



ANDALUZIA

OFFICIAL PRESS KIT



BANDALUZIA

Bandaluzia is a Sydney based Flamenco ensemble led by Damian Wright, consisting of a group of acclaimed musicians and dancers at the forefront of Flamenco in Australia.

Bandaluzia combine knowledge of contemporary and traditional Flamenco into a mesmerizing display of explosive dance, virtuosic guitars, soulful singing and masterful percussion, embodying all the passion, mystery and power of this remarkable art form.

Bandaluzia are also revered for their ability to mix elements of other genres into their performances, whether being the rich harmonies of Jazz, the exotic melodies of the Orient or the infectious rhythms of South America.

Bandaluzia are known for their sell out performances in theatres and festivals across Australia, and for bringing renowned artists to the stage as guests in their performances, an experience that evokes the senses with the grace of Flamenco.



Flamenco Guitar/Director

Damian Wright

Damian Wright is a Flamenco guitarist based in Sydney, Australia. Damian began Flamenco studies with Robbie Varga in Sydney and then moved to Spain where he spent 4 years studying with some of Spain's most recognised maestros of the Flamenco guitar, including Pepe Justicia and El Entri. Upon his return Damian has studied with Richard Tedesco in Melbourne. In 2010 Damian received an Australian Arts Council grant to further his studies in Spain. At present Damian is completing a Masters Degree in Music at Macquarie University.

Currently performing with the Flamenco dance groups of BANDALUZIA, DIANA REYES FLAMENCO and fusion groups THE TRANSLATORS featuring Steve Hunter (bass), James Hauptmann (percussion), Ben Hauptmann (mandolin) and trio RASA DUENDE featuring Bobby Singh (tablas) and Adrian McNeil (sarod). Damian has also supported such artists as grammy award winner MAMADOU DIABATE, RICHARD BONA, Brazilian singer BEBEL GILBERTO and string quartet FOURPLAY.

Performances are in conjunction with:

Musica Viva, Sydney Festival, Opera Australia, Fiesta Darling Harbour, Cafe Carnivale, SIMA, Jazzgroove, Spanish Festival-Sydney, ABC Radio and Woodford Folk Festival.

Side projects:

Performed in the documentary 'ESPERANTO' by Spanish director Manuel Conde. Performed original guitar music in 1st place winning video 'EXHALE' in the 2007 Australian Audi Art Prize.

Reviews/ Comments:

"Damian Wright is a brilliant Flamenco guitarist...Wright showed what a captivating solo player he is on his own *in time*, and elsewhere his articulation of complex lines was fluid and dripping with conviction"

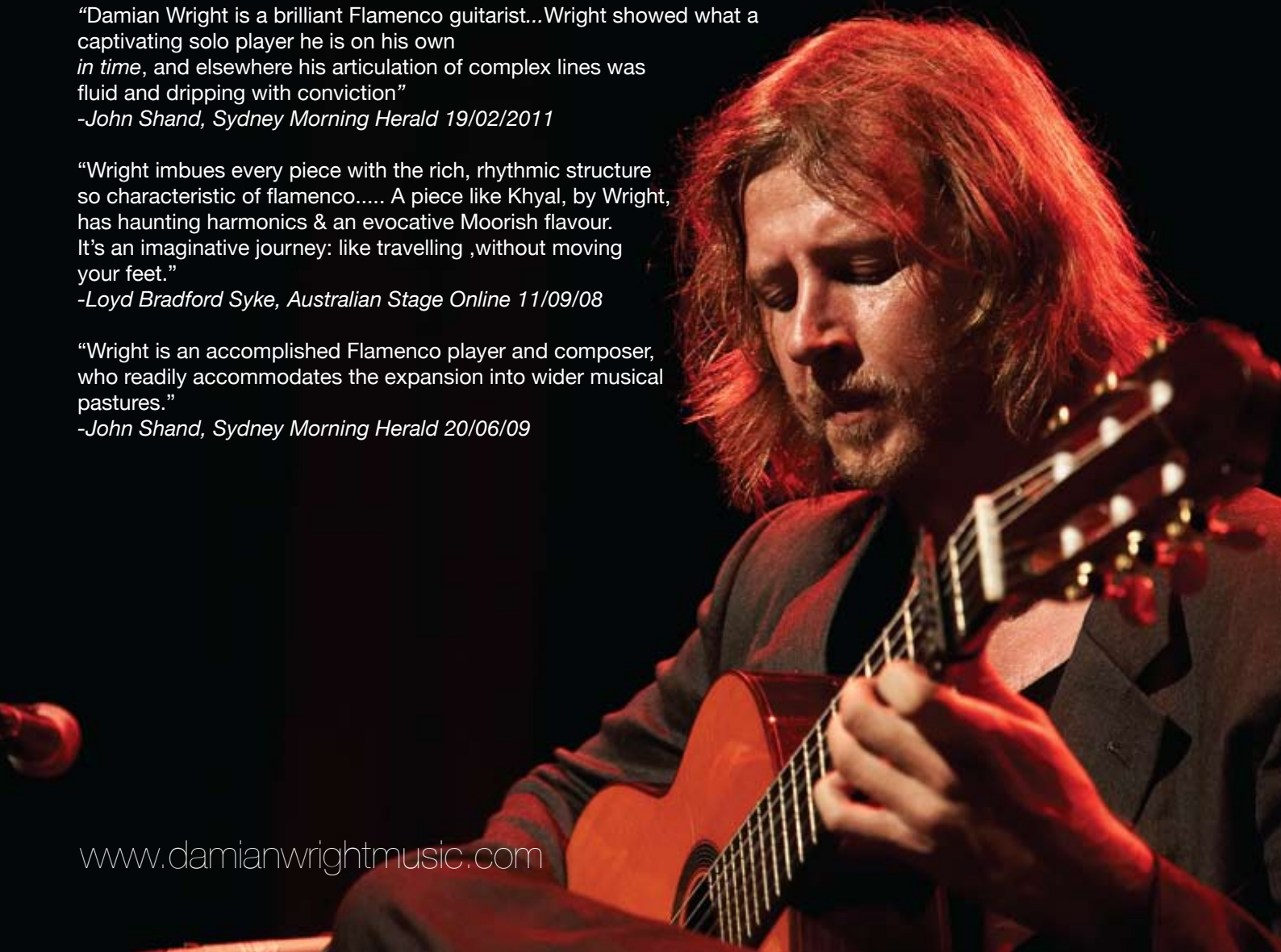
-John Shand, *Sydney Morning Herald* 19/02/2011

"Wright imbues every piece with the rich, rhythmic structure so characteristic of flamenco..... A piece like Khyal, by Wright, has haunting harmonics & an evocative Moorish flavour. It's an imaginative journey: like travelling ,without moving your feet."

-Loyd Bradford Syke, *Australian Stage Online* 11/09/08

"Wright is an accomplished Flamenco player and composer, who readily accommodates the expansion into wider musical pastures."

-John Shand, *Sydney Morning Herald* 20/06/09



Flamenco Dancer

Jessica Statham

Jessica discovered Flamenco and began her training at an early age in Sydney. She performed for many years at the tablao 'La Campana'.

In 2004 she moved to Madrid where she has spent the last 5 years studying intensively at the renowned Amor de Dios academy with acclaimed artists such as Marcos Flores, Concha Jareno, David Paniagua, Domingo Ortega, Manuel Reyes, Pepe Molina and more, all of whom are at the cutting edge of Flamenco today. She has performed often at Madrids popular 'El Juglar'.

She has gained a reputation for her impeccable rythm and footwork, graceful body technique and powerful style.

Since returning to Sydney she has performed with The Flamenco Crew and is a featured artist of BANDALUZIA, one of the most innovative and celebrated Flamenco groups in Sydney.

"As with tango, music and dance are entwined in Flamenco. Jessica Statham made physical the music's elegance, sadness, exaltation and haughty sexuality, while her feet made the stage an instrument as real as the guitar, stamping out stirring rhythmic variations."

-John Shand, Sydney Morning Herald 19/02/2011



Violin

Shenzo Gregorio

Shenzo started playing the violin at age 3 in Perth, Western Australia and was a member of the Western Australian Youth Orchestra. In 1992 he was accepted into the Queensland Conservatorium of Music and studied violin with renowned violin teacher Kerry Smith where he completed a Bachelor of Music.

His performances with two-times Aria award winners Monsieur Camembert have seen him perform at the Montreaux Jazz Festival, Paris, Hong Kong, Singapore and major festivals across Australia.

Shenzo is also a member of the acclaimed electric string quartet Four Play who has been touring Australia to rave reviews. Other composing credits for Shenzo include two full scale musicals for the Brisbane Festival of Music. "Sk8" (2006) and "Charters Towers the Musical" (2004) have both received widespread acclaim.

Shenzo has spent 10 years studying the rhythms and melodies of flamenco and has successfully incorporated the art-form to the violin with a sound that has gained much praise from audiences internationally.

"Gregorio's violin was rampant and soaring on Zyryab, before engaging in a thrilling dialogue with the guitar. On one piece he created a flute-like, breathy sound, as though the strings were being blown rather than bowed."

-John Shand, Sydney Morning Herald 19/02/2011



Bass

Steve Hunter

Steve Hunter is a renowned virtuoso on the electric bass and an award winning composer with over 90 of his compositions/songs released on various albums.

Steve's newest releases are: "Dig My Garden" on Birdland Records and "The Translators" on Jazzgroove records. Steve has played and/or recorded with (in alphabetical order): Dale Barlow, Billy Cobham, Kate Ceberano, Chick Corea, D.I.G., Virgil Donati, Renee Geyer, Bernie McGann, Steve McKenna, Matt McMahon,, James Muller, Carl Orr, Phil Slater, Guy Strazzullo, Sean Wayland and many other talented artists.

He has twice been a winner in the 'Australian Jazz Action Society' composition competition and his compositions 'Reason' (from the 'Nine Lives' album) and "Pray in your own way" (from the Local World album) were nominated for APRA awards in the Jazz composition category. In 2003 Steve was awarded a prestigious two-year artist fellowship from the Music Board of the Australian Arts Council.

Before he spent a year living in Spain, Steve Hunter was already a devotee of flamenco, and alive to the possibilities of its cross-pollination with jazz. Its intrinsic drama plays to the strengths of The Steve Hunter band, one of the country's most potent musical acts.

"Spain featured Hunter's bass guitar. This served to confirm what a superior player Hunter is to the famed Clarke in terms of conception, tone, melodicism and humility."

-John Shand, Sydney Morning Herald 19/02/2011



Cajon/ Percussionist

James Hauptmann

James Hauptmann is one of the star graduates of Canberra School of Music at Australian National University. He has worked with bandleaders as distinguished and diverse as Steve Hunter, Dale Barlow, Sean Wayland, Miroslav Bukovsky, Unity Hall Jazz Band and National Jazz Award winning singer Elana Stone.

James has recorded with The Mark Isaacs Trio - Visions, Steve Hunter Band - Dig my garden, House of reps featuring Dale Barlow - Question time, Blue Juice-Head of the hawk, The Translators-Jazzgroove, King Curly - Doomsday piano, ABC Recordings with The James Ryan Trio and Aaron Flower's BAZ.

James studied flamenco cajon with renowned flamenco percussionist Andrej Vujicic from 'Puerto Flamenco' and has performed with Bandaluzia Australia wide.

"Hauptmann, meanwhile, has absorbed flamenco's complex rhythms and routinely lit spot-fires beneath the music on his cajon."

-John Shand, Sydney Morning Herald 19/02/2011



Singer

Pablo Portillo

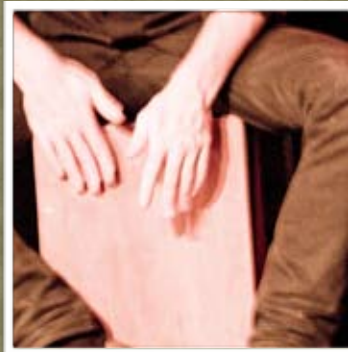
Pablo Portillo is a Flamenco singer from the famous Flamenco town of Cadiz, in southern Spain. Pablo embodies the tradition and culture of his homelands music and performs with the captivating power of emotion so characteristic of Flamenco singing. Pablo is part of a new wave of Flamenco singers pushing the boundaries of the Flamenco tradition and exploring new grounds for artistic expression.

Pablo has performed throughout Australia as a member of Bandaluzia.

"Flamenco was originally vocal music, and Wright's band has a superlative asset in singer Pablo Portillo. In fact he was underused, so compelling was his voice."

- John Shand, Sydney Morning Herald 19/02/2011







Contact Damian Wright at bandaluzia@live.com

