



CONTEST STARS ARE A BIG HIT

PEOPLE

THEY play flamenco music on take-off in Iberia jets, instead of the soothing music employed by the other airlines. Even without the excitement (or anxiety) of take-off, however, Madrid Flamenco managed to produce that same strange feeling in the pit of the stomach last night.

To achieve this was quite a feat in view of the sparse audience in Sunderland Empire Theatre. This was the third one-night flamenco concert of the winter programme; the other two played to packed houses. Where had all the people gone?

INCREDIBLY FICKLE

Wearside audiences are incredible fickle. There appears to be a demand, and there is an enthusiastic response when this it met—but three concerts make a surfeit of flamenco.

Last night's appearance was part of the first British tour of El Sali and his Spanish Dance Company, who gave us a glimpse of the infinite variety of the art of flamenco.

When El Sali himself first came on stage dressed in white trousers, waistcoat, and straw hat, he reminded one of the third male lead in a second-rate Hollywood musical of the 'thirties. This impression was shattered as soon as he started to dance.

He is a Spaniard who looks it—and is acknowledged as master of the "ritual" flamenco. Sometimes he danced without accompaniment, tapping his feet gently on the stage, on the same spot, and, stroking his hips as if to gain fuller control of his quivering legs, slowly built up to an explosive climax, at last moving from the same small square of the stage.

SUPERB CONTROL

The movement of his feet was barely perceptible at the beginning of his dancing, and then they flashed and beat out a rhythm at incredible speed. His arms, graceful as a ballerina's in swaying movements, underwent the same change, until the finger-snapping, thigh-slapping height of the near-frenzy.

He appeared to have superb control over every muscle in his body, snapping off the rhythm as suddenly as switching off a light.

The whole company managed to echo this eloquence. There were seven dancers, three singers, and three guitarists. The expressive guitar solo by Emilio Barrucs and the piano-playing of Juanita La Salinera deserve special mention.

Together, they built a subtle, sensual, and sensitive show. It is a pity so many people missed it.

—C.M.A.

Sunderland Echo Monday 19th

Club Together



Flaming passion of flamenco dance

YOU don't have to go to Spain to learn all about the art of flamenco dancing — classes have just started in Harlow.

Instructress June Jimenez has begun a four-week course at the Churchfield Common Room — the second session is tonight — and a longer course will start in September.

Flamenco dancing has been handed down through generations of Spanish gipsies.

It is said to tell the story of the struggles and persecutions they have endured.

The gipsies originated from the Indian sub-continent and travelled all over Europe, and elements of the cultures they encountered are contained in their dance.

Flamenco is a very proud dance, which shows itself in the arched back of the performer.

The foot is used to make different sounds, and the women, who use fluid, flowery movements, also clap their hands.

It is performed to a count of 12 and contains intricate and unusual rhythms.

Sturdy shoes and, for women, a flowing skirt are essentials.

People with bad backs or knees are not advised to take up the dance.

June told the *Star*: "Flamenco is exceedingly beautiful when danced well and from the soul, and those who persevere find that it captures their hearts and becomes a life-long love affair."

Tonight's session starts at 7.30 pm and lasts an hour.

For further information, contact Mark Hall and Netteswell Community Association on Harlow 24074.

