

VICENTE AMIGO ★★★
Flamenco Festival, Sadler's Wells,
0844 412 4300, until February 19

MANY of the acts in this year's Flamenco Festival at Sadler's Wells have been made to celebrate the short life and astonishing work of Spain's greatest modern poet and dramatist Federico García Lorca who died 75 years ago.

However not all the acts are members of the Dead Poet Society and opener Vicente Amigo is concerned solely with the vocabulary of his guitar.

Drawing most of his material from his sixth album Paseo De Gracia, Amigo encompasses jazz, film soundtracks and easy listening for his work, all of which is played in a soft/loud style that might be called Flamenco Grunge.

It comes as no surprise to

Dance

learn that he has accompanied rock artist Sting, jazz guitarist John McLaughlin and rai singer Khaled in his career.

His style is a combination of short, staccato explosions of aggressive playing interspersed with intricate caresses intended to seduce the listener into a comfort zone before bursting out again with a percussive strumming.

It suggests his relationship with his guitar is that of master and slave rather than the organic Zen mutual respect of Paco Peña or Andres Segovia.

The cool virtuosity of his playing allows little room for space and the imagination of the listener. Few are the occasions when you sense the

landscape and passion evoked by his playing, though there is a depth of melancholy in his solo that is conspicuously absent elsewhere in his performance.

The slick performance is sharpened by the late arrival of skinny, besuited dancer Dani Navarro. His stuttering, rapid-fire steps and fluid upper body movement exemplify the cocktail of passion and calculated improvisation that embodies the flamenco spirit.

High marks too for vocalist Rafael de Utrera and bass player Juan Manuel Ruiz for their subtle and well-rounded contributions.

It is a fairly cool start to what promises to be a terrific festival, though I must convey the reaction of what I took to be a predominantly Spanish crowd. They went bananas.

NEIL NORMAN

/lmx

Daily Express Friday February 10 2012

WHAT ELSE IS NEW

DANCE

SUSPIRO FLAMENCO/ MANUELA CARRASCO

Sadler's Wells, ECI

★★★★☆

CLIFFORD BISHOP

THE opening night of Suspiro Flamenco was delayed by one power cut and then curtailed by another of a different kind as an apparently spent Manuela Carrasco slumped against the singer, El Extremeño, and allowed herself to be guided off stage.

Many participants in this year's London Flamenco Festival are modernisers, infusing their art with contemporary dance, such as Olga Pericet, or street culture, such as La Shica, but the gipsy-born Carrasco throws down a purist's gauntlet to them all. This is flamenco with roots as deep and old as dance itself – a woman letting the music inhabit her,

and calling on the spirits to do likewise. The implication is that when she stops, divinity has left the building.

Carrasco, who has been dancing professionally for more than four decades, cuts a monolithic figure; stern and bulky, with hands that more often karate-chop the air than caress it. Possessed or not, in her zapateado – stamping – she certainly loses herself in the competitive interplay with her three singers, two guitarists and percussionist, unleashing a furious, disorientating battleground of rhythmic textures.

She is as melodramatically hieratic as she is combative. In the closing moments of last night's unexpectedly final dance she let the others build a rising

cacophony while she leaned slowly forward. One arm curved up and over from behind her like a scorpion's tail, and with two extended fingers she delivered a symbolic estocada – the matador's final, mortal thrust – to the entire audience.

The show's three male dancers are more unashamedly entertainers –

Rafael de Carmen an old-school macho show-off, Choro a percussive improviser, and

Oscar de los Reyes a dancer with footwork so swift that at one

point, balanced on his vibrating right heel and left toe, he seemed to be floating.

■ Ends tonight (0844 412 4300, sadlerswells.com)



Flamenco with roots: Manuela Carrasco is a mighty presence

EVENING STANDARD THURSDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2012

IN TOWN THIS WEEKEND

CLASSICAL HOMAGE TO KLAUS NOMI

The London Sinfonietta's concert series turns its attention to iconic cabaret performer Klaus Nomi with Olga Neuwirth's take on songs from his repertoire
Tomorrow, Queen Elizabeth Hall.
www.southbankcentre.co.uk



outfit fronted by Stephen Jones (below) play from latest album *The Pleasures Of Self Destruction*

Tomorrow, Leicester Square Theatre.
www.leicester-squaretheatre.com

DANCE FLAMENCO GALA

Carmen Cortés, Rafaela Carrasco and Olga Pericet perform traditional to contemporary routines as part of Flamenco Festival London
Tomorrow and Sun, Sadler's Wells. www.sadlerswells.com



BOOK NOW THE HUMAN LEAGUE: XXXV TOUR

The New Wave act (above) celebrate 35 years in the business, including hits from 1981's seminal *Dare!* to last year's album, *Credo*
Nov 26, Royal Albert Hall.
www.royalalberthall.com

GIG

BABYBIRD

The darkly romantic indie

METRO Friday, February 10, 2012

Sadler's Wells

Press Cuttings – Friday 10 February 2012