

June 28, 2009 THE SUN-HERALD

SOLEDAD BARRIO &

NOCHE FLAMENCA

CRITIC'S RATING 8/10

SYDNEY THEATRE

THE nonchalant opening of Noche Flamenca's latest production, with dancers, singers and musicians standing around a table tapping, is deceptive given the passion and power of the performance that follows. However, it sets the scene beautifully. These performers are like friends gathering at what could be the back of a taverna or in a town square in the middle of Andalusia.

Gradually the tempo increases until the full force of these songs of freedom hit you with all of their history. Broken up into seven pieces, the performance explores every emotion of flamenco with its sadness, humour and desperation.

Singers Manuel Gago and Emilio Florido banter between themselves, clearing their throats and urging the three dancers (Soledad Barrio, Jose Suarez "El Torombo" and Juan Fernandez) with the beautiful encouragement, "Ala!"

The skill of the entire company is quite extraordinary: the stunning vocals, the skill of the formidable guitarists and the power and agility of the dancers. The season has just finished in Sydney but will continue in Canberra from Saturday.

Some of the costumes verge on kitsch but at its heart this show, choreographed by Martin Santangelo, isn't a dressed-up production with touristic colour. It's much rawer than that and captures the very simple delight in all the passion flamenco has to offer.