdo el sentio
Olé con olé, olé con olé y olá.

Te gusta verme encelao
Suspirar por los rincones
Y Después darne de lao
Olé con olé, olé con olé y olá.

Tu sabes que me enajena
El notar sol de los solés
Ese olor a hierbabuena
Olé con olé, olé con olé y olá.