

La Zuppa offers Flamenco Music and more

by Peggy Stertz

“

I've never been to Spain, but I kinda like the music.”

— Hoyt Axton

Flamenco, the gypsy music of southern Spain, is passionate and compelling. It is rooted in the Spanish and Moorish traditions with a long ago connection to India. The sound of the guitar and the voice of the cantaor conjure up romantic images. Add to this the rhythmic tapping of the dancer as she provides a counter-beat all the time swishing her brightly coloured skirt. Doesn't it make you want to hop on the next plane to Andalucia?

Save the airfare! There's live Flamenco music in North Vancouver. La Zuppa, a popular Lonsdale lunch destination, transforms itself every Friday evening. Out come the crisp table clothes, candles and tall glasses. The menu switches from soup and sandwiches to delectable tapas and desserts served with a fine selection of Chilean wines. Deep red sangria is available by the pitcher. If you don't look out the window, you might think that you are in Spain.

Proprietors Juan Carlos Paez and Victoria Bakich started the Friday night concerts six years ago. They wanted to recreate the atmosphere of the Mediterranean tapa bars. Their philosophy is, "Eat well, share time with your friends, enjoy music, laughter and good conversation. Concern yourself with the things that really matter and all will be well in our world." The casual friendly atmosphere in the cozy café encourages the same kind of community spirit found in Spain and the delicious food is all made on site with fresh healthy ingredients, artistic flair and lots of love.

It wasn't until the early 19th century that Flamenco was accepted in polite society as café entertainment. Before that, the vibrant music and dance was shunned because of its association with gypsies. Today, due to its world-wide popularity, people naturally consider Flamenco the traditional music of Spain.

At La Zuppa, North Vancouver artist Juan de Marias, a native of Spain, is the current mainstay of the Flamenco shows. His guitar playing is fluid and

captivating. He sings with a clear beautiful voice



which embodies the gypsy spirit. Each week he is joined by various other flamenco musicians, singers and dancers.

On Saturday evenings, Paez and Bakich bring in local jazz artists, classical performers, folk singers, storytellers and even a Russian mime. A couple of young women from the Capilano College Jazz program have become popular favourites; Orith Fogel and Melissa Hammer call themselves OM, taking the first letters from their names. Hammer, who has recently graduated, plays the trumpet as well as anyone on the circuit these days. Fogel excels on both the electric and stand-up bass, singing popular jazz standards and original tunes with her own unique style. The musical conversation of trumpet and scat is nothing short of genius.

Paez and Bakich want to build this musical community in the heart of North Vancouver. It is their way of supporting the arts. "Society can't exist without the arts," Bakich believes. They also host a

WHAT: Live Music

WHERE: La Zuppa, 1544 Lonsdale

INFO: 604.986.6556