

FARRUQUITO & FARRUCO, SADLER'S WELLS, LONDON — REVIEW

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It would be unlikely, and probably disquieting, if a flamenco show were not also a déjà vu experience. The emotional and dramatic and musical trappings — the affronted glares from dancers; the ferocious but otherwise incomprehensible baying; the superlative guitar-playing; the sense that rather too much is being made of too little — are there to be offered to us like tapas in a bar. It is the rarissime artist who suddenly, potently, breathtakingly, shows us some new aspect of the tradition, some reason why we should be watching.

So it was a few years ago with the marvellous Israel Galván, who made us understand that flamenco is a way of inhabiting the stage and showing what dance might adventurously do. And so, I sensed, it was with Farruquito — heir to long traditions of flamenco — as his performance ended.

Up to that moment everything had been as we have learnt to expect it. Guitarists dazzlingly playing. Vocalists doing what they always do — taxing their vocal cords and howling like the Baskerville's pet in pursuit of the dancers. And the clapping and crack-of-doom amplification and timed-to-the-second-lighting and clouds of dry-ice, and the other performer — Farruquito's gifted brother, Farruco. Ho-hum, thought I.

And then, in the statutory finale where the star must at least appear to give all, Farruquito did just that. Possessed, he tore movement from the air, shaped extraordinary phrases and paragraphs of dance and rhythm, banished everything predictable and polite from the staging and became (as certain great flamenco artists have shown: Carmen Amaya the ideal) an intermediary, an interpreter between a still-living language and the audience. Farruquito revealed himself to be a master of rhythmic nuance, of steps and their emotional and dynamic causes, of dance as communicative truth and the reason for his identity.

Unexpectedly this performance turned out to be, I hazard, among the very best things that the decade of these flamenco seasons at Sadler's Wells has shown us. Heart-stirring. Dance as life.

Source: <https://www.ft.com/content/e6f24ac8-dae2-11e5-a72f-1e7744c66818>