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ENRIQUE DE MELCHOR





# JALEO



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The goal of Jaleistas is to spread the art, the culture, and the fun of flamenco. To this end, we publish *Jaleo*, hold monthly juergas, and sponsor periodic events.

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(\*See back cover for explanation)

COVER PHOTO: Enrique de Melchor. (See page 6.)





## REINVENTING AND FUSING THE FLAMENCO TRADITION

[from: [International Herald Tribune](#), April 1988; sent by Ted Bakewell]

by Mark Zwerin

Paris - After Ketama and Pata Negra played for a packed house in Barcelona last January, the newspaper [La Vanguardia](#) said: "The Spanish music of the nineties was born last night."

Traditional flamenco has remained static for many years. It began to open its windows with Paco de Lucía's guitar collaborations with Al DiMeola and John McLaughlin, but this was imposed from the top, a star being accepted for himself rather than his music.

Ketama and Pata Negra, among other young Andalusian gypsy groups, began reinventing traditional flamenco in the early eighties. They made records for the Spanish market and played local clubs and their reputation began to filter north by way of Mario Pacheco's Nuevos Medios label and Joe Boyd's Hannibal Records in London. but the Barcelona concert was the first time the music had been presented in a more or less formal setting with more than one group, as a "movement." [El País](#) called it "the final breakdown of barriers."

Ketama is composed of José Soto and the brothers Antonio and Juan Carmona. Soto and the Carmonas come from distinguished flamenco families whose members include Manuel (El Sordera) Soto and Pepe Habichuela. The latter is one of today's great traditional flamenco guitarists who has also broadened his heritage through experiments with Don Cherry (who calls himself a "global griot") and Moroccan Andalus musicians.

Ketama revises the rules rather than making new ones. While transforming lyrics, rhythmic patterns and instrumentation (electric bass), they remain with both feet firmly in flamenco. Last month Joe Boyd recorded Ketama

in Madrid with the twenty-two-year-old Malian master kora player Toumani Diabete, a mixture he called "the most exciting world fusion music you can imagine." As with Astor Piazzolla's exciting tango-based fusion music, all of this has been viewed dourly by a conservative establishment - at least until January in Barcelona.

Pata Negra is at the same time more adventurous and commercial than Ketama, with elements of the blues, Django Reinhardt and progressive salsa. It's a natural marriage since flamenco is "blue" to begin with. Like Django, they are gypsies, and the traditional handclapping and foot-stomping is parallel to Latino percussion.

The group consists of the guitar playing brothers Rafael and Raimundo Amador (Rafael also sings) plus accompanying musicians. They started out playing traditional flamenco in their native Morón de la Frontera, one of flamenco's cradles, near Seville. They listened to B.B. King, Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton and Grateful Dead records given to them by U.S. servicemen. While their most recent album "Blues de la Frontera" (Nuevos Medios) sometimes caters to mass taste with swing ("How High the Moon") and rock elements in the foreground, it also combines reggae and salsa with blues, jazz and flamenco to a point beyond mere fusion. The French magazine [Actuel](#) described it as "music too beautiful to ignore."

Researching an article on Pata Negra, the [Actuel](#) correspondent found Raimundo in "one of Seville's worst neighborhoods, a gypsy barrio ravaged by heroin." Rafael has been hanging out in the streets of Seville since he was

Pata Negra's Rafael and Raimundo Amador.  
Photo dedicated to "La Revista" ([Jaleo](#))

four years old. At nine he was drinking half a liter of whiskey and smoking two packs of cigarettes a day, busking in the streets. At fifteen he was sniffing anything that was handy and now at twenty-two he's paying for it with a bad ulcer. He has resolved to touch nothing but beer and the occasional joint."

Since the Barcelona triumph, tickets for Pata Negra concerts have been trading at black market prices. French, Dutch and Italian tours are planned and Hannibal will issue the Nuevos Medios album in Britain.

Meanwhile, tonadilla, a less intellectual style of modern flamenco, is now the rage. A girl from Sevilla called Martirio has turned the scene upside down as far away as Paris, where girls in discos wear Sevillana dresses and matador hats and Spanish culture in general is "in." Martirio, wearing dark glasses and combs made from old 45-rpm records, has popularized a Madonna-like punk-flamenco craze. Singing songs full of social irony and street realism, she became a household word with only one LP ("Estoy Mala," Nuevos Medios). CBS Records has signed her for the world outside Spain. She has been received by Prime Minister Felipe González and King Juan Carlos.

"The songs and structures of Ketama, the brilliant fusion musicianship and rock energy of Pata Negra and the wild style and wit of Martirio have charted the way forward for Europe's most vibrant musical scene," sums up Joe Boyd.



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## LETTERS

### Flamenco Junkie Finds

*Jaleo*

Dear Jaleo,

On the way to looking up something else, I stumbled across your magazine at the Cultral Center in Chicago. Needless to say, I forgot about what I was looking for and spent a fascinating afternoon reading through about two and a half years of your magazine. I loved it!

Ever since the first time I saw flamenco on TV as a young child (José Greco, who else!) I have found it an awe inspiring experience. It is so difficult to find any articles about flamenco music or dancers in any magazines, so your publication fills a need for a "junkie" like me.

The one problem was that the librarian didn't know if the magazine was still being published. I hope it is and I hope it is finds you. You'll really make an anglo who doesn't speak Spanish but finds the beauty of flamenco music and dance something special happy.

Jim Leon  
Chicago, IL

\*\*\*

### UPDATE FROM TERESA

My name is Teresa from the past "Teresa y Luisillo y su Compania Española". For the past twelve years I have been coordinator of the dance department of the University of Maine at Orono, teaching flamenco dancing.

I am on Sabbatical leave of absence during the Fall of 1988 and my research project will involve going to Spain to produce a video film for distribution titled, "The Legends of Spain, Dance Again". Rosario, Antonio, Pilar Lopez, Mariemma, Luisillo, Roberto Ximenez, etc. will be the prime focus of his documentation.

I have always been interested in receiving copies of your *Jaleo* publications and would like to become a subscribing member.

Sincerely,

Teresa Torkanowsky  
Hancock, ME



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## 8TH ENCUENTRO FLAMENCO

### GUITAR COURSE

This year's flamenco guitar course offered participants a new exciting package, which combined the teaching of two world-renowned masters from Córdoba.

During the first week (4-8th of July) classes were held by the master guitarist Juan Serrano.

In the second week (11-15th of July) **Paco Peña** again conducted his popular course of previous years.

Classes covered some analysis of the flamenco rhythms, construction of falsetas and the technical and emotional development of each fundamental flamenco form.

Beginners were also accepted to the course and were taught by **Ricardo Mendeville**, currently a teacher of flamenco at the Rotterdam Conservatory, whose previous courses in Córdoba have been unanimously praised by the students.

### DANCE COURSE

Our increasingly popular dance courses were conducted this year by several teachers: **Mariano Torres, Milagros Menjibar, Rocio Castilla**. Students were divided on arrival into various groups, one of which was for beginners.

All courses concentrated on two fundamental aspects of the flamenco dance.

1. Technique in relation to footwork, arms, hands and the particular character of body movement in flamenco dance.

2. Study of the choreography and performance of some flamenco forms which were selected by the teacher according to the level of the students and her/his own discretion.

Guitar accompaniment was provided for the classes.



## Angelita Concierto Flamenco

LA MIRADA, CA: Oct 2nd, 3:00pm at La Mirada Civic Theater. Singer Chinin de Triana, guitarist Gino D'Auri, guest artist Timo Lozano. Advance sale \$15.00 check or money order to Angelita, 10918 Telechron Ave., Whittier, CA 90605 (or \$17.00 at the door).

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## Paula Moreno Spanish Dance Update

This year the company featured the young flamenco guitarist from Granada, José Valle "Chuscales". [See Jaleo Vol. X-3.] These concerts were recorded at the Bathurst Street Theater for broadcast by CBC stereo radio to be released later as an album by Producers Group International.

José Valle grew up in Granada where he made his professional debut at age fourteen in tablaos flamencos. He has played on tours throughout Europe, Japan and South America, as well as the United States and Canada.

In these concerts Chuscales performed solos and with four prominent Toronto musicians, Barbara Ackerman (flute), George Koller (bass), Joseph Peleg (violin) and Dick Smith (percussion), as well as accompanying the dance company and flamenco singer Cesar Alvarez.



## Enrique de Melchor Talks to Gerard Klingenstein "The Flamenco is Limitless"

Gerard Klingenstein: *On almost three hundred different records you have not only accompanied singers and performed as a soloist, but you have also influenced the development of flamenco over the last twenty years. You have become the most sought-after guitarist at festivals, fairs and in recording studios throughout Spain. Your father Melchor de Marchena, who died seven years ago, was one of the most important guitarists of the last generation. What can you tell us about your family, your father, your own beginnings and the guitar itself?*

Enrique de Melchor: I was born April 28, 1950 in Marchena, Calle Espíritu Santo 27. Altogether we were six children at home. I have three older brothers and two sisters. Only two of my brothers have anything to do with flamenco. One plays the guitar a little, and the other is a singer. But it is only as hobby with them. My father, my grandfather and my uncle however were real artists and although not all of them were professionals, they were nevertheless well known.

I went to school in Marchena until I was ten or twelve. It was then that I started to get interested in playing the guitar and soon I became completely dedicated to it. Even though my father was at that time a well-known, indeed historical, personality on the guitar, he made very little money. We were poor people, more or less; my father was the only one in the family to earn at least some money. As a child, of course, you don't notice poverty; you only think of fun and games. My father never left us alone for any length of time. He went on tour for, say, a month and then returned home. Usually he would practise daily, alone, or with other guitarists, enthusiasts and gypsies from Marchena who often came to play juergas. There was a constant flamenco atmosphere around us, but since I was small then, I didn't really know what to make of it. On the other hand, it didn't bother me either.

My father didn't want me to become a guitarist, and certainly he never forced me to take it up. He must have thought at that time that a professional guitarist couldn't make enough money. As far as he was concerned I would have probably done better in a bank or an office. At first I took to playing the guitar for fun — much as you try playing the piano without knowing anything at all about the instrument and the technique it requires. So when I started playing the guitar, my father showed me a few chords. That was in 1960/62 in Marchena. As my enthusiasm for the guitar increased, my father started to teach me properly. Right from the beginning, however, he made it clear to me that the guitar was a very difficult instrument to learn and that you had to work hard at it. As soon as he realized how gifted I was, he engaged a classical guitarist to teach me to play the guitar the way he did. Somehow he was a genius and anticipated that the guitar would change very much during the course of time. Because of the different technique I employed, my father began to believe that I could perform in public without any fear of competition.

Mind you, the father/son and the teacher/pupil situation didn't cause any problems, for I accepted by father as a teacher not only for the guitar. I learned from him by watching him. At that time my father was working in Madrid in the tablao called 'Los Canasteros' which was owned by the famous singer Manolo Caracol. There I met the sixteen year-old guitarist 'Caracoles-El sixteen' who in the meantime has given up playing the guitar for good. We became close friends and he taught me many things that were important for accompanying dancers and singers. A voice within me told me without knowing why, that I simply had to play. Whenever I happened to meet a guitarist who was playing something I liked, I asked him to teach me how to play it. To this day, this hasn't changed.

*What began as a hobby has become your profession. Were the beginnings of that to be found in the working together with your father or did you go on tour alone?*

While my father was performing in 'Los Canasteros' — which no longer exists — he got me my first job and I stayed in it for five years. This period was an important experience for me. Mind you, you have to work in a tablao in order to make progress. My first tour took me to New York with the dancer Morucha. When we returned in 1972, I immediately went on tour again, this time to Argentina and Japan, together with Paco de Lucía. I think we repeated this three or four times until I stopped playing with Paco. During the following years, I worked not only as a soloist, but also accompanied various singers and dancers in many different places. Nowadays when on tour and I work, for example with Fosforito or José Menese; the first part of the concert is devoted to the guitar and the second part is then performed by the two of us.

Recently I played a classical concert together with Caballé Montserrat in the USA in de Falla's 'La Vida Breve' José Menese sang a part and I accompanied him.

*After your various tours at home and abroad, can you say anything about the different audiences?*

I must say I prefer the foreign audiences, the Argentinian, Japanese, American, French, British and German audiences, because they can concentrate better and listen better.

*Do you keep a record of the people with whom you have played so far?*

Not an accurate record, no. I've accompanied almost every singer and have made recordings with all of them, beginning with Lebrijano, José Menese, Antonio Mairena, Manolo Mairena, Calixto Sánchez, Luis de Córdoba, Diego Clavel, Chiquitete, and ending with Turroneiro. I played with all singers of today.

I have also played with a rock-group called 'Alameda'. Altogether, I have made two hundred records so far, and there are another eighty records on which only sevillanas are recorded. In addition to all this, my third solo LP will be coming on to the market next month. As to some groups on earlier recordings, I just don't remember who they are, but I recognize myself very well. I like listening to these old records because they reflect my youth. They also prove that you play differently in every period of your life, and they document my development.

*Do you know Sabicas' statement that you have to accompany both a dancer and a singer for twenty years before you can be allowed to work as a soloist. If that's so, you still have to wait a little (common laughter).*

Despite my respect for Sabicas, whom I appreciated highly, I think that he exaggerated a little. I believe that four years for cante and baile ought to be enough to acquire a basic knowledge of the guitar. I think Sabicas has reached an age where you tend to exaggerate these things. The best thing to do really is to start playing flamenco in a tablao. This is the only place to acquire the rhythm and the knowledge you require if you want to accompany others. After that, you have to attend festivals in order to perform the things you have learned. From then on, working as a soloist is just a question of opportunity.

*Do you like any other kind of music, e.g. classical, jazz, rock music. Can you get your inspiration from Van Halen, Knapfler or does it have to be Manuel de Falla?*

De Falla, I think, is flamenco. His music, melodies and rhythms sound very much like flamenco and, therefore, I like him best.

I once happened to hear the Brazilian guitarist Toquinho in Buenos Aires, and I have got a few records by Baden Powell, but it's just that I like listening to his records and not that I wish to profit from him in a musical sense. Talking about music in general — I use everything I like. I think however that flamenco has its own inner structure which doesn't need a lot of altering. As to rock music, I am far too much in love with Andalusian music, whenever I have time to spare I listen to that rather than to other music.

*For the development of flamenco, especially, the last ten years have been of great importance. All musicians have been looking for something new.*



*This has resulted in various connections: Sabicas and the rock guitarist Joe Beck, Manolo Sanlúcar and a South American guitarist, Paco de Lucía and Iturralde, Chick Corea, Al DiMeola, Larry Coryell, John McLaughlin, Dalaras, Ravi Shankar and Santana, just to name a few. What do you think of these experiments and their progress?*

I believe you also have to work a lot for the audience. Paco de Lucía has learned a lot through playing with John McLaughlin and other people. But I think it won't get him any further because he is in love with flamenco and will stick to it forever. Everyone should stay with the music he prefers. You can't play like a jazz-musician if you are a flamenco guitarist. These are two completely different things. A meeting between different styles may be possible, but not a mixture.

*But don't you think that today is a mixing-up of all cultures and that flamenco is only trying to adapt its rhythm to the international understanding and feeling in order to survive?*

Of course that's Paco de Lucía's concept. Through working together with so many famous people who attract a bigger audience than flamenco has ever been able to, his music has come to fascinate more and more people throughout the world.

*So would you say that the universal spirit of flamenco isn't buried in Andalusia after all, and that this opening had to take place in order to give this special form of music a future. Would you say that flamenco can be played everywhere?*

Yes! The main thing is that it be played well. We happen to produce something good, we ought to make it known. Mind you, the many poor flamenco groups performing along the Spanish coast, or elsewhere abroad, represent a real problem for us because it's becoming more and more difficult to communicate real flamenco. In many cases, however, these people have no other possibility of earning a living.

*In connection with that we ought to talk about the term 'puro' which is used quite often in flamenco.*

In Andalusia, especially, there is much confusion as far as this word is concerned. 'Puro' can mean everything, that is something modern, but also an ancient taranta. A soleares or bulerías is only flamenco if you play it the way it should be played and the way it should sound. It's wrong therefore when some player says of another one that what he is playing isn't 'puro', just because he can't play it himself. To make it clearer, I'll give you an example. Take an old, rotten piece of furniture and restore it. After restoration it will shine brighter than it ever did before. Applied to music, this means: you take a variation by Manolo de Huelva (1892-1976) which is very much flamenco, but which no longer corresponds to the technical and musical demands of today. You take it like you would take the piece of furniture, polish it up, restore and modernize it, without changing its 'nature'. This way it stays 'puro' and becomes contemporary.

*Would you say that your success as a guitarist is based on this compromise? Your special facility is— looking at the long and just historical list of singers you have accompanied—to join old and new, the traditional and the modern without any interruption and put it into a musical form on the guitar.*

Perhaps it has something to do with my heart—with my feelings. I am still young, but have lived both generations. I like the way the modern guitarists play, but more than anything else I find it fascinating to combine both. You can play flamenco both ways, in a modern or traditional manner, without overloading it like many jazz guitarists do, distorting it until it's no longer recognizable.

*Paco de Lucía once said that there are limits on the human voice concerning the development and progress of modern music, but no limits on the guitar. Do you agree?*

I am very optimistic. I think that the guitar, like all other instruments, is far better equipped than the human voice. If there are any responsible people who respect the origins and the characteristics of flamenco, the development won't have any limits. Flamenco is limitless.

*What about the 'fashion' as far as this is concerned. Are there any*

*ancient forms like the 'bulerías al golpe', or the 'bambera' which disappeared long ago and now have emerged again for some reason?*

Guitarists have always played everything. I believe singers have a great influence on fashion and it's they who determine what is played. For example: ten years ago there wasn't a single singer who could sing the 'guajira' and because of that it wasn't fashionable.

*Many amateurs tend to imagine that flamenco is just improvisation and inspiration—playing solo, or accompanying a singer or dancer, rather than playing pieces like a composition.*

You almost never improvise—maybe occasionally in certain places when there is another guitarist accompanying you. But despite this you always have a more or less well-prepared arrangement, for instance, in a minera. As to soleares, you can't improvise at all. Improvisation is required if you happen to play wrong notes. Then you simply have to improvise, otherwise it will show you up.

When accompanying songs, the playing of wrong notes can be fairly critical because it might just be that your improvisation doesn't correspond with the rhythm of the singer. With regard to solo-playing, it's just a matter of getting used to it. But you master these difficulties if you practise daily.

*I can't imagine how you still have time to prepare your future as a solo-guitarist. Your third LP will be coming out within a few days. When do you have time to compose new pieces?*

During the summer! Because at the festivals I don't need to exert myself except when I have to accompany Fosforito who always means a challenge for me. During the winter months I practise quite a lot—at least four hours a day. But I would never sit down with the intention of composing. My ideas come spontaneously. Sometimes I compose the first three minutes of a piece



Author Gerard Klingenstein



in half an hour. The rest might take six months or even longer. Composing takes time, you can't force it. You simply have to wait until it's there. Sometimes a melody for a soleares comes to me while practising, and perhaps a year later I'll take it for a whole piece.

*There are two kinds of musicians, the one appears on stage for his own enjoyment, the other plays only for the audience. What about you?*

Whenever I give a concert, I play first and foremost for myself and secondly for other guitarists. If there are three or four guitarists among the audience, I play for them. They are more important than two or three thousand people. I would never play showy pieces. It's far more important that the aficionados enjoy it than to play for people who don't really appreciate the music that is played. Of course you have to play one or two pieces which will appeal to the broad audience. But first of all it has to please me and other guitarists.

*Who—apart from your father—has had the biggest influence on you?*

I don't have any idols. I admire many guitarists. I know many young people who stick to imitating Paco de Lucía. I like him, too, but whenever I buy one of his records, I give it away after three days. If you like something too much, you can very easily come to depend on it. I have been influenced by many, but none in particular, because I listen to all of them and so have picked up only the best.

*Are you glad that one of the four records your father made is being rereleased?*

Yes and no. These records are of very poor quality and my father made them just because we were short of money. On the one hand, I am, of course, delighted that my father's music will become available to today's audience.

*Coming to the end of this conversation; what about your future? Can the aficionados look forward to hearing you again after all the guitarists who accompanied Paco de Lucía on his early tours, like Cepero, for example, have become great soloists?*

I consider that my current living conditions should make feasible for me to continue working as a soloist. I would certainly like to perform in your country, all the more as I like your audiences very much.

*Thank you very much for this interview.*

This article has been published in two German reviews and one Spanish publication:

1. Musikblatt, June 1987  
"Enrique de Melchor: 'Flamenco is limitless'"
2. Zupfmusikmagazin, May 1988  
"Enrique de Melchor in conversation with Gerard Klingenstein"
3. Sevilla Flamenca, February 1988  
"Las confessions de Enrique . . ."

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# DIEGO PEÑA

## "EL LAGAÑA"

### A Few Observations from the Translator

The convoluted ties of family relations that confound even the Andalusian gypsies untangle enough in this interview to grant the reader a fair understanding of who is (or was) who in the important communities of Lebrija, Jerez and Utrera. Some of the greatest names in flamenco's history are pronounced herein with the easy familiarity of a simple family man at home one afternoon commenting on his own kith, kin and acquaintances.

Paco Sevilla's tape No. B 13 complements this interview magnificently; in the tape, Paco pronounces many of the same names "El Lagaña" as in the interview and moreover provides the very music of the people being discussed, something the written page obviously can not do. Any serious flamerco is well-advised to acquire this tape, and indeed many others of Paco's series as the historical and artistic content of these tapes constitute indispensable elements of the education of any serious flamenco.

-The Shah of Iran

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[from Sevilla Flamenco, Sep-Oct 1987; translated by The Shah]

by Manuel Herrera Rodas

*Lebrija is a basic point of geography of the cante to which we [in Sevilla], despite our proximity, have not paid due attention. This flamenco center is characterized by the amateur status of its outstanding artists. Lebrija, with its important gypsy settlement, has not developed flamenco professionalism until relatively recently. The names of El Lebrijano, his brother Pedro, of Pedro Bacán, Concha Vargas, Manolito de Paula and of Miguel Funi and Curro Malena are well-known, but they are recent names in the history of flamenco. We would like to know something more primitive, more ancient, to enter into that storehouse that has enriched these new wines.*

*On another occasion we met a person who is fundamental to the history of the cante of Lebrija, María la Perrata who, although born in Utrera, passed the entirety of her life in the shadow of the Castillo, breathing the pure air of the wide marsh. This is how we came to know that singular and enigmatic man, Diego Peña y Peña, "El Lagaña". Diego is a unique cantaor who has always sung when he felt like it, who has fled professionalism, but has been indispensable when it comes to remembering and passing along the cante par siguiyias.*

*Without attempting to study how he has collected the cantes of El Loco, of Tomás el Nitri, and most important, of Manuel Torre, and now after assimilating and personalizing them, he expresses them, we attempted to locate him and strike up a conversation in order to glean his impressions and opinions. But Diego, who lives according to his own plan and who finds in wine and in cante the fundamental reason for his existence, could not always, try as he might, set forth all he had lived and experienced. Since history was made and had to be revived, we sought the memory of Lebrija with the help of another person who indeed enjoyed full capacity to remember and analyze facts and cantes, people and places. We refer to his brother-in-law, José Vargas, a Lebrija gypsy proud of his land and his cante, four years older than Diego and by contrast, a teetotaler. If Diego is cante and history, José is the memory of that cante and of that history. With the two of them, we passed a beautiful day in Lebrija. Curro Malena and Miguel Funi accompanied us in order to introduce us, and along with them came*

*Paca Celaya, Agustín Benites, Ricardo Rodríguez and José's son Diego.*

"My name is Diego Peña y Peña, as you can see, Peña on all sides. When I entered the service, a captain gave me a slap because he thought I was making fun of him. He asked me, 'what's your name?'"

'Diego Peña y Peña,' I said.

'And your father?'

'Juan Peña y Peña,' I answered.

'Your mother?'

'Fernanda Peña.'

'Your grandfather?'

'Sebastian Peña y Peña...' And Capitan Carrasco up and said, "This guy is mocking me!"

*You were born?*

"Me, you're asking when I was born?" How should I know?"

"He was born in '16, the 16th of October, seventy-one years ago", says his wife Constantina, the sister of José. "Therefore he was born in 1916."

*José, for his part said, "My name is José Vargas Fernández. I was born in Coria del Río but at forty days of age, I was taken to Lebrija, although his roots were in Ronda. All of us Amayas are of the same family, of the Negros of Ronda. Anica la de Ronda was the cousin of my father. Diego del Gastor, the Amaya guitarists... My mother was from Alosno but grew up in Coria. Her name was Concepción Fernández Heredia. My father didn't sing, but he was a very pure gypsy who loved the cante and dabbled very well in it."*

*A fact worth mentioning: José is Patriarch of the Andalusian gypsies, designates so by the Brotherhood of the Virgin of the Sierra de Cabra some ten years ago. Curro Malena noted this fact for us. José feels very proud of this title, as he is very religious. But let's begin with Diego.*

*Diego, talk to us about your family, about your people...*

"All were artists! All sang very well. My grandfather Pinini was a phenomenon! My grandfather was born and buried here although he was raised in Utrera. He was a cattle-slaughterer all his life. All the Peñas of Utrera spring from here in Lebrija." ("And those from Jerez also," adds El Funi).

*Your grandfather Pinini?*

"The best in the world! Forget Cádiz! Nobody has sung por alegrías like Pinini." "It's that he was different," interrupts El Funi. "Although nearly the same rhythm, with the same compás but with a different feeling. The cantañas that my people do have a sound that no one else has heard." Diego, "The cantañas of Pinini were his own, he created them because he had it in him."

*Who nowadays sings those cantes?*

"My brother Sebastián, he's the only one. Oh! And la Bernarda. What good artists are my girls from Utrera!"

*José adds, "The cantes de Pinini were consecrated songs and had nothing to do with those of Cádiz. Ours had to do with the alboreá and romances. These cantes were danced in Utrera and Lebrija. They're our songs. These cantes were Pinini's own. Those of his daughter Fernanda, of María Peña...all these were their own."*

*Diego, your lineage: Your grandfather Pinini, your mother Fernanda, your uncle Benito, your aunt María...*

"My mother was the best cantaora that ever walked the earth. She never sang except in family festivals because my father was very peculiar, but my mother sang everything: por soleá, por bulerías, por alboreá..."

"My aunt María was a phenomenon; her singing left you breathless. And Uncle Benito with such a stout body... But how he could sing and dance... and with palillas! He knocked them dead! Very gypsy!"

"Fernanda was my godmother," José Vargas is speaking now, "and is the mother of El Lagaña and grandmother of Miguel Funi. She was an angel from above. When she sang por alegrías, we were in heaven. Her sister María was another phenomenon singing por soleá, por bulerías and por cantañas. They were cantes chicos, but very pure, very pure."

"And Benito el de Pinini, who sang por siguiyias very well. And por bulerías he sang and danced very well, very well. Although, now I think his



nephew Miguel Funi does it better... Miguel, when he sings and dances, surpasses him."

*Diego, the other branch of your family, the Funi's... You are also a Funi, right?*

"Yes, I am a Funi, just like my grandfather on my father's side and my uncles. My grandfather was Sebastián Peña y Peña and he danced hilariously. He would put a scarf on his head and dance 'La Tonta' which he said was Galician, but which he danced por bulerías. My grandfather liked the ladies a lot. 'With a lot of starch, with a lot of starch,' he would say. The same with me."

*He recites laughingly:*

Al llegar a la taberna	On arriving at the tavern
lo primero que pregunto	The first thing that I ask,
si la tabernera es guapa	Is 'How beautiful is the hostess?
y el vino tiene buen gusto.	And 'How good is the wine?'

"His grandfather Bastián was very funny," said José, "He sang a good siguiriya. He has such gracia that he sometimes sang in bed so that his daughter-in-law and children couldn't sleep."

*We left Diego to his memories and asked José to tell us about his brother-in-law.*

"Lagaña is very gypsy. And as far as I am concerned, he is the best cantor por siguiriya there has been. Certainly the best I have heard."

"Lagaña went to Sevilla as a soldier. He would drink two glasses of wine and when the gentlemen there who knew cante heard him, they went wild. They would say, 'What is this? Dios mío!' And singing in the Alameda he drove the people wild. One time Antonio Mairena was there and had to tell him, 'Get out of here! These people have promised me five duros to sing and if you don't get out of here...' and he left to sing in the streets."

"El Lagaña has done some very pure cantes. Look! You have heard poor Fernando Terremoto and you know how well he sang por siguiriya. Well, all El Lagaña needed was two glasses of wine to start him singing. He went by himself and needed the help of no other gitano in order to sing. And bear in mind that in Sevilla the people know the cante very well!"

*Diego himself begins to recall this epoch of Sevilla.*

"Some gypsies from here, including one who was the brother of Luisa la de los Caracoles, dragged me into the 'Siete Puertas'. I was there as a soldier at the time. They took me to the Alameda. Las Pompis were singing in the Siete Puertas and I put the poor wretches through torment because I was singing for pleasure and charging nothing. I was singing por siguiriya and saluted everyone with cante. There were some gentlemen there spending money and buying me drinks. I was singing for free. Las Pompis who were there to earn a living were ready to kill me. And others as well. And Antonio Mairena, who was also there, said, 'Don't sing any more, you're going to kill us all...'"

*Lagaña lets go of his glass and captures the nearly impossible cry:*

Siempre por los rincones  
t'encuentro llorando  
que yo no tengo libertad en mi vida  
si te doy mal pago.

*The cantes, Diego, whose are those which you sing?*

"Using the cante of my people, of Los Pinini. But I have my own style, a mixture, with a little bit from everywhere."

"His cante is his own," his wife interrupts, "because I have known him since he was seven years old and he already sang well, very well."

"I have listened to him since I was a child," seconds Miguel, "as I was with him in the slaughter house. And he has always had his own personality when singing. The remates he puts on the siguiriya are his own. And on top of that he has such a gypsy voice, so clean, so smooth, with a unique 'eco'. What happened is that the passing of time and so much wine has

broken his voice and he can't do it anymore. And he used to turn the cantes in such a manner that it seemed they wouldn't come off, but he always managed. It was a cante different from any I had ever heard."

"Antonio Mairena," says Constantina, "came many times to father's [El Lagaña's] house to listen to Fernanda and her children and to Diego and Sebastián... because it was a unique sound."

*What are your cantes, Diego?*

"Mine are the gypsy cantes, the siguiriya and the martinets. And of course the soleá. These are the cantes that I like."

*Were martinets sung in Lebrija?*

"Of course. The old gypsies sang por martinets."

"And El Tío Conejo," says Curro Malena.

"Djú, el Tío Conejo", continues El Lagaña. "Yes, he was a gypsy that had a forge and sang very well por martinets. But he never had drunk so much as a cup of wine. One day I made him drink three or four, because he liked my cante por siguiriya so much. He was about sixty and I was still a young man. And I sang por siguiriya and he was beside himself."

"Now, where they really sang por martinets was Trinana. Not Lebrija, not Jerez, not Sanlúcar or anywhere else. When I used to go down Calle Pagés del Corro, I went straight to Triana and there was in that same street a tavern where I would go in and take a cup of wine. And there were some old folks who would go there to hear me sing por siguiriya. Of course, in those days I had two cojones to sing with. And others were there who sang also. Djú, Triana!

*Diego, why dose one sing?*

"Because it comes to one's mouth. The cante that doesn't come up can't be done. A cante has to come to one of its own."

*What is necessary in order to sing, Diego?*

"Much strength, such as Antonio Mairena had."

*What are the cantes of the gypsies?*

"Por siguiriya. Por soleá and por martinets. And here they have always sung por bulerías."

*Always the cantes from here, always the bailes from here. Lebrija always. For this reason we turned to José so that he could recall for us the people of Lebrija before going on with Lagaña's biography, which is so united with that of his brother-in-law, José.*

*José, more important people of the cante from Lebrija?*

"Antonia Pozo, who was very poor and begged alms. She lived in the Misericordia [poor house] and, one day, Antonia Mairena was with us in the bar Conchita, with me, my cousins Bastián 'El Bacán'. We called her over; Mairena heard her and was left speechless. Because Antonia had a very personal cante, very much her own. Antonia Pozo also lived in Utrera, but she was from Lebrija and her cantes were from Lebrija. She was born here and here she was buried."

*José, more?*

"La Rumbilla was a very pretty gypsy. Very accommodation and very nice. And she had a very gypsy cante. She was the grandmother of Curro Malena, but her husband was a very odd man, very quiet, and cared little for juergas. His name was José. However, he liked very much the cante of his wife and permitted her to sing in the gypsy festivals. She sang and everyone was left speechless."

*What type of cante did she do?*

"Por bulerías, because in Lebrija bulerías have always been sung."

*Anyone else?*

"Of course! La Perrenga, who is the wife of Perico, who lives over yonder in Cantarrñas. She has a canteito that is very flamenco... por bulerías canta muy bien, muy bien."

"And Ana la de la Rumbilla, who is the mother of Manolito de Paula. I'm going to tell you a story, my son. It so happened that my father had been dead fourteen or fifteen days and I was living on the Calle Lorenzo Leal, in the house of a gypsy everybody called La Recorte. The daughter of Mania la Paco had just gotten married and they threw a fiesta. I didn't want to go out because I was still thinking of my father, but my wife urged me to. And when

that gypsy, Ana, sang, I don't know what got into me, but I came out dancing and I danced my bit — with all the sorrow I had — and when she finished singing, I went home and to bed and continued crying.

"They used to have here some enormous fiestas. With all those gypsies — they were irreplaceable. I have a compadre, Bacán, El Bacán, Lagaña's brother, who does some very pure cantes por signiyas. His cante is short, but he has a voice that's old and gypsy."

*There's still Juaniquí. No?*

"Uncle Juaniquí was very tiny, but good grief! God gave him such a powerful cante, and so beautiful! When he came out singing por soleá, he left everyone senseless. His cante was his own. He knew other cantes, but what he did por Soleá was his own, a gift from Heaven.

"I remember when Tomasa, the mother of Rafael de Paula, got married, all of us gypsies went to the wedding in Jerez. Tío Juaniquí was there too, and all the gypsies got together, José de Paula, Perico el Tito . . . glory hallelujah! And sometime around midnight, we all began singing . . . and Tío Juaniquí sang also. I can't begin to tell . . . there was nothing more than shacks and the venta de Santa Inés. And when we were boys we all went, my compadre Bastián, my brother Quintín, my cousins, Bernardo and Bastián, myself. My brother took out a huge jug of wine from a bodega called 'San Víctor' and we drank it with him. When Tío Juaniquí saw us coming, he said, 'Here come my boys . . .' and he delighted in us, although he drank precious little wine. But he loved to have us there with him.

"All the gentlemen of Jerez used to bring him there and they would carry him to Santa Inés and he would leave loaded down with food for the house."

*Wasn't that Juaniquí de Las Cabezas?*

"Listen! They say he was from Las Cabezas, but I don't know. But I think he was from Lebrija and always lived in El Cuervo."

*Any more recollections, José?*

"Yes, there was a gypsy here that they called 'La Mona,' who was the mother of el 'Niño la Mona', the wife of Peña, the one they called 'Manolo el de la Acosta'. Well, that gypsy woman sang very well.

"And Anica, the mother of El Lata, who also sang very well por alegrías. And por bulerías. And Manuela la Negra who was his mother. She was great por alegrías and por soleá."

*Where did they sing?*

"The true gypsies' cante was heard among the field hands, because we used to harvest olives and work in the fields. We were very poor, like the 'blessed of the Beatitudes', but there was such art and such fun. We were like brothers."

*In fact, other gypsies, from Jerez, Tío Borrigo among them, have told us the same about the Barrio Santiago and the gypsypasants. Do the gypsies of Antiaño have any relation with those of Lebrija?*

"Yes indeed. You must realize that nearly all the gypsies of Jerez are connected with Lebrija, especially Santiago. There are many roots in Lebrija there."

*And between Jerez and Lebrija, "El Chozas" .*

"Oh! He was like a Christ. A patriarch of the cante gitano! He had sweetness in his mouth. Everybody loved him. One day a señorito, a nephew of Queipo de Llano, took him and had him singing for seven days. And bear in mind that El Chozas was from Lebrija and not from Jerez."

*We return to El Lagaña and ask, Who do you recall?*

"Juaniquí, of course. He sang very well por soleá. And I recall El Mellizo who was the brother of El Chocolate. El Chocolate is from Jerez, but El Mellizo, half-brother on his father's side was from Lebrija and sang everything well. And El Moreno, brother of the mother-in-law of Curro. And El Ovejica, Los Pelaoos..."

*How was the Lebrija you recall from your youth?*

"Lebrija was a small town, but now it's become a palace. We gypsies have always lived well here, everyone working like everybody else. I was born in the slaughterhouse and was a cattle-slaughterer. Other gypsies worked in the fields, some as livestock dealers. All of us gypsies here in Lebrija did something.

"We are all equal here and I couldn't tell the gypsies apart from the payos. The gypsies used to live in the Barrio Nuevo and in the Calle Nueva, but now everybody's shuffled together."

"We are three or four thousand gypsies here," notes Miguel.

*(Time passes as Diego continues consuming his glasses of "fino" which he alternates with red wine in the kitchen. Time, wine, emotions, and memories combine to form the memory of this gypsy, so strange and solitary, who sang the siguiriya better than anyone in his time. From time to time, and with each question put to him, El Lagaña smote upon the floor with his staff and sought to the ancestral cry of the siguiriya. The broken throat does not respond to the call) He exclaims:*

"I have to die one way or another!!"

"Look what you're doing to help the situation," interjects his wife, "since you are always with the bottle!"

"Yesterday they buried someone in El Cuervo called El Lagaña, the same as me. You can't imagine the commotion here. My brother Juan came running along with all my brothers-in-la . . . everyone crying."

*Where did you pick up the name El Lagaña?*

"When I was a child, I had the mumps and it produced a lot of 'legañas' [eye matter] so that my brother Fernando called me 'lagañaoso'. The name stuck, and now, if you ask for me by any other name, nobody will know who you're talking about!"

*So you always have worked in the slaughterhouse?*

"Always. I have been a matarife [cattle-slaughterer] all my life. Not now. Now I'm retired. But I always worked in the municipal slaughterhouse. Now I draw a pension from that."

"A lot he draws," comments his wife.

"Well, I draw twenty-three or twenty-four thousand pesetas a month and we live on that."

*(Lagaña is an original biography of the cante of Lebrija. Lover of solitude and cante, he has found his best companion in wine. But here we must make an exception. Never did he miss work. Wine was his stimulant, his medicine, his driving force. Always on the job, and singing when he felt like it.)*

"It's that Lagaña has never sung in fiestas," continues Constantina. "He has sung in gatherings and in taverns. And many times unaccompanied. He never had to sing to eat, and anyway, it wouldn't have suited his character. He is a cantao who is very much his own man. He never was an 'Artist'. And something else I'll tell you. He always enjoyed singing more for payos than for gypsies, and he never sang for money. He has sung for the Marquesa de San Gil, for Don Pío Halcón, for whoever asked. And he always sang after working. The only time he missed work was during the war."

*Let's go back, Diego, to your biography. How much time did you serve in the War?*

"I was in the war three years, and wounded. I was in Fuente-Ovejuna — no small thing! And in Peñarroya ..." *And Sevilla, didn't you serve in the militia in Sevilla?*

"My father hooked me up and I spent the whole war in Sevilla."

"You see," said Constantina, "his father, who was called Funi, was very well-placed and very respected. And when the war broke out, none of his sons went for one reason or another. Finally, someone said, 'Look, Funi, you have to let go of one of your sons,' and he said, 'Well, take Dieguillo.' And he was only a boy, no more than eighteen years old. The next day he went to the front. He didn't know what that was but he was soon to find out. As soon as he [the father] realized the danger, his conscience was troubled. And after a year's service, his father was able to claim him in Sevilla, because he was a slaughterer of cattle. He was put to work driving. But since he (Diego) has always been hard-headed, do you know what he would do? With every truck that went to Lebrija, he went back and forth. So Captain Carrasco who had helped him out most, finally said to my father-in-law, 'Juan we're going to have to take Dieguillo and ship him off to Granada. Otherwise, he is going to cause us a great embarrassment'"

*Lagaña adds: "There in Granada, when I jumped off the train, I had no*



more than ten duros in my pocket, and no sooner than I landed, I said I am going to grab me a jug. I asked someone where they sang flamenco around there..."

"Well," El Funi clarified, "he was on the train with another gypsy who was called El Buque, who is the uncle of Manuel de Paula, and another gypsy called El Sordo."

"Mi compare," interrupted El Legaña.

"Your Compadre," they all went. "And when he had drunk four jugs of wine, he set to singing. And what a 'Leco' he had, and I have heard him a thousand times and I am not saying this because he is my uncle, but I have never heard anyone sing por siguiriyas better."

"Well they went to Granada and, in front of the station, more or less, there is a fountain, and when Lagaña was singing por siguiriyas, even the women put down their jugs at the fountain to listen to him."

*[His brother-in-law José Vargas can better render account of his years (Lagaña's) in Granada, since José also served there. José's first period of enlistment was up and they sent him to Orjiva in Las Alpujarras. There, a lieutenant Don Rafael Gutiérrez Rabé took him along to Granada and made him quartermaster. José, faithful like no one else, conducted himself in such a way as to gain the respect and protection of all the officers, and the affection of all the enlisted men. Four years he enjoyed this respect and protection. During this time, he met a gypsy girl from the family of "Los Tiraos." José left the mess at headquarters and began eating with this family, for "Where five can eat, six can eat," his father-in-law would say. He didn't get married according to gypsy rite, since his bride didn't want to upset her parents, so José with all the humility that becomes a good man, accepted fate as it came along. When his period of service was over, they wanted to make him sergeant, but he refused because, "We gypsies don't make good soldiers," he told his commander.]*

"And now, you see, I have two sons who are policemen."

*José, you in Granada, well-placed relatively speaking in your quarters, and Lagaña just arriving there...*

"Yes. One day I went for provisions and I saw him in the street. 'What are you doing here?' I asked him. 'I'm being punished,' he answered. So I said to myself, 'Where shall I take him now?' I remembered two gypsies from here in Sevilla who were over there. One was José, the brother of Gitanillo de Triana who was also called Gitanillo, and the other was Nicolás Vargas from Gamas, both of them novilleros. And both of them were well-connected with a lady from there and had told me to visit her but I never did. So I decided to go that day. I went with Lagaña to Calle San Juan de Dios, number 14, for they had sent me to Señora Antonia, who was the widow of the Marquis de Santa Cruz, who had built the Sierra Highway. Later they killed him in the war, at the time of Hazaña. The lady was Antonia la Canastera, who as a child had married the marquis. Two boys came out wearing white caps and Lagaña said, 'Where are you taking me?' Anyway, the lady saw from up above that we were gypsies and told us to come up. Nicolás was already up there, sitting on a cot, with a bottle of cognac, and I asked him about José. 'He's in the bathroom,' he told me. 'Dame! a gypsy in a bathroom!' I said. You see, in those days..."

*Did José remain friends with Antonia?*

"Hell yes! Of course! In fact José came out grumbling about not having gone there sooner. Both of us were numb from the cold. We drank four or five cups and I said to my compadre Diego, 'Let's go, compadre, let loose with the siguiriyas.' And I start singing!

Ovejitas blancas  
y el praito verde...

"Everybody went wild! We were all crying. We were in heaven! So Antonia la Canastera says, 'It's been years since I've seen my brothers and sisters. Let's all go to the Sacromonte! When we got there, everyone went wild with Antonia, kissing her and calling to one another, 'Antonia la Castatera is here, Antonia is here!' Meanwhile we waited quietly in the

caves until Antonia said to her brothers that they should go and hear this gypsy, El Lagaña.

"And El Lagaña started singing and all the gypsies were crying. And the rest of us were crying. It was like a funeral parlor.

"There was among them a certain Frasquito Yerbagüena who, when he heard him sing, said, 'Manué is risen!' Frasquito was a gentleman who was very well versed in the cante. He wasn't a gypsy, mind you, but very knowledgeable, and a good friend of the gypsies. Frasquito would sing some verdiales that could take away your breath. When Frasquito heard Lagaña, he was enthralled, and brought him to the Pescaería. And Lagaña came out singing there and what a commotion! They and never heard cantes, so beautiful and so gypsy. I told the people there to call him 'Funi' which is what his own people call him. And when Lagaña let loose a wail, the gypsies' eyes were headed with tears. And when he was heard by Paquito Candil, Eduardo Postales, Perrete, and Carmona they all swore by him and wouldn't leave."

*Carmona was the father of Los Habichela?*

"No, he wasn't gypsy."

Were there guitarists with you?

"Yes, Los Cotorrcros. They had a very beautiful daughter called Tere, the prettiest gypsy I have ever seen. What a bunch! Good people! And we met a son of Chorojumo, who was enraptured with the cante of Lagaña."

*Where did you all hold your singing sessions?*

"In bars, in houses. But to the Sacromonte we rarely went. We had a little trouble there. Nicolás was a fellow who liked things done properly and one day he hit a fellow over there with such a blow as to knock him off a barrier because someone threw a kiss at a gypsy girl. We are just like the Moors in that respect. That we can't take it. There arose such a ruckus that we all had to leave running downhill. So, at times we went to one house to eat and have a fiesta, and at other times to another. Where we usually went was the house of Antonia la Canastera, since her husband had left her so well provided for, nothing pleased her more than entertaining us.

"But one day Lagaña came down with typhoid fever and they carried him to the hospital. Everyone went to see him, Frasquito, the girls, and the gypsies, everyone. When his mother found out (who is my godmother, Fernanda Peña Vargas), she called me long distance, 'How is my son? How am I going to manage to go so far...' So when he got better, I called her and said, 'Madrina, El Lagaña is already much better.'

"Is he singing yet," she asked. I said he was and she said, 'well if he's back to singing, he's all right.'"

*(We returned to Diega so that he could tell us a little about Frasquita, and so that he could analyze as much as possible the cante he had known in Granada).*

*What was Frasquito like, Diego?*

"Frasquito Yerbagüena was the best in the world. (He begins to weep as he recalls his lost friend. We had already said that feeling and emotion were going to be present in our chat with El Lagaña. When he begins a cante and can't finish it, he cries, when he recalls a friend who has passed away, he cries). I sang por siguiriyas once for Frasquito in Los Claveles bar, and he had been my friend ever since."

*How long were you in Granada, Diego?*

"Two years," his wife explains now while El Lagaña sink into his memories.

*What cantes did Frasquito sing, Diego?*

"The cantes from here. In Granada, when I was there, they didn't know anything about the cante. All they did were those zambras from Sacromonte."

They didn't know the gypsy cante. All they did were those Zambras from Sacromonte."

*They didn't know the gypsy cante there?*

"No, I awoke the cante por siguiriyas there."

me fuí a un olivar.  
Olivarcito tan desgraciaíto  
no nace ni nacera.

*So Frasquito learned the siguiriyas from you?*

"No, Frasquito didn't learn from me. When I went, Frasquito was already singing por siguiriyas. He was the only one who sang our cantes there."

*Diego, did you sing with guitar or a palo seco?*

"Sometimes with guitar and sometimes without. Since I sang mostly when the spirit moved me, I usually sang without guitar."

*Do you recall any guitarists from that period?*

"El Morao, no relation to El Morao de Jerez. A fine person."

*Did you know the Habichuelas, because the father, who is now deceased, also played. . .*

"No, I hung out with Frasquito and with Gitanillo de Triana and with Nicolás Vargas. And I went a lot to the house of Antonia la Canastera. That old lady was so good! Every time I went back to the headquarters, she would say to me, 'Here, Funi my son,' and she would give me five duros. The poor thing was always lonely and so kind."

*Diego, we have already talked about you, your life, your work. Speak to us of those people who have fundamental to your cante. Your cante is the siguiriyas, but who has sung best por siguiriyas?*

"They say Manué."

*For you, Manuel Tarre has sung best por siguiriyas?*

"No, there was someone who sang better. My uncle Benito sang better than Manué. One day, they were both singing in Utrera and my uncle said, 'Now I am going to sing for you.' And not even the train took off while Benito Pinini was singing. My uncle Benito sang better than Manué, more gypsy."

"And the best in the world has been Antonio Mairena. There has been no one like Mairena. I put him up here in my house, my brother Sebastián brought him here. Such fine manners he had. The power he had in his throat no one has had! He was a phenomenon. Not even Manué . . . When he sang!

Dices que duermes solita  
¡Mientes como hay Dios!  
porque de noche con el pensamiento  
dormimos los dos."

*José agrees with his judgement: "Antonio was the king of the cante! You had to see him at a fiesta with the gypsies! He had them rending their shirts; he was truly the king of the cante gitano. Curro Mairena also suffered and sang por siguiriyas. And Joan Talega was the patriarch of the cante. It seemed like he was preaching the Holy Gospel when he sang. Many times I like him more than Antonio. I didn't much care for Pastora [La Niña de los Peines] but Tomás (Pavón) yes, Tomás was the greatest," (And he talks about Macandé with his clean jacket, and Caracol... "Very good, but I liked Mairena better." Also he talks about Serna de Jerez).*

*Legaña: "El Sernita, my son, was a gypsy who has not received just recognition. He is one of the glories of Jerez. When he sang this:*

Esta noche me mío  
me llevo un chisme,  
me llevo la cazuela  
aunque me tizne."

*The toque?*

"We always sang whole keeping rhythm with a cane or with the knuckles!"

*José: "Bear in mind, my son, I have listened to all the cantes with palmas and rhythm, but have seen very few guitarists. But Diego, yes. Diego del Gastor was a blessing. And Los Moraos. Manué is the elder and a great tocaor. And Parilla. From here Pedro Peña and Pedro Bacán."*

*And in the baile, whom do you most like?*

"Parilla! Uncle Manuel Parilla who danced very well. Also in Jerez there was one I liked a lot. His name was Vicente, the brother-in-law of El Rojo. Vicente might have been the cousin of the grandfather of El Funi. He danced very well, but Benito Funi was best of all of them. I liked to watch Benito dance much more than to hear him sing. But Miguel Funi is better yet than his uncle Benito."

*El Farruco?*

"Por bulerías, yes. Por lo demás es otra cosa."

*Others?*

"Rafael el Negro, Paco Valdepeñas . . ."

*Women?*

"Pastora Imperio was the queen. Also I knew Las Pompis, who sang very well, and also did some little dances that were very gypsy. And La Macarrona and La Malena who took your breath away. And here in Lebrija, Inés, who was the daughter of Fernanda la de Pinini — that girl was born dancing. She did all kinds of dances. The prettiest and most down-to-earth gypsy in all of Andalucía. She would dance and then open her cape and raise her arms...what a glory!

"La Piruja was another one who would do some things por alegrías that were unique. She was the finest bailaora that we had here in Lebrija. She was daughter of Bastián Funi."

*Which are the bailes of Lebrija?*

"Las bulerías y las alegrías. Here they never danced por tangos. Of course the alegrías that are danced here are not those of Caí (Cadiz)."

*What is needed in order to dance?*

"Look. In order to dance you have to have upper body. And lower body. But footwork, no. Stomping is for horses."

*Where is the cante going today?*

"Bear in mind, my son, that the gypsy cante today isn't what it used to be. There are cantaores with their own strengths, but it's not the same. There is Chocolate, who sings por siguiriyas, very well and very gypsy-like. And Fernanda who is a celestial glory. Fernanda is one of a kind! And her sister Bernarda. And Perrata . . . and Perratito, very good, very gypsy. And the new guys, Curro, Mercé."

*José: "The cantaores today are more stimulated, but there is no one today who can sing."*

\*\*\*

*Night fell upon us and the memory of the cante. We have attempted to capture the memory of the cante of Lebrija by springing the trap with our questions, and have endeavored to ensnare ourselves in the enchantment of the art: The art of the cante por siguiriyas of a rare genius named Diego Peña and known as "El Lagaña".*



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## THE FESTIVAL OF OJEN

[from *Classical Guitar* magazine in England, Feb. 1987; sent by Guillermo Salazar]

by Juan Martin

Last August I was invited to perform in the Festival of Cante Flamenco in the small white pueblo of Ojen. Ojen lies nine kilometers inland from Marbella in the province of Málaga, Andalucía. The guitarists appearing were Enrique de Melchor, Pedro Bacán, Juan "El Habichuela", el Niño Puro and myself as soloists. The singers were a combination of the old school and the new: Fosforito, Juanito Valderrama, Niña de la Puebla, Naranjito de Triana, José Menese, and of the new newer generation Calixto Sanchez, Diego Clavel, Tina Pavón and Pansequito. There was also the dancer José Joaquín and his small cuadro group. Even though Ojen is a small village this is regarded as one of the most prestigious flamenco festivals in Andalucía.

There has been much excitement leading up to this event. In Ojen itself this is the major happening of the year the festival director had received telephone calls for ticket reservations from as far afield as France. The tickets cost 1,500pts which is quite a lot of money when you are taking the whole family. Children are not charged entry provided they sit on their parents' laps and don't take up a seat. What, in fact, happens is that they do take up seats until someone arrives to claim them and then the parents are left for five or six hours with a heavy, maybe wriggling weight to make their already hard chairs feel like iron!

The festival is held in the center of the pueblo in the open air surrounded by the white houses, and there is room for one thousand people. The radio is there to broadcast and television cameras have arrived to film certain artists during the evening. I leave my home near San Pedro in plenty of time to make my way up treacherous mountain roads which tonight are bumper to bumper with expectant aficionados. The time is ten in the evening. The festival is due to begin at eleven thirty, but previous experience of flamenco festivals tells me this is optimistic and that twelve thirty is more likely. There is a place to park for the artists, unlike most of Europe's great concert halls, and this saves one time and frustration. The personal touch of the director welcoming one and the offer of refreshments contrasts dramatically with, say, the Queen Elizabeth Hall at London's South Bank Arts Centre, where I have parked outside the artists' entrance to carry guitars in, and have come out to find some commissionaire threatening to have the car towed away. Once inside one asks for a cup of coffee, and plastic mugs and spoons are brought along with an immediate demand for 25p or whatever it costs. No matter you're on stage trying an acoustic or have no change in your pocket; "Now, if you please Sir!" All of this is the wrong spiritual preparation for a recital. One does it, puts up with it, but it jades. I should add that the Wigmore Hall has an inner sanctum calm that contrasts with this, and that its resonant acoustic is a joy to perform in.

In Ojen, the public is milling in the narrow streets and the local women are dressed in their best finery, contrasting with the more laid-back look of the French, Americans, Dutch and others who have found their way up to the pueblo. The warm-up area for the guitarists is one large room, and the picado practice with sponge placed under strings by the bridge is well under way. Enrique is chatting with Fosforito while he zips up and down with the right hand only. Niño Pura is very quick with his picado and won a "premio nacional" last year. In a tiny brush cupboard type of room I come across Pedro Bacán, who is actually playing the guitar without the sponge and listening to his sound. Of course when one doesn't have individual dressing rooms it does help to damp the noise down, but how can it prepare one's musical spirit before performing? It can't, but in some areas, outside of parking lots, Spain is tough. You have to get out there in front of a fairly hostile audience (someone actually stood up and complained 'que lástima de guitarra' to Paco Cepero two years ago in the Marbella cante festival) and produce it. No matter you are preparing in front of three other guitarists and

some of the best singers in Spain. The PA systems in Andalucía are getting better but they are always too metallic and painfully loud. This roughness reduces the art of the singer and guitarists considerably.

Enrique Melchor is first on with Tina Pavón. The public is still finding its seats and not settled, so Enrique moves in on the microphone to blast the audience into attention. Certain people in the audience pay attention to the guitarist's opening, but most Andaluces only stop talking when the 'cante' begins. There is this man, the son of the great accompanist Melchor de Marchena playing the guitar right from the opening note with an astounding fluency and punch, and there are people talking loudly, arguments about seating, women scolding their children, bottles being knocked over. Tolerance has to be developed to put up with the general noise of the lack of respect for the artist, who has practised his heart out to reach this sublime technical level only to be ignored. He lives in hope that later on there will be more concentration, and that when the public is involved with one of its favorite singers they might start to 'receive' him too. 'Receivers' are a problem - some people have AM and some have FM . . . This is difficult, since the highly esoteric art of flamenco is only for people with the FM receiving ability.

Fosforito reaches the audience. They love him for what he has done for the 'cante'. He's an maestro. Without him we wouldn't have the same style of cante we have today. His Soleares is quite electric even though his voice is more strained than ever - and it always has a nasal delivery. But this flamenco, where beauty of voice is only one element and where so many things have to be taken into consideration. Fosforito's voice is now a little more husky, his sitting posture is back erect and knees apart with palmas sordas keeping time with Enrique's compás and suddenly Enrique senses his moment has come and puts a string of very flamenco falsetas together that bring out Fosforito in a way that he barely can contain his emotion. It's a pity that 'Enrique doesn't use his aire on his solo albums. I suspect it has something to do with record company commercial persuasions - and I know how they can be. There is a row of five 'gitanos' in the audience. An old, loud one with a stick who beats on the ground with it, and four other younger men. They've had plenty of Jerez on sale at the festival and they are trying to show the non-gypsy 'payos', by their comments, that they have a deep knowledge of the arte. In fact these particular 'gitanos' were not very deeply involved in 'el arte' but they know that their race and what they regard to be an innate supremacy covering 'el cante y la guitarra' will probably convince the surrounding Andaluces. Enrique is 'gitano'. He doesn't look it. One would expect him to be a financial consultant of some sort. But flamenco rhythms are very mathematical. To understand the compás one needs to understand various permutations and have a cool analytical head, but this has to be accompanied by a warm heart and passionate nature. A difficult combination.

Juan 'El Habichuela' comes and performs like the good professional he's always been, but tonight he is not inspired. He's from the last generation and was considered technically to be first class twenty years ago but now there is a new fanaticism with technique. There has been a revolution since Paco de Lucía came on the scene, and one wonders if Juan Carmona 'El Habichuela' is feeling misunderstood by the new school and by the public who have come to expect non-stop fire works in the form of continual gunfire picado scale passages. Juan's old gypsy knowledge is deep and mature like his serious pharaoh countenance. This Paco de Lucía influence has brought new standards of execution but has disfigured the noble art with its unseemly, ultra-macho 'mecanismo'. The subtle nuance of an Habichuela is now lost because public and guitarist alike are waiting for the big one, the long, long scale played with an evenness, a power, a clarity which will shut them all up. '¡Ala! ¡A ver si tu callas ahora!' One can say that this is only the beginning of what is, after all, a very young art form - Ramon Montoya was the first concert flamenco guitarist, and he died as recently as 1948 - and that from here we progress like the great concert pianists to the use of technique with subtlety. But what of Ricardo (d. 1972), who played, already, with fluency and poetry and who gave so rewarding an artistic experience?

Are we going forward? Technically yes, but musically no, would be my deduction. Continually fast scales don't add much musically and too many of them disfigure a solo and distract in the accompaniment. The odd one can be electrifying - the problem is that you need to do them the whole time to play to that level of perfection on the odd occasion. Result: they are played the whole time just to stay at that level. consequence: the sacrifice of other very important elements. and the wrong mental direction in which to create quality flamenco music.

Ricardo's playing and music I have studied, and Paco de Lucía has taught me personally many of his falsetas, particularly his early material from 'La Fabulosa Guitarra' album - which I think he has never surpassed in terms of 'aire', quality and flamenconess. The recording he complained to me about being a bit dry, but a good fino Jerez is dry and most aficionados would prefer this every time.

Back to Ojen. It is 3:15 in the morning, the August night still warm enough to play in the open air and I have to open up the second half of the festival. I have been accompanying singing for years; some may remember me bringing Rafael Romero 'El Gallina' to the Wigmore Hall and ICA in 1976, and I would like to be appearing tonight with a good 'cantaor'. The impresario, however, has heard my recent 'Solo Album' on the radio here and seen this and 'La Musica de las Pinturas' in the record shops, and feels it would tie in to appear as a soloist. The thing is that here one has to earn the attention of the audience before they even stop talking - this of course is to some degree why the constant fireworks technique has come about. The idea of starting with musical subtlety or a slow 'toque libre' is out of the question. I am waiting backstage and listening to the presenter announcing me, Naranjito wishes me luck and I'm up onto the stage, quickly seated on the traditional straw-covered wooden chair and find that the microphone is not switched on. 'Ole! Viva España!' The technician eventually switches on. The public is still unsettled after the intermission and so I sit there perfectly still, not playing a note or even tuning - I have found this is the best way to suggest that you, the artist, expect something from the public, not much, just the courtesy of silence, the equivalent of a clean page for a writer. Now certain people are hissing to others to silence them, and the radio technicians are getting nervous because we are on air and being transmitted throughout the whole of Southern Spain - and no guitar. The radio presenter is making desperate signals and now with the closest one can come to silence in Spain, I begin my first piece.

The twenty-minute recital was well received, the silence increasing throughout as did the applause and when I came off the organizers congratulated me as if I had just climbed Mount Everest. I suppose in a way I had.



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## ANTONIO TO MAKE WORLD TOUR

[from: *Hola* May 26, 1988; sent and translated by Roberta Turner]

by Titi Serverino

Antonio "el bilarín" receives us in his famous Madrid studio to give us the great news of his return to the stage. At sixty-six he is still able to keep on delighting audiences with his arte. Antonio has danced all over the world, written a platinum page in Spanish Dance and achieved numerous successes demonstrated by the numerous trophies he enthusiastically displays in the museum room of his studio. Now he has decided to convert his memories into the present and is preparing his comeback for '89. But we prefer to let him tell us his reasons for returning to Spanish Dance himself.

*When did you decide to dance again?*

Pues, mira . . . , just last week, and I've decided to do it because I've always had something boiling inside me — my whole life is dancing. After all those years of directing the National Ballet, they kicked me out all the same. Later I directed some shows and (I have a creative mind) I've choreographed some ballets, like "El Rocío", for instance, for the independent company of María Rosa, which was a success. And after seeing so many artists, so many salas rocieras, so many programs of the Ballet Nacional de España . . . I say: "I'm Antonio;" I look at myself in the mirror; I look great; I have the same measurements I had when I was dancing in my prime. When I dance a simple sevillana in a room, people praise me extravagantly and they tell me I don't have to retire; all this gives me encouragement and besides I'm

in great health and full of hope, as if I were starting all over again.

*How long do you intend to keep on dancing?*

I have planned to retire in '92, coinciding with the Olympics, which is a very nice date because I debuted in '29 at the World's Fair in Sevilla before Her Majesty, Queen Victoria Eugenia and King Alfonso XIII, there was my entrance and in 1992, my exit. These ten years of absence have given me a chance to reflect and to get ready to show that one has arte, or doesn't have it; technique dies, but not art; I fortunately, still have the technique.

*Recently we saw you dance "salve" in a salon in Madrid and I can tell you that people wept with emotion. You've told us a lot of nice reasons for coming back to dancing, but what is the reason exactly?*

Spanish dance is very neglected because there is a great lack of interpreters and the audiences insist on more and more each day; they expect something that makes them feel emotion and when they don't get it, they really miss you. And that's what has happened to me, that's why I want them to see my finale.

*When will you begin your world tour?*



Antonio in his studio. (photos by Ricardo Reese)



The tour begins in El Liceo, in Barcelona, followed by an appearance in the Theatre of the Zarzuela in Madrid; then I leave for London, Paris, Milan and finally New York.

*How will your work be choreographed?*

I will use a program which is the essence of my career, a program based on the guitar, poetry, singers and "Antonio" throughout.

*We have learned that in London they are doing a musical comedy about your life and that you have been paid a fabulous sum.*

The story about the money is, I believe, a newspaper commentary, but evidently, I guess my life is interesting to producers of musicals and television.

*What does a dancer need to succeed?*

In the first place he must be professional and besides that he needs something more, called magic.

---

## LA MERI

### 1893-1988

by Josie Neal

La Meri, renowned ethnic dancer, choreographer and teacher, died January 7 in San Antonio, Texas, at the age of 83.

Hailed by critic Walter Sorrell as "the undisputed queen of ethnic dance," La Meri was considered the world's greatest authority on the ethnic dances of many cultures, particularly those of India and Spain.

Born Russell Meriweather Hughes in Louisville, Kentucky, La Meri grew up in San Antonio, had her first professional engagement in 1924, dancing prologues to silent movies at the Rialto Theater. As a young dancer in New York during the late 1920's, she played the subway circuit with the Spanish dance ensemble of Maria Montero, also performing as featured dancer in a vaudeville "flash" act, Sevilla, and in Shubert's *A Night in Spain*.

At the height of her performing career, from 1928 to 1939, she toured the world as a solo dancer, receiving wide acclaim for appearances in South and Central America, Europe, Scandinavia, Australia, New Zealand, Tasmania, India, Burma, Malaya, Java, the Philippines, China, Japan and Hawaii. Her repertory included dances of many of the countries she visited, all learned and first performed in their country of origin. In Spain, she was a student of the great José Otero.

In 1940, she established the School of Natya with Ruth St. Denis in New York, where she taught East Indian dance, and lectured and performed with her company, the Five Natyas. The school later became the Ethnologic Dance Center, and its curriculum was expanded to include Spanish and other dance forms. Until it was closed in 1960, the EDA was the only institution in the United States to offer a four-year course of intensive study in ethnic dance.

La Meri was a close friend of Argentinita and her sister, Pilar Lopez, and it was at Argentinita's behest that she began teaching in 1942 at Jacob's Pillow, where she remained as a resident teacher, performer, and choreog-



La Meri - Zambra (photo Waltre E. Owen)

rapher for 11 years. In 1953, she revived her 1944 production of *El Amor Brujo*, appearing with Ted Shawn, Carola Goya, Peter di Falco and members of her company.

After retiring to Cape Cod in 1960, she founded Ethnic Dance Arts, Inc., where she taught and produced an annual ethnic dance festival, with workshops and performances by distinguished guest artists, including Maria Alba, Luis Rivera, Gisela Montemayor, Mariano Parra, Carola Goya and Matteo, Manolo Vargas, Dini Roman, Salvador Vires, Luis Olivares, Azucena Vega, Pilar Gomez, Roberto Cartagena, Ramon de los Reyes and Jerane Michel.

In 1972, La Meri received the Capezio Dance Award for her contribution to the field of ethnic dance. In 1977, she inaugurated an award of her own, the annual St. Denis Award for outstanding achievement in the field of ethnic dance. Teo Morca is among the recipients.

La Meri was also the author of an autobiography, *Dance Out the Answer*,



La Meri

### LA MERI, 89, DANCER, TEACHER AND SPECIALIST IN ETHNIC REPERTORY

[from The New York Times, January 21, 1988; sent by George Ryss]

by Jennifer Dunning

La Meri, the dancer, teacher, writer and dance ethnologist, died in a San Antonio hospital on January 7. She was eighty-nine years old.

Described as "the undisputed queen of ethnic dance" by Walter Sorrell, the dance writer, La Meri was long considered the leading American authority on the subject, particularly the dance of India and Spain. She toured the world at the height of her career, in the 1920's and 30's, studying and performing.

She founded the School of Natya with Ruth St. Denis in 1940 in New York, where she taught and performed with her company, the Five Natas, and presented such guest lecturers as Pearl S. Buck, Coomaraswamy, Lin Yutang, Ted Shawn and Argentinita. Her book "Spanish Dancing," published in 1948, was considered by many to be the definitive text on Spanish dance.

La Meri, whose real name was Russell Meriwether Hughes, was born in Louisville, Ky. She received her first dance training in San Antonio, where she studied ballet and Spanish and Mexican dance as a child. She later studied Hawaiian dancing in Hawaii and, in New York City, modern dance with Michio Ito and ballet with Aaron Tomaroff and Ivan Tarasoff.

#### Dancing Before Movies

La Meri made her professional stage debut in 1924 in San Antonio, where she danced prologues to silent movies. In New York, she performed with Maria Montero and was a featured vaudeville performer with Keith Time and in the 1949 Broadway revue "A Night in Spain." Her first major work was "Krishna Gopala," presented in 1940 with St. Denis and Hadassah as guest artists. She also created an interpretation of "Swan Lake" in the Bharata Natyam school of Indian classical dance and created many dances in the styles of other cultures. "An afternoon with Miss La Meri is rather like being shown a small corner of some connoisseur's collection of choreographiana," John Martin wrote in The New York Times in 1940 in a review of one of La Meri's many New York appearances.

She taught and performed with her own company at the New York

and several authoritative articles and books on ethnic dance. Her book, *Spanish Dancing*, is considered by many the definitive text in English on Spanish dance.

Among the distinguished dancers who were students of La Meri are Nila Amparo and Juana Carreras, original members of The Five Natas; Maria Alba and Carola Goya, already established as Spanish dancers, who studied East Indian dance; Peter di Falco, her partner; Matteo, Jerane Michel and Rebecca Harris.

She is survived by her companion and former company member, Bill Adams, and numerous friends, colleagues and students.

\*\*\*

School of Natya, which was absorbed into the Ethnologic Dance Center she founded in 1942. The school continued until 1956 and was an important source of training in ethnic dancing. La Meri taught at universities across the nation. She also taught and performed at the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival and taught at the Juilliard School in New York. On her retirement in 1970, La Meri established Ethnic Dance Arts Inc. in Hyannis, Massachusetts, where she presented an annual ethnic dance festival and awards.

La Meri wrote six volumes of poetry and five books on dance esthetics, technique and composition. Her extensive collection of material on ethnic dance, given to the New York Public Library in 1948 and 1962, is a major holding of the library's dance collection.

### AN AMERICAN IN MADRID

[from: El País, Nov. 29, 1987; sent by George Ryss; translated by Paco Sevilla]

by Ricardo Cantalapiedra

To understand the performance of Juan Callejuela "Pollito," it is necessary to know his background, even if it is only a brief outline. He is a North American, from California. Callejuela is the Spanish translation of his American last name (Johnny Lane).

Callejuela began to study Spanish philology (the study of historical writing and learning) in his native land. He travelled to Spain in 1970 and stayed several months. He was enthralled by the gypsies and flamenco. The following year, he returned to stay and chose Granada as his residence. When he finished his studies in philology, he lived for ten years in the caves of the Sacromonte, with los Pitirili (residents of one of the major caves). El Andrés and El Quiqui were in charge of teaching him guitar and cante.

Pollito went on stage and performed in such places "de solera" in Granada as La Zambra, the tablao of Curro and Rey Chico. He came to Madrid and was presented in Los Canasteros. Since then he has been a resident of Madrid and one of the most colorful figures in the bohemian Madrid nightlife.

Callejuela has the external appearance of a tall and blond gringo. But when you hear him speak, you will be mystified, mouth opened in astonishment: Pollito speaks in caló at all times and does it in such a way that even the gypsies themselves are confused. Whoever meets him is instantly a friend and it is not difficult to find him at sun-up chatting with Paco de Lucía, Camarón, or Tomatito.

As an artist, he has performed many times in the Café de Manuela, as well as in any little hole-in-the-wall, on any night, under any pretext. But the last thing you would suspect, unless you know him, is that Pollito is a gringo, an



Juan Callejuela "El Pollito" (photo by Marisa Florez)

American in Madrid. There are people who won't believe you even if you swear by everything that's sacred. Because the artistic style of Pollito is "tela marinera" ("too much") a combination of Lola Flores, Peret, Los Chichos, Bambino, and La Terremoto. His friends call him "Pollito colorao" because, when he sings, his face gets red with feeling and passion.

He goes crazy, stops, messes his hair, stomps his feet, does juggling tricks with the guitar, does an off-balance half-turn, and dances. "Voy a empear con una de Los Chichos, y luego, ya me iré degenerando." (I'm going to begin with a song by Los Chichos and then degenerate from there.) Said and done. And the audience, of course, open their eyes wide and pinch themselves to try to understand that what they are seeing is not an illusion.

## FOREIGN GUITARIST IN MADRID

by Jesse Tinsley

Madrid, Spain — Professional guitarists performing in Madrid are not necessarily gypsies, the true maestros of flamenco music. Non-Spanish guitarists in Madrid — which is recognized as an international flamenco hamlet — are performing in the city's cafes, theaters and cultural centers and rising to at least local notability.

One of them is Adam del Monte, a 21-year-old flamenco guitarist from Israel. Del Monte and others acknowledge that recognition can be difficult for foreigners in the country where the music was born. And the gypsies are sometimes wary of foreigners, who are often labeled as incapable of capturing what they call "duende" or soul, an elusive quality of the music that goes beyond technical expertise. That argument, however, is less prevalent today.

Del Monte's bulerías, are original and flashy. He produces unusual sounds by experimenting with various tuning methods on his guitar. He is an innovator in a style of music that has a restrictive framework, while simultaneously giving the artist enormous freedom of expression. When he plays, his facial expression is as serious as hard as stone. He says that seriousness is out of concern that everything will go well. Del Monte has performed with some of Spain's outstanding artists, such as singer Lole Montoya of "Lole y Manuel" and famous guitarist, Niño Miguel. He has performed in the Manuel de Falla auditorium in Granada and gave a concert with singer Enrique Morete in the Teatro Real in Madrid. Del Monte has also performed in various cafes and cultural centers and has participated in flamenco festivals. While Del Monte prefers solo concerts, he has played his guitar among dancers, singers and regularly performs with his father, Dino del Monte, who plays the zimbal, a flutist. That trio currently is working on an album. The songs include a mixture of Indian, Arab, flamenco and jazz elements.

Adam del Monte began studying guitar 13 years ago. He studied at the Whatford School of Music, U.K., the Talma-Yalin music and art school in Israel, and the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, England. He also studied for eight years with his father, a classical and flamenco guitarist. Adam del Monte says he prefers flamenco, because it gives him the freedom of self-expression. His original works include eight flamenco and three classical compositions. The most recent are "African Ritual" — with elements of African, jazz and flamenco rhythms, and "Lament to Six Million Brothers" — a slow, haunting contemporary classical composition that pays tribute to the millions of Jews who died in the Holocaust. The "Lament composition, del Monte said, "is a reminder that this must never happen again." His compositions are drawn from his concepts and experiences in life. "The better understanding I have of myself, and the more sincere I am, the more creative the compositions. When something is totally crystalized, it's pure and powerful." Adam del Monte, who has lived in Madrid for three years, learned the true meaning of flamenco in Southern Spain. "I lived in the caves with the gypsies. They received me openly, although I was strange and bland. It was there that I got the real feeling of flamenco.



Adam Del Monte



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## FLAMENCO AROUND THE WORLD

### FLAMENCO IN AUSTRALIA

Dear Jaleo,

A few years ago you did a feature on the Los Flamencos Spanish Dance Group — here is our latest effort. Adelaide is an active though small community and our biggest problem is getting committed guitarists (even one will do) and singers.

Somehow we manage to do things but certainly not on the scale I would like. Since my trip to Spain in 1984 the main projects I have been involved in either solo or as part of Los Flamencos (apart from the usual floorshows, participation in concerts and events etc.) have been the recording of a radio program on flamenco and a video film 'Flamenco Forms and Rhythms' where Roger Hicks and I were principal dancers.

This film was a great success and the brainchild of our former guitarist Vince Andreacchio. His brother Mario (a former flamenco guitarist) has his own film company and through the sponsorship of the Education Department, we made the film which is now distributed through all the High Schools and Spanish Departments here.

The most recent experience worth mentioning was the concert 'Alborada Flamenca', a report and program notes which follow.

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#### EXPERIENCES OF THAT 'FIRST' CONCERT

In September 1987, the 'Los Flamencos Spanish Dance Group' put on their first concert.

The Group as such had dwindled and was going through a slump when



Veronica dancing tangos. Pepe El Quawri on guitar

Mari Olivares (our singer who also dances in the group) and I sat down and decided to try a concert. We both have completely different ideas of what we like but somehow it came together and worked.

In the first half we wanted to use a theme of migration to show how flamenco music and dance had changed from the 1800's to present day with a slant on youth. The link we used between the numbers was poetry. In this segment we wanted to demolish the image of flamenco dancers having to wear ruffles and play castanets and to show it in a more realistic everyday manner.

However, the second act we presented as Tablao Flamenco.

What we were attempting was too difficult for the guitarists and the singer in our group to attempt on their own, but, we had, by good fortune, a gypsy guitarist, Salvador Flores "el Titi de Algeciras", temporarily in Adelaide from Sydney and Pepe "el Qawri", who was also temporarily here, agreed to do the show. We had no funding whatsoever. The Spanish Club supported us in practical ways by organizing child care during the concert for patrons, taking over the bar in the theatre and feeding us. I used my best students as well, so we had a mix of professionals and non-professionals. Altogether we had a cast of 16 people.

We were delighted and surprised with the success of the show. Roger Hicks my former dance partner came in as artistic director and it is true to say that without him, we couldn't have artistically achieved the result we did. His clever use of lighting, ideas for props and inspiration with the choreographies when my mind went blank, was tremendous.

We spent a month preparing the groundwork then rehearsed five times a week for two months; we held two shows and were turning people away from the door at the evening performance, which has never happened in a flamenco performance in Adelaide before.

The beginning of the first act began with a sketch of our interpretation of a juerga in the 19<sup>th</sup> century using tangos and finished with a sketch of young teenagers: Sofia, Rocio and Jorge Delgado, with their 'ghetto blaster', bopping across the stage to Spanish Pop music, with Alicia Rodriguez bemoaning:

Esta música les deja sordos, mudos  
sin gracia en los movimientos.  
Y nosotros sentados en el porche,  
comiendo las aceitunas en silencio  
nos preguntamos  
¿Donde están nuestras fiestas de ayer?

This then was the signal for the fiesta (in street clothes) to begin. We used sevillanas, rumba and tangos.

Some of the numbers we had in between these two fiestas were: zambra mora - beautifully interpreted by belly dancer, Shamira; tientos danced by myself, martinete and caña, the latter danced by Mari. Most of the songs sung by 'Titi' were his own composition, and the wording of these numbers fitted in with our theme of migration and hardship. To dramatize the martinete, we managed to get a forge and don our guitarist 'El Niño' in a leather apron and singlet; he kept the beat with hammer and tongs.

The siguiriyas, done in the second half was a balance of Alicia reciting poetry, with the guitar, footwork and singing complementing, but not overshadowing her work.

'Titi' was an absolute dream to work with. He comes from a long line of flamenco artists in Algeciras; his compás, his complete understanding of the cante and dance uplifted the show and everybody's performance level. He was always supportive at rehearsals with a good sense of humor which often relieved tensions that were building up.

The guitar support was good, Pepe in particular put his heart into the final concert and as for myself — a review of my dancing will have to come from another source. I was pleased to finally do justice to the hours I had spent pounding the floor in the studios of Amor de Dios.

The students were great. We discovered some singers among some of



El Titi de Algeciras

them when they were told they would be singing chufflas. After the initial horrified, "No! we can't sing!" reaction, we couldn't keep them quiet. Eight year old Ana Belén and twelve year old Susana Garcia stole the show with their tangos and their personalities in the finale of the first act. The Delgado siblings revelled in their role, bopping across the stage and carried off their parts with much aplomb.

The students had only very minor parts so what they did, they did extremely well. One of my most promising — Mary Allstrom, a budding bulerías dancer — is now living in Little Falls in the States. (My loss but certainly your gain.)

Our own singer/dancer, Mari, really impressed. Her singing has been developing over the last three years but she was a little awed by the presence of "Titi". She was 'persuaded', however, to sing a solo and did a beautiful interpretation of Loli y Manuel's canción por bulerías, 'Cabalgando Gitano'.

Although I had participated in numerous concerts over the last fifteen years, and had some experience in stage managing and choreographing small amounts of work, this was our first complete concert, and in some ways it was the blind leading the blind. We had to call on all our resources and imagination. These were stretched to the limit in making the ideas in my head work on stage and in organizing simple props that were inexpensive but would symbolize what we were trying to represent.

For me, personally, the concert was a fulfillment of a goal I had always wanted to achieve. It was the first time I had been called upon to choreograph so much for so many people. The experience was draining and I certainly admire those Dancers featured in *Jaleo* who seem to be continually creating new works and putting on concerts.

Naturally the whole business had its share of dramas. In the course of running around getting free publicity on radio and television, putting out posters etc., we found that we had inadvertently put the wrong telephone

number on the posters. Some poor lady had been inundated with phone calls inquiring about the concert.

The other dramas we had were with the videos. They were a disaster. I don't understand why people find it so hard to take straight copies of a show. The video was used as an exercise for two students by a professional, using three cameras. This was to be done at no cost to us. The end result was that the color monitor didn't work so that the films are mostly black and white. In trying to be artistic, the whole flavor of the show was lost as cameras zoomed in on people's faces and guitarists' hands instead of the whole stage as some of the best choreographies were being danced. A lot of those steps are now lost forever and there are some very disappointed dancers who are barely seen even though they danced quite prominently.

I wonder if video camera operators don't like 'silencios' in alegrías. This is the third time on video that the camera has concentrated on the guitarist and not my dance and each time, my silencio has been completely left out. The only exception was the belly dancer — the camera never left her during her entire performance.

Needless to say it took me three months to recover from the concert. I'm looking forward to doing another one but with a lesson learnt. In all the running around organizing everyone else I found too little time for myself and wonder if that's a normal phenomena. Even though I danced well I felt that I didn't do as well as I should have. Though we created on stage a tremendous and at times electrifying ambiente as a group, I wasn't able to 'feel' my dances the way I usually do.

Next time I delegate more and perform with less people.

—Verónica Vargas

\*\*\*



Simón and Stella - Tangos&gt;



Left to Right: Street Festival - Mari, Alicia, Sofía, Rocio, Niño (on guitar) Jorge.

#### PROGRAM NOTES

**Verónica Vargas** began learning flamenco dance in Adelaide in October 1973. She studied with all available teachers in Adelaide but it was Roger Hicks (teaching under the name Rafael Vargas) who was to have the greatest influence on her dancing, later to become her partner. The two of them were to form part of the original Los Flamencos Spanish Dance Group.

The Sydney teachers who later influenced her dancing were - Verónica Gillmer, Antonio Vargas and Diana Reyes.

Verónica studied in Spain on two separate occasions, the last trip funded by an Australian Council grant. Her teachers in Spain have included El Gúito, Ciro, La Cintia, Paco Romeros, Paco Fernandez and Merche Esmerelda.

Her early performances were at the Los Amigos Restaurant for nearly two years and her shows with Los Flamencos and as a solo performer have been many and varied, the most notable being her appearance in the video film, 'Flamenco Forms and Rhythms'.

Of Croatian descent, she speaks Spanish fluently and taught dance for five years at the 'Cervantes' Spanish school.

Currently teaching at the 'Dance Centre' for Rex Feid and for the Spanish Community Centre.

**Roger Hicks** under the name Rafael Vargas, was one of the original

members of Los Flamencos as principal dancer and choreographer.

Studied with Caramina Estudio de Baile Español in Melbourne and in Madrid in with Estrella Morena, Maria Magdalena, Diana Reyes.

As a well known teacher of flamenco dance has taught at Caramin Estudio Melbourne and in Adelaide at Helen Beinke dance Arts, Cervante Spanish Community School, Centre of Performing arts, Carelew and the Dance Centre.

He is also a professional piano accompanist for ballet classes and has many years experience in numerous stage productions.

**Salvador Flores Loreto**, nicknamed El Titi de Algeciras, was born into a gypsy family of high repute living in Algeciras. An inherent talent for singing enabled him to pay his way through Art School in Algeciras. Flamenco song and surrealism provide Salvador with a canvas through which he can project the nomadic philosophy of people in transit. His paintings have appeared in galleries in San Sebastian, Bilbao and Madrid, the Cuban Galleries of Málaga and Cádiz and galleries in Perth, Sydney and Adelaide.

**Pepe 'El Qawri'** was born as Pepe Sammut, in the village of Qawra in Malta to a Spanish mother and Maltese father. He began playing flamenco guitar at the age of twelve to support himself. In 1970 he went to Málaga where he played with flamenco artists such as Antonio Lasuna, El Tato, Tai



José Zamora, Rafael Vargas, Leli Vargas at the Café de Turkas. During this time also travelled in Italy, Malta, Lebanon, Morocco and Greece.

In 1975 he arrived in Sydney and played at El Jaleo restaurant for seven years becoming a part owner in the restaurant. During this time he worked with many of the well known artists in Sydney such as Antonio Vargas, Anita Ortega, Susana, Diana Reyes and Antonio Soria.

He has appeared in a documentary for SBS television called 'Impressions'. In Adelaide he has performed as guest guitarist with Los Flamencos and recently completed a live guitar recital on ABC radio in memory of Andres Segovia.

#### NOTES ON NUMBERS

**Tientos, Tangos:** From the villages along the Atlantic seaboard near Cádiz. In Tientos the singing used to be a simple statement, but owing to the interpretations of certain singers, became more and more serious, developing into a very profound style.

In contrast, Tangos is sparkling and sensual.

#### Tangos

A mi me importa muy poco  
Que un Pájaro en la alameda  
Se pose de un arbol a otro.

Que pájaro será aquel  
Que canta a la verde oliva  
Dirle por Dios que se call  
Que su cante me lastíma.

#### Tientos

Me pongo a lovidar y no puedo  
Yo lo camelo olvidar  
Que en España los gitanos  
Los mataban sin consuelo.

Se haga luz  
A mi pena y amargura  
El misterio do esta cruz  
Yo le estoy pidiendo a Dios  
Que mi sombra se haga luz.

Vamonos pa Roma  
Que el Pare Santo es muy bueno  
Y a los gitanos adora.

Ten pena de mi  
Que hasta el aguita que yo bebo  
Te la tengo que pedir.

**Zambra Mora** In the style of Tientos/Tangos, shows the early Arabic influence in flamenco music.

Yo soy como las gentes que a mi tierra vinieron  
Soy de las raza mora, vieja amiga del sol  
Que todo lo ganaron y todo lo perdieron  
Tengo el alma de nardo del árabe español.

Miguel Machado

#### Martinete

De noche cuando me acuesto  
Me duermo y hablo con Dios  
Le cuento lo que a mi me pasa  
Y se me alivia el corazón.

En los arboles del alba  
A mi gitana modelaron  
Y vivas candelas  
Y el aunque macho sonaron

No me importa que esté la fragua  
Tres años y un día cerrá  
Lo que me importa son mis manos  
Sin trabajar in tu metal.

**Caña:** Closely related to Soleares, is one of the oldest forms of flamenco and one of the purest and most beautiful. One of the basic cantes, considered the perfect form of cante flamenco where beauty and depth of feeling are in harmony.

#### Caña

Están haciendo en el cielo  
Castillos de corazones  
Pa toos [todos] aquellos gitanitos  
Que mataron sin razones.

Serrana tan malamente



El Niño in Martinete

Han hablo de los gitanos  
Las lenguitas de la gente.

Libre como el aire  
Libre como el viento  
Como las estrellas  
En el firmamento.

**Sevillanas:** Some styles developed from folk music in existence before flamenco. Sevillanas, the most popular dance in Andalucia, danced mainly at festivals and particularly the famous Feria of Seville. Although played in the flamenco idiom it is an old folk dance. Sevillanas in the 80's has become one, if not the one universal popular dance all over Spain.

It has captured the new mood of an international Spain. It can be danced solo, by couples or even groups. Many people like to play castanets or do finger snapping while dancing but often people who dance it on the spur of the moment in juerga or fiesta dance with whatever is available, guitar, singer, palmas, orchestra, cassette player... Sevillanas is heard today with almost any type of musical arrangement from jazzy renditions to the tapping of a stick to the solo singing of coplas.

Esta música les deja sordos, mudos  
y sin gracia en los movimientos.  
Y nosotros sentados en el porche,  
comiendo las aceitunas en silencio  
nos preguntamos  
¿dónde están nuestras fiestas de ayer?

Alicia Rodriguez



Gypsy girl dancing.

Sears. It featured music by the famous Amaya clan. An amateur guitar builder, I also loved Latin music and participated in parties at which Cuban and Mexican music was played and sung. I was a subscriber to the British magazine, Guitar News, and in the no. 76 issue, there was a description of

## FLAMENCO TRAVELS

### THE GYPSY FESTIVAL AT STES MARIES DE LA MER

by H.G. Huttigg

I have nurtured a lifelong interest in the flamenco ambient. My earliest introduction was through the purchase of a record, a 78 rpm from a sale at



Son of Ojet El Perro - Festival Stes Marei de la Mer

the Gypsy festival at Stes Maries de la Mer. Written by Michael Elliot. He gave the following introduction: "at the southern end of the River Rhone is the region known as the Camargue, a swampy land, home of wild birds, horses, wild boar and the breeding ground for fighting bulls. The local equivalent of our cowboys are known as Guardians, featuring hats with the side brim turned up - Australian style and single striped trousers. They carry long poles with a prod on the end. According to legend, St. Marie Jacobe and St. Marie Salome, together with their servant, black Sara, landed at a point close to the present church. This was in the first century A.D. The relics of these saints are preserved in this church and are the objects of veneration by the gypsies".

The festival of St. Marie Jacobe is held on the 24th and 25th of May and is attended by gypsies from Spain, France and to a lesser extent from other parts of Europe. The gypsies are permitted to camp in the environs of Stes Marie about a week before the carnival starts and most arrive in modern trailers drawn by autos. Alas, when we visited, not one horse drawn caravan was present.

In 1967 we decided to visit the festival and, arriving on the 23rd of May, found that all hotel rooms were taken. With the help of the Syndicat d'Initiatif, we found a small apartment. The roads leading to Stes Marie were lined with modest farms. The gypsies were already visiting, feasting, and engaging in impromptu bull fighting. There is a small bull ring in the little town and it was busy with amateur taurino activity. The gypsies' transportation was modern, but their clothing was as gypsy as ever: gaudy jewelry and dresses, flowered, bright and shiny. Some of the women wore dresses with large white spots (lunares) as used in Sevilla. Several of the French gypsies would bother us to tell fortunes (L'chance), but the rest were there just to have fun.

On the afternoon of our arrival we strolled through the crowded streets and went to the ancient church dedicated to the saints. as the gypsies came to town they would visit the church to pay homage, particularly to black Sara.



Ojet El Perro and friend drinking Mistel.



Ojet El Perro and group at Hotel de la Plage.

Votive candles were purchased and taken to a crypt beneath the altar. The heat and fumes from the candles were stifling. Many gypsies would exit from the church and form groups in the streets, dancing, singing and "dando palmas." As payos, we found no antagonism nor attempts to be robbed or cheated. All gypsies were willing to be photographed with only one exception, a teen-aged girl dancer.

The first night we went to the hotel La Plage for dinner and fun began. At the table next to ours were some obviously very well-to-do gypsies. They wore stylish clothes, but the gentleman wore large golden earrings. We could hear music groups forming in the patio outside, with shouts and palmas, and we could hardly concentrate on our Coquilles St. Jacques. The

gypsies in the patio were good musicians, but they had a very poor guitar. The bridge was loose and some of the strings were lead through the holes to nails driven in the tail. We went exploring and found gypsies everywhere, at carnival rides, around bonfires, (a gendarme put one out while we were watching, the gypsies having made it by prying up the asphalt of the pavement for fuel).

The following day we went for a walk, looked in on gypsy camps walked to the beach and out a long jetty on which people were fishing, and looked at topless ladies getting suntans. At a store buying postcards, we met two young men who had come to televise the festival. They were from Zurich and had come down the Rhone in a kayak with television cameras and



Pere Gitane and grandsons.



Gypsies dancing from the cathedral to the waterfront (Zarguera family).





Above: Manitas de Plata. (The blond was a total stranger.)

Below left to right: H. Huttig, Fred Huttig and two television journalists from Switzerland to film the Festival Stes Marie de la Mer.



camping equipment. We met them again in the evening at a restaurant where they were supposed to televise some gypsy artists. The planned group never arrived but other gypsies dropped in and played and sang. The next day we made friends with a group of Andalusian gypsies. They were teaching a three year old girl to dance, using a piece of tin for a dance floor and giving the rhythms with cante and palmas. Their leader was an old grandpa who carried the traditional carved cane of a horse trader and whose throne was a small chair with no seat bottom.

Our apartment had a fridge, so we stocked it with lunch goodies and Vin Mousseux, a local champagne. It sold for about forty cents a bottle and we thought nothing of finishing a bottle with our lunches. In the afternoon we would go to the hotel La Plage where most of the action was - in their outdoor patio. One group became our favorite. They were from Barcelona and they became our good friends. We even became a part of their group and we shared their wine, passing the bottle back and forth. The leader of this group was the father, Ojet El Perro. We never learned the name of his wife, a rather heavy set lady, nor of several teen-aged girls and one son, who was about eight years of age. Ojet's guitar was a modest one from Valencia. The golpeadores were of formica and looked as though they had been ripped off a bar counter. His repertoire was mostly cante chico, alegrías, sevillanas and a few soleares. One excellent dancer joined us — I think that she was called Maraona or perhaps, Faraona (a term of praise meaning a female Pharaoh, an Egyptian ruler).

It became too crowded at La Plage, so the gypsies moved with us to the pavement that formed the entrance to an abandoned church. We danced, sang and did palmas. The gypsies would take the champagne and shake the bottles until the wine spurted all over and the cement floor became inches deep in wine, splashing as the dancers stamped in it.

At many places, temporary tables with roulette games were set up. There were trestles with planks covered with freshly caught mussels — to be eaten raw with vinegar and salt. This was the day of the procession to the sea. As we walked near the beach, a Mercedes stopped and two men jumped out. The rear trunk was propped open since it was filled with cases of champagne. These men were Manitas de Plata and his brother in law, Ballardo. They stood on the street corner and sang and played for a half-hour as a rapturous crowd gathered. Then the procession came from the direction of the old church, people bearing the statues of the saints, and men on horseback. They went into the sea and the relics were blessed, celebrating



Ojet El Perro and wife dancing.

the arrival of the saints from the ocean.

In general, we found that the music was mostly amateur, but strong and interesting. One group from Vienna had two guitars, a violin, and a cello. They were the most professional, but were less flamenco than the others. Once we saw a very tall gypsy, called "Chico". He had an excellent José Ramírez guitar — almost new. This was the only really good instrument that we saw. In general the music tended toward the cante chico. There was some rumba flamenca, alegrías and a few soleares. The ambient was not like a professional tablao, but there was a fine feeling of camaraderie and friendship - a condition rare upon meetings of gypsies and payos. The Stes Marie festival is a little known treasure and one that every flamenco lover should attempt to visit.



Austrian Gypsies.

**JALEO THANKS THE FOLLOWING CONTRIBUTORS:**

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...sobre el baile

## DANCE AND AGE



The first time that I remember thinking about age and dance was on the day of my first rehearsal with Pilar López in Spain. This was back in the early 1960s and I was contracted as her guest soloist for a tour of Holland, Belgium, and Spain. I was pretty nervous, as I was about to begin rehearsing some exciting duets with this famous artist who happened to be quite a bit older than I was. I did not know how I would feel dancing what I felt would be the sensual, man-woman, dramatic works that she was planning. I needn't have worried, for I quickly learned that she was "eternal woman", transcending any age difference. She did not have to be highly technical or worry about "steps". She adapted her dancing to herself, her physical self, and expressed her spiritual and sensual artistry. I also learned very quickly why she was so successful in training the best male dancers, such as Jiménez, Vargas, Lorca, Vega, Greco, Gades, Maya and many others. It was because she always expressed the pure feelings and emotions of femininity on stage. That transcends age, for feelings are eternal. I will get to this concept later in this article, for this is very important in the aging of a dancer.

Pilar Lopez's days of jumpy, classical boleros and jotas were over, but her repertoire of theatre and flamenco works fitted her age and feelings and whatever she danced, whether solo, with me, or with others, I felt that she provided a great lesson in great performing. She was an artist aging properly, in repertoire, responsibility to the public, and herself in general. She did what she could and did it well. The audience loved her. There was one exception, and this was another lesson in aging. When she played the miller's wife in the ballet, "The Three Corned Hat," by Falla and in my opinion, it did not work. The reason was more than physical age. Her acting could not transcend that certain, but obvious, spark of innocent youth that is the character of the part. It would be like an adult Judy Garland trying to play Dorothy again in the Wizard of Oz.

There are many ways to think about age with regard to dance. You could put it simply, as the body aging, the aging and maturing of the artist in thought, feeling and artistry. There is aging as a performing artist. Attitude is another factor, especially in the United States where many people feel strongly about youth in everything. There is the often asked question, "Am I too old to take up Flamenco"? Or for that matter, any other type of dance. There is the thought of actually becoming aware of your body for the first time as a flamenco dancer, for example, actually looking at yourself and your physical and mental potential as a flamenco dancer. There is developing an attitude of what you want to do with flamenco dance if you do get involved.

I became acutely aware of these and many other thoughts on age while conducting workshops with people ranging in age from 10 years old to people in their sixties. Each person's personal and individual "need" for flamenco affected how they approached this dance form.

I would first like to talk about performing artists. As a performing artist, the responsibility is not only on the dancer, performer but on the dancer's relation to an audience, most often a paying public. When flamenco became a performing art, away from the closed, informal juergas and fiestas, it acquired a time and space energy that the dancer had to adapt to, along with looking the part and being aware that a public is paying to see something special. That meant being in pleasing costumes, looking sharp, dancing with energy and not huffing and puffing. It meant that physically you had to be able to sustain a dance and look like you were really feeling it. This all sounds pretty basic, but in reality, it is constantly on the minds of serious professional artists. For a very young

professional who is serious about his or her work, that is really not a problem. The last thing that a very young dancer thinks about is aging. Even if a very young dancer has not yet acquired genius of artistry, great compás, feeling emotion and maturity, the audience is usually pretty kind in acceptance of their performance, mainly due to their exuberant youth and vitality. The audience becomes much less tolerant as the dancer ages. This was brought out very strongly in the movie, "Turning Point", when the ballet company began to take the aging ballerina's parts away, giving them to a much younger girl. Even though the older dancer was a great artist, it was youth that they felt would sell and was what the audience wanted to see.

Flamenco dance has some marvelous qualities, human qualities, that favor the dancer. Unlike classical ballet, for example, which requires a dancer's body to perform the demanding physical techniques that are inherent to the art of ballet, no matter what the ballet dancer's age, flamenco dance matures with inner subtlety. The flamenco dancer's body, although a pleasing shape is desirable, is almost secondary to the feeling and the art of the dancer. Feelings, compás, emotions, and art do not age. If a ballet dancer's body has been let go and is out of shape, and he or she can not balance, leap, jump. If the dancer just tries to pose and rely on mature subtlety, it often does not work because ballet is a dance form that is by nature, highly refined technically.

I am not talking about the artistry of the many great ballet dancers who have aged gracefully. Flamenco, because of its very internal self expression, ages well. A dancer can maintain compás forever; their feelings can maintain that inspiration that audiences will believe and, if a dancer listens to his body, he will mature internally with feeling, emotion, and artistry, and go on inspiring audiences into his ripe old age. One of the biggest mistakes is of course, not listen to your body and knowing when the physical turning point has arrived. Dancing, all types of dancing, is a very physical art and demands that the body keep up with the internal spirit and soul. Usually, when someone is "over the hill", it is because they have not listened to their inner clock. He or she puts on the girdle just one more time, expecting the audience, the paying audience, to be tolerant and appreciate their "great artistry". Well, they may be artistic, but basically, the flower should be picked when it is in bloom.

It is very difficult for a professional dancer who has put his life into dance to know, inside, when to set the dancing shoes aside. The ego is strong and the past feelings of satisfaction and duende die hard. There have been many, many great flamenco artists who are not teeny boppers, such as the artists in "Flamenco Puro", who go on thrilling audiences, and it is a very one to one personal consideration for each and every dancer to think about. I am sure that flamenco aficionados will never tire of El Farruco, or Matilde Coral or many others who continue to dance. Who can forget "El Cojo", with his gracia, dancing until he died.

Flamenco dance is one of the most personal dance art-forms in the world. It is not a group or communal dance form, but a solo interpretation of each individual's feelings and total being. This is what it is in its truest form and this leaves a lot of room to be individual, not only in these feelings and personal emotions, but in the individual approach to its technical traditions.

When does a performing, professional, flamenco dancer know when to retire? There is no set answer, for each one is as individual as the waves in the ocean, but the key may be in doing a bit of self-analysis to determine what you actually want to continue doing. Some questions could be: Are you still inspired by performing in public? Is your body still vital enough to perform a strenuous soleares or do you find yourself posing more than moving? Do your costumes still fit well, or have you grown out of them? Do your aches and pains in the knees, joints and body in general outweigh the fun that you used to have? Do you think a lot about your age now in relation to your dancing?

Are you just dancing for the money now and could care less about the joy of the art or what people think? Are you doing out of habit? Are you bored with your dancing, feeling that your dances are boring to do? Are you bored with rehearsals and find exercise a drag? These are just some questions that will eventually come up for most dancers who have been dancing all of their lives.



and feel the reality of aging coming on. Again, there is no answer or cure, for aging is something that can be retarded a bit with good health, proper physical, emotional and spiritual care and healthy heredity but it is a fact for all dancers, more so than for a guitarist or singer. I can only say that all professional dancers should listen and feel their inner clock and listen as truthfully as possible, with their profession in mind. They should think of the public that they want to come to see them and to pay them for their art. There is a great responsibility to the art of flamenco that we hope will go on with great interpreters for all to see. There is a great responsibility to the public and, finally, there is responsibility to the self, the total physical, spiritual, emotional and mental self, for you and only you, the dancer, lives with that inner duende that you have felt; it will be your memories that know that you never let it die within.

What about the many people who dance flamenco who are not professional, do not want to be, those who find flamenco fulfilling in itself. As long as you are breathing and can move, you can study and enjoy flamenco dance. There are literally hundreds of people studying flamenco dance who have no need or desire to become professional dancers. The studio, Amor de Dios, in Madrid is full of teachers who have students from all over the world studying dance. The students are young and old and in between, and I am sure that they find flamenco a bit more of a joy than aerobics, and they may be finding their emotional outlets as well. There are people all over the world studying flamenco dance and I have had many people from all over the world come to my workshops. Almost all of them have told me, in their own words, that flamenco dance is a total tonic for their bodies and minds; it lets them come in contact with their feelings about themselves and life in general. Many love the discipline of the study and they search for what it takes to dance flamenco with no thought of the tablao or concert stage, but are just an interest in the "inner dance". They know that there is no short-cut and, the challenges of the music, the techniques, the compás, and all that goes with it, is a life long study that can give them a reason and purpose to get to know their bodies and feelings.

You can start studying flamenco dance any time in your life and age with this dance form, using the cliché, "gracefully", if you take care of your body and keep your mind young and your inspiration intact. That is the real philosophy of aging that I feel is so important. Never say "I am too old", for being "too old" means you are dead and buried. Yes, the body ages and that cannot be stopped, but it can be retarded and flamenco dance is the style to

retard it. We work away from the gravity, which is the worst culprit for aging. If we give in to it through bad posture, our bodies will sag. Flamenco dance is pulled up, with a beautiful aire and posture that will keep your body vital. With the added philosophy that "zippers do not lie", you will keep your body fitted to the pants and dress that you love, and not let out the pants or get a larger dress when you feel the body starting to spread. Inspiration cannot age. Neither can joy and love and respect for the art, so if the mind and feelings stay young, then you will dance the "inner flamenco dance" until the day that you die. That is the secret of aging gracefully: that love of lifting your arms in a joyous alegrías, laughing with your bulerías por chuffa, crying a bit with a siguiriyas that you feel in the blood. Let go. Do not worry about age, for the idea is to think about life and life with the inner dance of flamenco. That is what creative aging is all about.

Thirty-four years ago, when I went on tour with Lola Montes all over the United States doing Community Concerts, the last thoughts on my mind were of aging. I was full of life and hope, and we drove endlessly and danced everything, jotas, classical, flamenco, and theatre dances. My thoughts were of learning more and more of this art that had inspired me to quit a very nice job as a budding auto mechanic. I was like a sponge, soaking up everything that I could learn about the dance and theatre. To me, my life was endless. I was Tarzan and would just go on and on, ageless, strong, able to do anything. Well, you do age and I know that after close to forty years of dancing, teaching, choreographing, the one thing that I have learned is that it is the love and inspiration of this great art, the art of flamenco that keeps me young at heart and disciplined. I keep in mind that "zippers do not lie". It is worth the effort to do those extra exercises to keep my body in shape so that I can "feel" the dance with my total being. I know that I will reach a turning point someday and I do hope that I will never let the public down, not with my ego, but with my interpretation of this beautiful art. I hope that I will know when to take my last bow professionally and know when I should stick to the fiesta. Life should be a fiesta and may we never stop dancing life's fiesta. Let's not worry about age, as I have said before. Let's live each day, each dances to its golden evening. Like fine wine, let us feel our aging is good. It is improvement of the total self and, since we are students of not only flamenco, but of life, then our total life improves with age because we have learned a bit more of becoming the dance. Dance your age with feeling and love and truth of your feelings, and you will be ageless. You will just be...be flamenco.

—Teo Morea

## GAZPACHO DE GUILLERMO

### WHY GAZPACHO?

More than a few people have asked me why this column has been given the name of "Gazpacho". For the benefit of those who have not been exposed to Spanish cuisine, Gazpacho is a type of cold soup served in Andalucía, to which one may add different vegetables. So, unlike Campbell's gazpacho in a can, the real "gazpacho andaluz" is served to each person in broth form, and then the various vegetables are added to suit one's taste. So, the variety of topics covered, or the rambling potpourri writing style, is the reason for the title. The name was suggested by Paco Sevilla and Juana De Alva back in 1980, possibly to make presentable some of the early articles by an inexperienced, incoherent writer.

It all started back in 1978, when I got my first issue of *Jaleo*, which has

been in existence since August of 1977. Paco Sevilla wrote in one of his articles that he would like to see more columns by the readers. I started by sending in "Punto de Vista" articles, and later came the monthly column in September of 1980. Counting articles not bearing the gazpacho title, one or more of my articles has appeared in 44 of the 52 issues of *Jaleo* that have been published since July 1980. Still, *Jaleo* could benefit by some new readers contributing their ideas in the form of articles or new columns, like Nanette Hogan's "The Dance Student's Corner". Hey, I know it's not easy, and it doesn't pay money, but you could be adding "your own grain of salt to the dish" and ensuring the continuing life of *Jaleo* at the same time.

Many have contributed and some continue to do so...Teo Morea, El Tío Paco, George Ryss, The Shah of Iran, Paco Sevilla, Juana de Alva, Peter Baime, Gordon Booth, Jerry Lobdill, Ken Sanders, Paula Durbin, Lester De Voe, Rodrigo, and Maria del Cid. Why not join the gang?

### CURRENT EVENTS

I've acquired the new updated *Lives and Legends of Flamenco* by flamencologist Donn Pohren. Without giving an in depth book review, I'll just make a few comments about his eighty-page, computer printed supplement to this fine book. On the positive side, there is plenty of good information on some of the more recent stars: like Juan "El Lebrijano," Paco de Lucía, Paco Peña, Mario Maya, Ciro, Camarón de la Isla, Paco Cepero, Ma-

nolo Sanlúcar, etc. By recent, I mean those who have had careers since 1964, when the first edition of this book was published. On the other hand, one would expect more information regarding certain artists from a book regarded so highly by the critics and awarded such lofty prizes in Spain. For example, regarding the dancer Manolete, only one sentence is written: "Manolete, bearded gypsy brother of guitarist Juan Maya Marote, is one of flamenco's most respected dancers". Another example: "Manolo Domínguez is considered one of today's more accomplished accompanists". As a final comment, Donn seems slightly less critical and opinionated in his 1988 update supplement. Has Donn mellowed out and moved for good to a Madrid suburb, far from the land of soleares and siguiriyas? This book is highly recommended, but just as Paeo de Lucía has created an army of less talented imitators, Donn has created his own band of bible thumpers who quote chapter and verse, without true knowledge or experience of flamenco art. Beware!

### FLAMENCO RECORDINGS

On other fronts: A guitarist named Marcos, who has recorded two albums of flamenco guitar music in the 1980's, has now turned to writing articles in Guitar International, a British magazine. His column is titled "Flamenco Maestros", which reviews the great guitarists who have recorded albums. The April 1988 issue features Ricardo Niño and Pepe Habichuela, followed by Paco Cepero and Niño Miguel in the May issue. Marcos is a good aficionado of flamenco guitar and his writing style shows that he is quite an interesting fellow. There is a photograph and a review of his own albums, written by Paco Sevilla, in a back issue of Jaleo: Vol: VIII, No. 2, Spring 1985. Marcos has joined another knowledgeable guitarist-writer named Tomás Jiménez, who had a column titled "El Duende Flamenco" in the British magazine Guitar.

The same issue of Guitar International, April 1988, mentions two new flamenco guitar recordings of interest: "Flamenco", Rafael Riqueni, Blue Angel. BA 29018 Digital DMM, which is Riqueni's second guitar record. The first was "Juego de Niños". The other is a compact disc of a concert by Paco Peña titled "The Music of Ramon Montoya and Niño Ricardo". According to my good friend and "Jaleísta", Joe Bubas, from Pittsburgh, this Paco Peña CD is already available in the United States.

According to the Spanish magazine Sevilla Flamenea, several interesting recordings have come out. Most notably: A record by singer Chano Lobato and guitarist Paco del Gastor titled "Aromo"; one by singer José Mercé and Enrique de Melchor called "Caminos Reales del Cante" in which the reviewer says that Mercé supercedes all his previous recordings; a new one by Tina Pavón on the Pasarela label titled "Sal y Duende" with Manolo Domínguez and José Luis Postigo on guitar. Tina's voice is very reminiscent of Pastora Pavón, La Niña de los Peines. Another record has just come out called "Ketama", featuring modern, jazzy numbers by a group that includes some of the Habichuela family (Juan Carmona, Antonio Carmona, and Pepe Habichuela).

### DENVER UPDATE

Locally in Denver, Colorado a new flamenco company has formed under the direction of dancer Pablo Rodarte. "Amanecer" has already played to a full house audience in concert at the Houston Fine Arts Center at the University of Denver on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 1988. Pablo invited as guest artists Susana DiPalma and Gregorio Lobo of "Zorongo Flamenco", in Minneapolis. Highlights of the concert were the zapateado by the Rodarte group, and La Caña by Susana, Pablo, and Gregorio. The full title of the new flamenco group is "Amanecer Teatro Flamenco", and it is available for performances throughout the U.S. Contact maestro Pablo Rodarte at (303) 922-5968 for further information. Members of the company are: artistic director and principal dancer Pablo Rodarte, featured on the cover of Jaleo, Vol. VIII, No. 4, dancers Patricio CuNalta, Louanne Davies, Ramona Garduño, Lisa Trujillo, Andrea Wagner, Debra Espinoza, and guitarist "su servidor" Guillermo Salazar.

Aee guitarist René Heredia, fresh back from his third solo concert at New

York's Carnegie Hall, has opened for the summer at El Noa Noa. He is joined by dancers Salli Gutiérrez and "La Carmencita". All of Rene's aficionados are glad to see him performing again this summer as he did last summer at the Café Promenade, which no longer features flamenco.

Another flamenco and Mexican dancer Jeanette Trujillo has been active in the Denver area with guitarist Denver Pearson and a local Mariachi band. Occasionally appearing with Jeanette's group is Guillermo Salazar. Guitarist Miguel Espinoza has returned from an extended gig in Chicago with singer Pepe 'El Culata', son of the original Pepe 'El Culata'. Miguel is currently doing some solo engagements about town, most recently at the coffeehouse "Paris on the Platte". Earlier in 1988 guitarist Carlos Montoya gave a concert with orchestra in Boulder, Colorado, a short drive from Denver.

—Guillermo Salazar

### LIVES AND LEGENDS OF FLAMENCO

by D.E. Pohren

A book Review by Paco Sevilla

The long awaited second edition of Lives and Legends of Flamenco has finally appeared. The first edition (1964), along with The Art of Flamenco by the same author (1962), was a sort of bible of flamenco for aficionados of the 1960's. It is still the only reference work in either English or Spanish that gives a concise history of flamenco artists, including estimates of their birth and death dates. Much has happened in the last twenty-five years to make an updated version highly desirable. Not only has an entirely new generation of flamencos appeared and an older generation begun to die off, but a tremendous amount of research has been done on the lives of artists at the last century and early part of the present century.

This new edition of Lives and Legends brings us a number of newer artists and very interesting breakdown of flamenco into regions. In addition, Pohren brings to the reader some of the information about flamenco life in the past that has been published in Spain's flamenco magazines and in books that are not widely available. This book is therefore a worthwhile addition to any flamenco aficionado's library.

With my recommendation out of the way, let me now tell you how profoundly disappointed I was in this new edition. First, from a technical viewpoint: I understand that this book would not warrant a great expenditure of money on its production, for the financial return is certain to be minimal — the nature of the flamenco market and fact that the first edition is already widely distributed — make that a given. So it made sense not to re-typeset the whole book, but, rather, to just add a new section to the old book. Of course, that meant that Pohren did not have to do any updating of the historical material and, therefore, we get no benefit of all the research that has been done on the old-timers; there are many errors in this part of the book and many supposed facts that are based only on legends and have been pretty much discounted. The real complaint, however, is that the new part of the book was done on a home computer or word-processor and is very amateurish and sloppy. The column justification system is poor, resulting in awkward word spacings. It is not a quality type and some letters print darker than others. Saving money is one thing, but being this cheap is ridiculous. He could have used a laser printing system, for example; that is not expensive and gives a higher quality. And there are so many typographical errors.

With respect to the content of the new sections, I get the feeling that it was done by somebody who's heart was not in it, who was doing it only to make a little money or because it had to be done, for whatever reason. I believe that Pohren has been pretty much out of the flamenco scene for the last ten or fifteen years, in spite of living in Madrid, and only returned to it to write this new edition. I don't want to downplay the merits of what he has contributed here, but I must point out how far short he fell of accomplishing what he could have.

It appears to this reader that Pohren did not wish to leave Madrid. If an

artist did not live in Madrid or the information about him was not available in a magazine or book, then he did not get more than a passing mention. So, we read: "La Paquera...still rides high." or "Diego Carrasco has cut some fine records accompanying Tía Anica la Piniñaca." Others get a brief mention: Manuela Carrasco, the most important gypsy dancer of the 1970's, gets a very short and superficial paragraph. Others are out of date already: Pansequito (and many others) is called a "young gypsy singer." He has been around forever and already has a son who is a performer. Lole y Manuel are described as if they are current phenomenon, taking the youth by storm; they did their thing twelve years ago, have been passé for some time, and aren't even together anymore. Then there is a fair amount of information that is not correct: Susi Amador is not from Sevilla; Joaquín and Ramón Amador are not brothers; since when is the serranas a "mountainized version of the siguiriya?" I don't see much connection between the two except for the compás — certainly they are not poetically nor melodically related.

The regional breakdowns of flamenco are excellent for Sevilla and Jerez, with heavy doses of material from magazines like *Sevilla Flamenca*. But the areas of Málaga and Granada are treated very superficially. In Málaga, for example, where is El Cojo de Málaga, El Bolo, Pepe de la Isla, Pepe de Cañete, Antonio Losada, Manuel and Rafael Santiago, and many more. Isn't Manzanita from Málaga? What about the whole Madrid school of pop flamenco — Manzanita, Zíngaro, Parrita, etc.? Pohren may not like them, but they deserve at least a passing mention. I realize that space restrictions may play a role here, but what about Morón de la Frontera? For Pohren, Morón stops with the artists he associated with in the 1960's. But there is a whole new generation of artists there who don't even get a mention: singers like Paco Camacho, Juan Luis Cabrera, Pepe Palomo, Pepe Labrón, or guitarists like Juan and Manolo Monilla, Javier de la "Chica," and Paco Delgado "El Leri." And what about the great Paco del Gastor, now coming into his own as a superstar, a real giant of a guitarist; he gets only a brief mention?

And so it goes! I guess you can't please everybody. When I publish my book, I'm sure to be massacred by the critics. In spite of all the above, this is still the best work of its type in English, and the 80 pages of new material does make for very interesting reading. There are also a few new pictures. The book is available from: The Bold Strummer, 1 Webb Rd., Westport, CT 06880. The cost is \$29.50 plus \$2.50 for shipment. Also available from the same source is *A Way of Life* by Pohren (\$15.95 and \$11.95 for paperback) and *The Flamenco Guitar* by David George (\$18.95).



## A NEW RECORD FROM JAPAN

A record review by Paca Sevilla

I was delighted to find in the mail a record album by a Japanese flamenco guitarist named Minoru Setta. The title, "Lloro del Viento," is a bit puzzling: Should it be "Llanto del Viento" or "Lloró el Viento" or "Llora el Viento"? (The English translation would appear to indicate the latter.) The album cover is very well done, with text in Japanese and English. Here is the description given of Minoru Setta:

*Minoru Setta is a flamenco guitarist of established reputation in Japan, who has already made a considerable career. He has spent many years as a soloist, an accompanist, and a famous tutor who has produced a number of excellent players. These recordings of his own works commemorate his 40<sup>th</sup> birthday. I'd like to send him a heart felt "Ole!" for his efforts for a long time*

*He began to play the guitar while he was in junior high school. In Nagoya he became familiar with flamenco and studied under Kenzo Takada, a famous forerunner of this field in Japan. After he came to Tokyo, at "El Flamenco," a restaurant putting on a flamenco show, he was fascinated by the guitar playing of a young expert Pepe Habichuela. It wasn't long before he decided to go to Spain with an ardent desire. He stayed at the house of*

*Habichuela in Madrid, whose family produced outstanding guitarists besides Pepe. Though Setta didn't take any formal lessons from the Habichuela brothers, it was the best study to listen to their performances every day. After about two years and six months in Madrid, he had come back to Japan at invitation of Yoko Komatsubara and took part in the tour of her dance company. He also took the road all over Japan in a group which consisted of five members including well-known flamenco singer, Curro Lucena. The group, "Los Ases Flamencos" was dissolved by and by, but Setta has continued his activities organizing a group named "Cuadro Flamenco" for himself.*

*Setta chooses Paco de Lucía, a hero of flamenco world today, as a guitarist who has influence on him. Setta's study on Paco is no easy task. The notes of music copied from records of Paco de Lucía are piled mauntain-high in his room. Setta is also influenced not a little by another expert, Serranito, from whom Setta took lessons eagerly during his second visit in Spain.*

*Setta, however, doesn't want to be a mimic of Paco or Serranito, though he is fascinated with them. It may be necessary to be bent on copying Paco being able to move fingers rapidly, in one stage. But in Setta's opinion, real inspiration of flamenco is brought regardless of skill. A way of talking backed up with truth must move other people, though the speaker stutters sometimes. Setta believes that all of his own works are filled with his sincere emotion and will. "My works are like my children," says Setta. "They grow up little by little. A bad child may be a good one some day. I keep playing guitar with such a feeling." Setta's affection and hopes like that can be heard from his every performance. Each performance is admirable and is full of his usual sincerity, which make one feel "weight" in a good sense.*

That build-up had me ready to really like this one. "Lloro del Viento," a bulerías opens side one. Played by two guitars (a student of Minoru, Sadayuki Suzuki, plays second guitar), the piece begins with an attractive free-form section and then goes downhill from there, with a monotonously repeated theme that is, for the most part, buried under the heavy bass of the accompaniment. Perhaps it is due to poor recording, but the lead guitar appears as a lot of delicate fiddling around buried in the background.

"Pueblo de las Estrellas" is an alegrías in the minor with a major key ending. It shows a number of technical deficiencies: weak tremolo, weak picado, and left-hand sloppiness in difficult passages. On an emotional level, there is a mellow "sameness" throughout the piece that lacks intensity. When the second guitar comes in for the ending, everything becomes bright, exciting, and technically satisfactory. This section is heavily influenced by the cantinas on Paco de Lucía's "Entre dos aguas." A rumba of this type requires technical virtuosity and we don't find that here. At best, this is pleasant background music. The fandangos de Huelva is in the style of Pepe Habichuela. Played by two guitars, it is not badly done, but neither is it memorable; it rambles along without ever really developing a beautiful theme or melody. Likewise, the farruca is not bad, mellow and adequately played, with a little better tremolo, but just rambles along without ever getting to the point.

I would like to be able to support Minoru's recording effort, but cannot recommend it for commercial distribution. Minoru is probably a good accompanist and his playing is suitable for cabarets, but the technical and compositional skills required for commercial recording are just not evident in this record, where the picado and tremolo, in particular, are very weak. The first string of his guitar should also be adjusted for recording purposes; the constant buzzing of this string makes the technique sound worse than it really is.

For those who are interested in this record, it is available (no price indicated) from:

Flamenco Studio Sacromonte  
Painmansion 6F  
4-32-8 Ogikubo  
Suginami, Tokyo JAPAN







## FISL NEWSLETTER

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*[A reminder to Jaleo readers: This is a reprint of a newsletter produced twenty years ago. Although many of the people mentioned in these columns are still active in flamenco, references to people or places are not current.]*

### EDITORIAL

#### The Cante and Americans

Now that the Second Annual Festival of Cante Flamenco is approaching, we begin to hear talk about the impossibility of Americans singing flamenco. As in the toque and the baile, Americans, from their first attempts, have assumed the defensive. From their initial experience with flamenco, they are told they must have come from a certain race whose origins are actually quite vague, (the "rhythm in the blood" bit, all of which was probably manufactured to give flamenco that certain mystery which Americans fall for faster than anyone. (1))

The volumes of books flamencologists have written on who's who in flamenco and where this and that came from, number in the hundreds. They have never said Americans can't sing flamenco; the question never even occurred to them; they are too involved in judging who in Andalucian sing flamenco, since anyone born outside of that blessed region couldn't even begin to attempt it. This "impossibility" attitude has greatly stunted the growth of the art both in this country and in Spain.

The first real breakthrough for Americans in the cante came in 1959 at the Cordoba Concurso de Cante Jondo. German-American Elaine Dames, (Elena Marbella), entered the competition with artists of such stature as Juan Talegas, Fernanda de Utrera, and Fosforito. She didn't win any prizes but was given honorable mention by the judges. (2)

Rumor has it that American-born Maureen Carnes entered this year's Cordoba Concurso where she went as far as the semi-finals. Maureen has spent a number of years on the other side working and studying. It has been said that she is one of the most knowledgeable people in Spain with regards to the cante.

Elaine Dames' students, David Moreno, Luisa Verette, Anita Volland, Antonio de Jesus, Estela Zatania, and Maureen Carnes, together with their respective students, can be considered to represent an American school of cante flamenco. Although other teachers and singers have certainly made contributions and are part of the school, Elaine must be given the initial credit for her inspiration, methods of teaching, and, most important, her belief in the cante for Americans.

(1) With very few exceptions, is there any American artist who dares to present himself without a Spanish stage name.

(2) For detailed description, see "Oído al Cante" by Anselmo Gonzalez Climent, (Madrid, 1960), pp. 77-85.

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### RHYTHM OF THE MONTH

#### MALAGUEÑA

E. Zatania

Before we delve into the complexities of the malagueña, it is necessary to define certain terms with the assistance of the knowledgeable Hipolito Rosy (see Teoría del Cante Jondo, p. 240). According to him there are three different and well-defined manifestations of malagueña:

1. "Malagueña corrida" - an old folk dance much like the verdiales, also called "bandola" and "zangano". It was this cante that was taken by Juan Brea, refined and remade, and became the present version of malagueña cante that we know today. He was, in a sense, the missing link between the folksy "malagueña corrida" and "malagueña de cante" (see below: #2). Today the dance still exists, mostly as a very balletic concert number done in ballet slippers and with castanets.

2. "Malagueña de cante" - the only malagueña which belongs under the heading of flamenco (and therefore the actual subject of this essay). A free compás, never danced.

3. "Malagueña instrumental" - a malagueña for guitar only, based directly or indirectly on the semi-classical composition (which in turn contains melodies from the malagueña corrida), by Lecuona. A solo piece known to all guitarists, flamenco or otherwise.

Written references to the cante of malagueña date back as far as 1863. During the last 30 years of the 19th century (the so-called cafe cantante period), this cante was popularized and developed until it had over 25 different styles. (1) Many singers became famous out of all proportion to their singing ability merely because they could sing well the malagueña and other related cantes. Most of them sang the cantes de Málaga and cantes de levante exclusively (these being the principal components of "cante andaluz"), and the "cante gitano" was ignored by the general public and artists alike as it was too coarse and un-pretty for them. This period in the history of malagueñas is referred to by many flamencologists as the "period of aggrandizement" during which the cante was embellished and transformed from cante chico to cante intermedio, (some even call it cante jondo).

As was mentioned above, this evolutionary process was virtually initiated by Juan Brea. His contemporary, Enrique el Mellizo from Cádiz, made the next significant move with his unique stylizations of the malagueña which proved to be more intrinsically flamenco than any previous style. It is said that El Mellizo was greatly inspired by the Gregorian chant, and traces of it can be seen in his malagueña which is characterized by its rich melody line. The following is one of his verses:

Donde va a llegar  
este querer tuyo y mio?  
Tu tratas de aborrecerme  
yo ca' vez te quiero mas  
Que Dios me mande la muerte.

The next figure of importance in the history of malagueña, was the great don Antonio Chacon who continued to develop this cante along sophisticated lives still preserving its basic flamenco nature. Chacon played the greatest role in the popularization of malagueñas, mainly due to the fact that he had a fantastic facility for interpreting cante andaluz (although he always preferred the cante gitano). Chacon developed his own version of the malagueña; very dramatic and profoundly sentimental as can be seen from the following verse he made famous:

En la tumba de mi madre  
a dar voces me ponía

y escuche un eco del viento  
'no la llames' me decia  
'que no responden los muertos'

If we consider malagueña to have had three major phases in its life they might be called 1) the folklore phase during which malagueña was, strictly speaking, nothing but a fandango de Málaga, similar to verdiales; 2) the period of aggrandizement beginning with Juan Brea and spoken of in detail above; and 3) the hitherto unmentioned, period of degeneration. This latest unfortunate development was one of the by-products of the café cantante movement, all that was to be heard of "flamenco" was milonga, guajira, taguillo and the like; but most often, fandanga and its family, including the malagueña. During this time the 'malagueña lily' was gilded beyond the limits of good taste. In modern times, with the present trend toward traditionalism in flamenco, malagueña has been restored to its original purity, although some singers still caught up in the dying opera flamenca have failed to renovate their interpretations.

The malagueña is directly descended from the fandango, which in the opinion of many, can be traced to the jota of northern Spain. It has, therefore, the same physical structure as these cantes. That is, a poetic verse of four or five octosyllabic lines which, when sung, totals six lines due to the repetition of the first or second lines. Although roughly in 3/4 time due to its parentage with the fandango, it is basically a free cante without a determined compás and therefore can not be danced. Like fandangos, its melody line is in the major mode except for the last line which returns to the Doric mode of the 'paseo' (that part of the entirety which is not 'eopla').

The following are some of the most famous interpreters of the malagueña who have left behind styles which bear their names: Juan Brea (1835-1915), Enrique el Mellizo (1835-1903), La Trini (1850-1920), El Perote (1865-1910), Chacon (1865-1929), El Canario (1870-1900), Fosforito (1870-1940). Among the contemporaries, Aurelio Selles is famous for his interpretations of the malagueña del Mellizo, as is Pericon de Cádiz. El Niña de Almaden who died early this year sang excellent malagueñas.

By far, the best record for studying malagueñas is "Café de Chinitas - Selección de los Cantes de Málaga" on Hispavox HH 10-259. The record contains many different styles of malagueña (and other cantes de Málaga), which are among the best interpretations available.

(1) Donn Pohren, "Lives and Legends of Flamenco" (Sevilla, 1964), p. 80.

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## LA GUITARRA FLAMENCA

B. Zern

To date, we've considered the earlier guitar constructors observing how the important advances of Antonio Torres of Almeria a century ago came to dominate the entire Madrid school of construction in the early 1900's after they were adopted by Manuel Ramirez.

Now is a good time to give a brief survey of the contemporary state of the school of Madrid. In center stage there remains the house of Ramirez, which since the death of José II has been under the direction of (who else?) José III. The present José does not appear active in actual construction. Rather, he oversees the production of various craftsmen (individually identifiable by their initials within the guitar) and he is in charge of the business end of the enterprise. The individual guitars themselves conform very closely to a standardized design. Some purists disapprove on principle of attempts to standardize the production of such an individualistic instrument. But the Ramirez remains a quality guitar, and the flamencos generally produce good sound even though the new finish (described as a sprayed-on acrylic mixture, and considered an affront to decency by traditionalists.)

Some advanced flamencos have told me that they consider the normal Ramirez sound a little too formal or even classical for flamenco. It is true that the Ramirez is rarely a sharp "juerga" guitar, and is more suitable for solo playing. Since the Ramirez is much in demand, it should be noted that the guitar presently is not available by mail from Spain, due to an exclusive importing arrangement between Ramirez and a Chicago firm.

To date the only independent constructor to emerge from the shop of José Ramirez III is Manuel G. Contreras, who started his own shop in 1963. The Contreras guitar appears very reminiscent of the Ramirez (though Contreras does try many experimental pauerns at times.) Manuel's flamencos have found wide acceptance among American and Spanish flamencos abroad. They are built by him personally (working with one apprentice) and his talent is often immediately evident in the guitar which can be both rich and flamenca.

Another of today's noted builders in the Madrid tradition is Arcangel Fernandez. After apprenticing to the great Marcelo Barbero (who apprenticed to José Ramirez II) Fernandez founded his own workshop in 1956 when Marcelo died. Since that time, he has steadily been gaining the respect of the most discerning guitarists. His flamencos are even more highly prized than his classicals, to the extent that he may already be the most highly regarded constructor within Spanish flamenco circles. The reputation is even spreading to America, and it is possible that Fernandez may be appreciated during his own lifetime - quite a rarity for a fine guitarrero. The Fernandez produces high-quality flamenco sound, the character of which is defined by the traditionally narrower body depth (3 1/2" depth at neck join, about 3 3/4" at the tail: almost 1/4" shallower than the common Ramirez design.)

NEXT MONTH: The Madrid School, Continued.

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## BIOGRAPHY OF THE MONTH LA MALENA (1870-1953)

by F. de Tal

Malena Seda Loreto was born of gypsy parents in Jerez in 1870. After learning to dance at an early age under the instruction of her aunt María la Chorrúa, she went to dance in the cafes cantantes of Sevilla where she spent nearly her whole life.

La Malena was one of the three big "M's" of her time; besides herself there were her famous contemporaries La Mejorana (1860-1925), and La Macarrona (1860-1947). It must also be mentioned that a dancer named La Sordita (1870-1945) was highly regarded at that time even though her name didn't begin with "M".

La Malena's biographers unanimously agree that her style of dance was particularly arrogant and majestic as opposed to fiery or turbulent and that she excelled in the movement of arms and hands.

In 1933 at the age of 63 La Malena toured with La Argentinita's "Las Calles de Cádiz". In typical flamenco fashion she continued to dance right up until her death; (La Malena had a professional career of over 70 years). Her last public performance at the age of 82 was at a summer festival in Sevilla, "Cantes y Bailes Populares de Andalucía". Her dance por mirabra at the festival is described by Juan de la Plata, ("Flamencos de Jerez" p. 97): "The stage was enormous but Malena, as in the good old days, required only a small area to electrify the public with her jondo emotion and draw a clamorous ovation."

La Malena is survived by two talented relatives; her niece, Maleni Loreto a dancer and teacher in Madrid, and nephew, Eduardo de la Malena, a fine professional guitarist presently residing in Sevilla.

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(Continued on page 50.)



Artists from Los Bacantes, New York, summer 1987  
Guitarist Diego Amador, dancer La Tata, guitarist Amaya

## "FLAMENCO AROUND THE USA"

### RYSS REPORT

NOVEMBER '87

#### María Benítez In New York

After a considerable absence from the New York scene and a seven months tour of the USA María Benítez, probably the best and the most exciting of the bailarinas is back here. Her company was presented by Friends of the Arts (of Long Island) in their "Dazzling Dance" series at Hofstra University (Long Island) on November 14, 1987.

The present Benítez company includes three Spaniards, her guest artist Eduardo Montero from Sevilla, who might well be classed as doing the baile antigua with tremendous stage experience and presence. Cuquito de Barbate, María's cantaor is already known to the local public and is a well supporting member of the cast; Cuquito is a nephew of the legendary cantaor Niño de Barbate. Paco Izquierdo is also known to the local public as a superb and highly experienced guitar player. The other guitarist is Guillermo Rios, ever so popular as a concert and recording artist on the local scene and has combined the greatness of his original gypsy teachers, Marote and Pepe Habichuela.

María Benítez bailarinas Rosa Mercedes and Monica Flores, I believe, have been with her for some time. These two ladies with Miguel Angel Díaz presented the classical works, including Concierto Andaluz, Pedro Azorin's Jota. María Benítez' classical work was Reflexiones, which she had danced previously in New York. For the traditional showpieces we must single out the taranto, so seldomly performed on stage and then only by the very best; indeed a difficult dance by Benítez and Montero. The full company rendered the all exciting "Jaleo" performance. Eduardo Montero danced his farruca

"clasica" (antigua) with the two guitars. Exemplary performances were rendered by María in Soleá and as finale her Alegrías (with the guitar of Rios); absolutely superb and not equalled by any other performer.

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DECEMBER '87

#### Benítez Returns With Rosita Segovia

She is still by all counts the greatest of our bailaoras. Her performance is exquisite, natural...her troupe always superb; dynamic, the very best in flamenco.

María Benítez has, as always, a surprise for the New York City audiences. The surprise was the choreographer Rosita Segovia, partner of the great Antonio for eighteen years (after the separation of Rosario and Antonio in the 1950's). Rosita works both in Miami and Barcelona and strengthened this Benítez ballet with five more dancers, as compared to the Long Island show of November 14.

Back to the surprise: The world premiere of Andaluz to the music of Falla and superbly performed by María herself; I say this without hesitation nobody could have danced and interpreted this dance-gem as La Benítez.

The concierto Andaluz (music by Rodrigo) and Sonata (Scarlatti) — both dances have been performed here previously — had the added Rosita Segovia touch.

Guest artist Eduardo Montero originally from Sevilla, now living and teaching in Madrid showed "el arte clasico" in his farruca interpretation. He has such a tremendous stage presence and body movements calculated in every misanscène; there is art in every foot step. Montero did the choreography of the taranto and zapateado.

The María Benítez Spanish Dance Company is unique. We only wish that we could see them more often here in New York; every six months for example.

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#### Sabicas in a New Role

December 27, 1987 at 1:30pm at Weill Hall (Carnegie Recital Hall) young Virginia Luque a 23 year old classical guitarist from Algeciras (province of Cádiz) will be presenting a guitar recital. Remarkably she studied with Andrés Segovia and has been highly recommended by him. There are other firsts: Sabicas "el fenomino" will be in the introductory role of presenting Virginia Luque to the public and audience at Weill Hall, 57<sup>th</sup> Street, New York City.

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JANUARY '88

Casa de España to show some of Carlos Saura's great movies - Bodas de Sangre, Carmen and El Amor Brujo...Also to present Carmen Rubio (who is from Spain) and her Dance Company in.

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FEBRUARY 88

Mario Escudero's recital at the 92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y. First half - guitar solos - the second half will be a tablao presentation by "Al Andaluz" under the direction of Manolo de Cordoba (bailaor), La Conja (bailaora and cantaora), Luis Vargas (cantaor) and the guitar of Rafael Cañizares.

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APRIL '88

Vicente Granados, M.C. in all the homenajes de Casa de España - conferenciante, maestro de ceremonias in all that is flamenco (the picture is twenty-four years old, taken in one of his many conferencias with the other



two greats cantaoor Domingo Alvarado and guitarist Diego Castellón, Sabicas' brother active at all the Homenajes and beloved by the aficionados).

Such a homenaje was held for Alicia Montes, bailaora, who danced at the Chateau Madrid years ago with some of the greats like Maruja Herédia, Ramón de Cádiz, Esperanza Galán here and in San Juan. She unfortunately had a stroke, recovered but never danced again until tonight - her night of the homenaje. I sat next to her and felt the emotions as the night progressed. Master of ceremonies was the ever popular cantante/cantaoor Paco Montes.

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**AMERICAN SPANISH DANCE THEATRE**

Of course there was other news: A company you might not have heard of before, but as great as many of the others: The American Spanish Dance Theatre at the Manhattan Community College in March 24 through 28. Andrea del Conte, a beautiful program: La Vida Breve, Enamore and Luis Montero's Amor Brujo. Montero (who had been fully covered in the last issue of *Jaleo*) left for good for Spain...or so he thought he did; the master choreographer cannot leave that easy...caught by Andrea he will be back in Chicago (For Libby Fleming's Festival in June and in September/October for Carlota's Festival)

Andrea's Festival was a dance show...but the selection of music was singularly exceptional—background music for El Amor Brujo was exceptional, as the staging was and the presentation of this number, Dominico Caro, cantaoor for most of our best dancers was in exceptional form and led the flamenco show to its maximum luster...The amazing Cañizares on guitar and backed by Basilio...yes what a team of guitarists; unequalled probably in the States. Where Cañizares played he made the dancers shine; he had the inventive toque for both dancer and singer, at the right moment, at the right time; Rafael was recently recalled to Andalucía for three months, where he and his famous brother Juan Antonio play for Manuel Gerena.



Andrea Del Conte of the American Dance Theatre

Andrea del Conte gave a great rendering of Candela in Amor Brujo, with Clara Mora as Lucía—she is better known on the local scene, whilst the gypsy fortune teller, the lesser known Jackie Kalata has exceptional talent...Manolo Rivera was his usual self in the role of Carmelo and danced his solo "por soleares"—Montero danced and mainly was the master choreographer...he could never permanently leave the USA.

The other great Company Spanish Dance Theatre is having their own presentation: I believe her cantaoora is La Conja and the Miami Guitarist Pedrito Cortes and Basilio.

René Heredia was in New York in concert, a very good tocaoor...plays original music, his arrangements of



Promoting flamenco in New York City 1964 - "Mr. Flamenco" Vicente Granados, Promotor, chief spokesman-lecturer on cante flamenco. With him are two other flamenco noblemen - singer Domingo Alvarado and guitarist Diego Castellón.

Rondeña that sounded very beautiful...with the rare appearances of the old gitanos: Sabicas, Mario Escudero, Montoya...he is the natural to fill their place...all he needs is a good concert manager, he has a clean cut presentation—announces all his numbers prior to playing them, a very presentable performer.

Finally last, but not least, yes The Royal Spanish National Ballet is due in New York (I believe they were in Miami earlier)...yes Medea, not Spanish but considered the greatest flamenco work...yes come to New York early and mid July—Jose Antonio is the artistic Director.

Another big credit and achievement—the *Jaleo* Vol X No. 2,—covers us in New York, tells the story of the family Amador (or part of it)—and the rising star René Heredia and tells the life and the tragedies of the Dancers. FISL Newsletter, page 38...list of Nightclubs in New York City some 20 years ago...Nostalgia grips the air where are those clubs now? The nostalgia of the gypsy cantaoor or the nostalgia of fados de Lisboa—we do not know, the Latin population, probably double, but the flamenco entertainment seems to have faded.

The big hope for the aficionado now is Casa de España; where previously they presented a Colombian writer...drama from Paraguay...or a singer for Honduras, La Casa is this month doing two productions of the Picasso work "El Deseo Cogido Por El Rabo" once in English and once in Spanish after two weeks of presentation at a small Theatre on 22<sup>nd</sup> Street in Manhattan...this show, bathed in Picasso's eccentric fantasy throughout is a ready vehicle for our flamenco artists; our dancers Liliana Morales (Skinny Anguish) and Aurora Reyes (Fat Anguish) play the leading roles—Gil de Lamadrid has worked both as actor and dancer...the main credit undoubtedly must go to the Spanish director Angel Gil Orrios for these presentations.

Mr Gil did eight years of research into the realms of Picasso's plays and then translated "El Deseo Cogido".....from the French (originally written by Picasso) into Spanish...the play was written in Paris in 1941 during the Nazi occupation and the fictitious names applied to the hunger and starvation of these years...I preferred Mr. Gil's Spanish presentation at the Pearl Theatre to the English translation (given at Casa de España during their Festival week...it is easy to downgrade this work, if the critique so desires...for Liliana Morales, who did the full choreography this was a tremendous uplift.

As you see the Casa de España of New York had added two nights of showing of "El Deseo Cogido"...ahead of their Segundo Festival de Jazz Español.

Leaving flamenco for a short moment; May 15 was San Isidro with an open invitation by the Gatos residing in New York...Jesús Ramos owner of Villa del Parral, wife Lydia and Vicente Granados who acted as M.C. and was as knowledgeable about El Arte Taurino as el arte flamenco. The general public was honored by the presence of Sabicas and brother Diego who watched the hours of Video Taurino. The flamenco artists were headed by The Shah of Iran, Paco Ortiz, Carmen Rubio, Jerane Michel, Mariana Parra, Liliana Lomas who is shortly leaving for Málaga (three months work with a tablao gitano outside Málaga)...we should have a story and hopefully pictures when she returns.

### JUNE-JULY

Ballet Nacional de España to Tour the USA. Since Maria de Avila has been retired as director it will be interesting to see how their new director Maya Plisetskaya will have aided the progress of the Company. Many of the aficionados will only want to see the major work of the flamenco realm "La Medea".

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### Festival of Jazz from Spain

It was indeed a surprise to see the names of Pata Negra (see page 3 this issue) and Gerardo Nuñez as guests for the jazz week here in New York. During the recent San Isidro Cocido at Villa del Parral I had mentioned to Sabicas the coming attraction at Casa de España, namely Pata Negra (maybe not the right thing to tell the great Sabicas about Pata Negra). Whether he heeded my words or not Sabicas sat in the front row during the concert. The brothers Amador dedicated their bulerías encore to Sabicas.

Raimundo Amador is considered as, maybe the greatest juerga tocaor gitano...specifically "por baile gitano", he told me however, that he was doing more Pata Negra performances recently with his brother Rafael. Their combined guitar work is magic, modern innovations without an end, fifty-mile-an-hour rasgueos and a remarkable projection of the guitar. No, he is not an orthodox player, but he has...arte...the Django Reinhart of the flamencos.

Antonio Carmona (the 7<sup>th</sup> Habichuela I met) played the drums for Rafael Amador. Antonio probably the weakest of the Habichuelas tells me that he plays the guitar "a little in order not to be abandoned by the other six guitar Habichuelas".

Pata Negra opened the show, to a crowd of standing room only public. The two brothers Amador — Raimundo and Rafael — have achieved fame in Spain and now in France. They play the flamenco guitar most of the time with a pick, alas Raimundo, a super star in the gypsy accompaniment por juerga has an unbelievable powerful rasgueo with lightning speed—the toques were mainly in the bulerías, tango and rumba category, at times the tientos could be heard...Rafael in his own right is a very good guitarist and the super cantaor of the group...there was nothing orthodox about their craft; but the mere presence of Sabicas in the front row subdued some of these qualms (I never got to hear the maestro's criticism)—there was plenty of critique by others. The general public enjoyed their presence and played palmas continuously...I found their appearance phenomenal. For their last numbers they were joined on stage by La Conja and Aurora Reyes, who played palmas and danced.

As unaware as I was of the techniques of Raimundo, I had heard Gerardo Nuñez playing lead guitar with the Cumbre Flamenca (the second Cumbre of La Tati that had such a success in Central Park, New York). Gerardo plays a beautiful Negra guitar (by Faustino Conde). His toque is elegant and well executed. He was introduced as the guitarist for Terremoto, Mario Maya and of the second Cumbre (it could be the third in Spain). The show was, of course all Nuñez, with less of that heavy jazz. He started a solo rendering of soleares followed by bulerías and rondeña - this last item the rondeña is Nuñez and Carmen Cortés (his wife). On stage he was joined by Mario

Cortés (brother-in-law) on flamenco guitar and Antonio Carmona (Juan Habichuela's son) on drums.

Special mention should be made of the "cantaor"—the soprano saxophonist Antonio Moltó — who made some beautiful imitations of a flamenco cantaor on that instrument. Highlight of the evening was undoubtedly the appearance of dancer Carmen Cortés with a tremendous rendering of rondeña; as far as I know nobody else has ever danced this rondeña gitana as she can — the program ended with a tanguillo and two rumbas with the everlasting presence of that Spanish soprano saxophone.

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On the local scene Arturo Martínez returned after three months in Spain. He played recently in New York for Pilar Rioja—José Luís Negrete was her other guitarist and Enrique Iglesias her cantaor. Martínez is now slated to appear during the week ends with Carmen Rubio and Paco Oritz at "Curtains Up" in New York City for a months duration.

I have added the write-up of the artist of the month, Pollito, Juan Callejuela, ex-California ex-Granada. [See American in Madrid.] He has talent as cantaor/guitarist, has worked at don Alberto's in Brooklyn and was in the recent Picasso show.

Another news is that Marina Keet is bringing her Spanish Dance Society of Washington for a special appearance at the American Museum of Natural History, New York on Thursday, June 16, 1988 at 7:30 pm. Marina is dedicating her program to Carola Goya and Matteo.

In passing, it might be told that a Peña Flamenca is in the making, possibly here at Parral and Lydia is the spearhead behind it.

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### Cristobal Reyes

Some two years ago Cumbre Flamenca (our second) performed in Central Park; some dancers have billed this as the greatest flamenco show ever to be presented here. Cristóbal and La Tati were the top dancers, the venture of Casa De España this month featured four of the Cumbre



Cristóbal Reyes in "Espectáculo Flamenco Tap-Dance."  
(photo by Andres Palomino)

participants: Cristóbal, Carmén Cortes, the guitar-ists Gerardo Núñez and Diego Losada.

Cristóbal and Harold Nicholas (tap dancer, of the Nicholas brothers were featured as a mano-a-mano (could we say pie-a-pie) in the largest Cathedral here (maybe in US) St. John the Divine...Mr. Reyes is, no doubt, world class; probably the best of all the bailaores, including the guys out of the prestigious Pilar Lopez school...his foot work is unequalled, as antithesis to Mario Maya, who continually dances with a partner, he requires no support bailaores. Reyes is a solo performer, he has nuances, movements, elegance unequalled in the business. He satisfies the audiences with endless encores; backstage, unlike other artists, Reyes has and makes time for the public. He told me that he might be returning to Carnegie Hall this year.

It was then, in this Cathedral setting, that Harold Nicholas a superb tap dancer, but also as a singer, set foot dancing to the piano and drums. Sympathetic Harold showed his arte and in the end joined Reyes doing tap dancing to the rhythms of the flamenco guitar.

Mr. Reyes' support cuadro consisted of La Tobala of Sevilla as cantaora, loud and wild who at the end danced a baile gitano. The cantaor was Yeye de Cádiz with Diego Losada (lead guitar), Chiqui and Tito Losada as the three guitarists. The flamenco program was lengthy: a farruca for three guitars playing for Cristóbal, a fabulous alegrías; La Tobala sang a solo with guitars, the musicians played solos and the usual bulerías and por fiesta was danced by Cristóbal.

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**FOURTH REUNION OF COCIDO FLAMENCO**

The previous Reunion of Cocido Flamenco took place last March 29. Our intent is to have at least one annual reunion for the purpose of making our contribution toward maintaining and disseminating the afición for



Los Bacantes, Summer, New York '87 L to R: Eva Lange, Manuela Vargas, La Tata, Gabriella

flamenco, gathering aficionados and others who are interested.

Previous reunions' motive was to honor flamenco artists who have departed, as well as those present, all of extraordinary merit as dancers or guitarists. This Fourth Reunion we wish to dedicate to the Cante and its masters, some of them not professional, for this is the least known and accessible facet of the flamenco expression. We will also offer a brief perspective on the Guitar and the Dance. There will be a projection of a Spain's National T.V. Network video showing the songs of Antonio Mairena, Camarón, the Pinini Family, and others. Also, the guitars of Melchor de Marchena, Paco de Lucía, Diego del Gastor, and others. And dances of Carmen Amaya, Mario Maya, Parrilla de Jerez and Farruco.

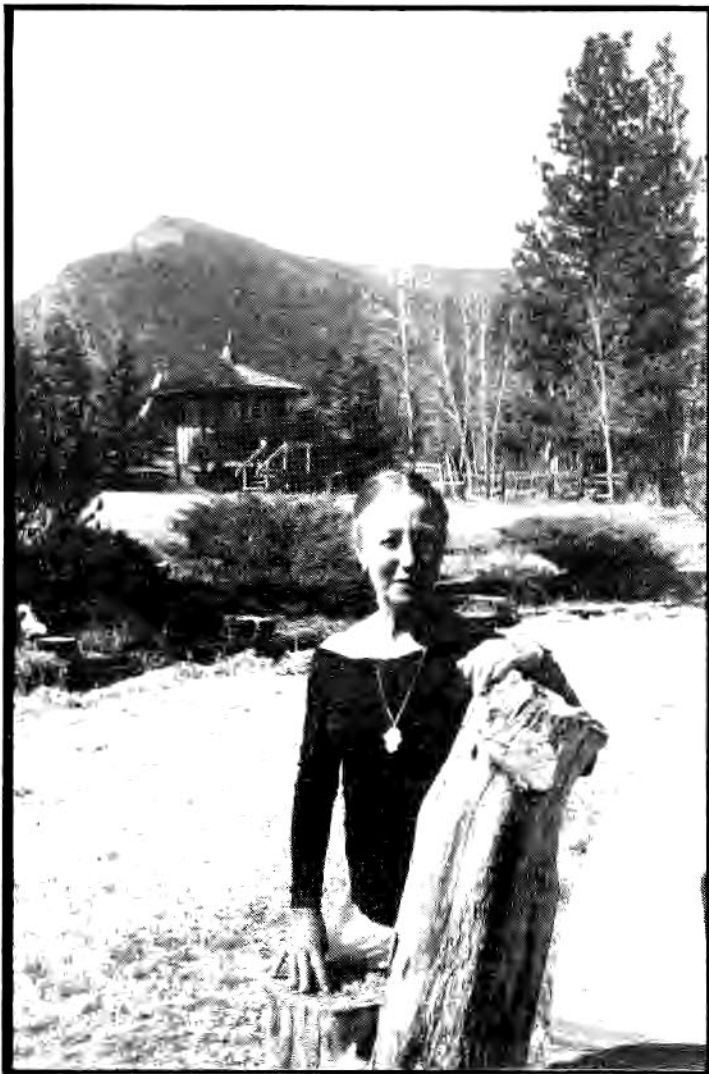


Left to Right: cantaor Luis Vargas, La Conja & Rafael Cañizares at Don Alberto's in Brooklyn, Autumn '87.



Victorio & Rafael Cañizares at Don Alberto's.





## FLAMENCO IN MONTANA

### An Interview with Elenita Brown

by Jacqueline Hegedus

The home of Joseph and Elenita Brown is located near Stevensville on the West side of the Bitterroot Valley at the base of the mountains. On entering the Kootenai Creek Ranch, a road follows the creek up to the main house. A magnificent panoramic view of snow-capped mountains, pines and pastures are viewed on all sides. The house, designed by Joseph and Elenita, has clearstory windows reaching to the top of the second floor and opening onto the view of the mountains. Also from this vantage point may be seen a large log barn complete with dance studio upstairs. A horse arena and viewing stand is across from there and some 24 champion bloodline Arabian horses can be seen grazing about in the pastures. The horses are the business and financial mainstay of the ranch.

*When did you and Joseph settle in the Bitterroot Valley, Elenita?*

In 1971 when Joseph took a teaching position at the University of Montana in the Department of Religious Studies. At that time we had just some of the land we have now. We camped out on the place while we built the barn and house. We lived in teepees and tents. It took a year and a half to build the house, but I started teaching dance in Hamilton and Missoula six months after our arrival.

*I understand the studio was given priority over the house.*

Yes, the studio was built in the barn long before we moved into the house so that I would have a place to practice and teach. Our four children, plus

six students that came with us from Indiana, helped us build the barn. In the evenings, I would give the students a dancing class. Sometimes the temperature would drop below zero and we would dance wearing ski clothing.

*It must have been an exciting time. Let's go back though to when you were a child. At what point in time did your interest in dancing materialize?*

I was born in Buenos Aires of Swiss parents. My mother said I could dance and sing before I could speak well, and I could sing in French, German and Spanish. Those were the languages I was brought up with. I can remember myself loving to sing and move. It did not matter not understanding the words. I was too young. Life was very stimulating...I was surrounded by Spaniards in Argentina, and international people from everywhere came to our house to visit. We traveled back and forth to Switzerland and, on one of those visits, when I was four years old, I was put in a school of rhythmic dance for children. On our return to Buenos Aires the following year, I attended the British Royal Academy of Dance.

*Was ballet your start in formal dance education?*

Yes, ballet and character. I was also exposed to all the Latin rhythms, the popular things. My interest in Spanish dancing came later. I had Spanish dancing as character dance, but not "Spanish" Spanish dance.

*When did your first encounter with Spanish dancing occur?*

On one of our trips, when I was twelve years old, we stopped in Barcelona. We were there two months and I started taking private lessons. A lady would come to our hotel room. We would move the bed out of the way and she would teach me jotas, sevillanas and the basics of Spanish dancing. Her name was Conchita Piquer. She was very famous. Of course at that time I had no idea who she was. She was very strict but very kind. Not at all "star" looking. She was small and very gracious and always insistent on style and do the Spanish correctly...So it was she who made me fall in love with Spanish dancing (classical and flamenco), Spanish people and their culture in general. From ballet to classical is not such a big leap as from ballet to flamenco. I loved it.

*Where did you go from there?*

I continued my studies. In Switzerland I attended the Ecole de Ballet du Theatre de Lausanne de Mara Dousse, a Russian school of dancing. Lausanne has always been a great city for the arts. I saw Carmen Amaya there, Teresa y Luisillo, Escudero and Pilar López. All the greats from the golden period.

*Just watching the great performers is an education in itself.*

I would go backstage after performances and talk to them, hoping I might be able to take lessons from them, but of course they were always on the move. I collected a lot of Spanish records and danced on my own.

*The drive was always there.*

Yes. For the next eight years I continued my academic studies and dance, music, languages and art in England, France, Italy, Germany, Austria, and Spain. I would also dance in operas during the opera season. Then, in 1952 Joseph and I were married in Neuchatel Switzerland.

*How did you meet Joseph Epes Brown?*

Joseph was finishing his book on Black Elk entitled The Sacred Pipe, which has since been published in eight languages. At that time he was working on finishing the book and arranging for the translations. He was a friend of my parents. My mother especially through correspondence and common interests Joseph had been very interested in dance and had the opportunity at one time of attending as an observer the classes of La Meri in New York City. We had a lot in common. We married and I returned to the United States with him.

*And you took your first teaching position.*

Yes, at Verde Valley School in Sedona, Arizona. I taught classical ballet, character, ethnic, Spanish and modern dance. We were in and out of Sedona for 14 years. We spent two years in Albuquerque, New Mexico where I studied Fine Arts at the University. While there we rented two rooms from Clarita Garcia Alison. I discovered Clarita was a Spanish dancer. I was "tickled" to find myself living in the same adobe with her. We became good

friends and every night we would start by warming up and then choreograph and teach each other whatever flamenco we knew. What a ball! Clarita is the mother of Eva Encenias. At that time Eva was only one year old. Eva, now has summer workshops. Clarita is the cantaora. Eva also has her own company, "Ritmo Flamenco". They recently performed in New York city. I hear they were very successful.

*Was it Joseph's work at the universities that prompted your frequent moves?*

Yes. He was working on his masters in anthropology at that time. He later completed it at Stanford University in the San Francisco Bay area. While there I found a lot of enthusiasm for flamenco and attended a lot juergas. I took lessons where ever we went. You can not learn dancing from a book. Dancing is handed down. It's our legacy. You can not go to the library and read dancing, you have to experience it. That is what I tell my students. If you miss a class it is gone and you can not make it up at the library. In 1966 we moved to Prescott, Arizona. Joseph and I were both charter members of the faculty at Prescott College. I was an associate in dance and Joseph taught humanities.

*What was the dance program like at the college?*

We put on interdisciplinary performances the same as we did at the Verde Valley School in Sedona.

*You are very strong on bringing all facets of a subject into play.*

I think in wide ways in my teaching. Ways that are not too narrow. I can understand what the purists mean when they insist on flamenco puro and will not introduce influences of jazz and other styles, but I think it is also good to expand as well as to dig deep into the roots.

*Dance is not static but grows with changes just as languages do.*

Yes. You learn from what it was before and you build on that. You respect ideas from the past but at the same time are inspired to build on those ideas for the future. This is where I digress from the purists.

*How long were you in Prescott?*

We were there two years and then we went to Stockholm where Joseph studied and received his Phd. in Anthropology and religious studies. I then proceeded to "stick myself" and children into the curriculum of the dance academy at the University. I took everything they offered in dance and worked solid every day, 9am to 5pm. It was a big renewal.

*This was your continuing education.*

Right. Lots of primitive jazz with drummers from Ghana, classical ballet, modern dance, American styles, classical jazz, mime, and Spanish with a teacher from Barcelona, Jose de Udaeta. One year later we returned to the States. This was 1970 and Joseph was asked to join the faculty at the University in Bloomington, Indiana. I opened my own studio in Bloomington.

*You certainly have a strong background and varied experience in dance.*

It has all contributed to my choreography. For instance if I choreograph for an opera with Spanish dance, it comes in handy to have a ballet background. Or, if I choreograph a rumba it is certainly good to have a latin American dance background. The diversity in background all fits together.

*Dance is a more subtle and intricate disciplinary art than most people realize.*

It is important to have a good background, especially if you do your own composing. You must have a source to draw from. If you only use other people's compositions, then of course it does not matter. A tailor may create his own pattern for an article of clothing or he may use someone else's pattern. If he creates his own pattern he must be more knowledgeable besides just having talent.

*And how was your teaching experience in Bloomington?*

Very good. I taught a lot of Spanish dance there. Because it was the mid-west you would not think that many students would fall for that style of dancing. But they did, and they were very dedicated. One of my students, one of the six who came to Montana with us and helped us build on our land, was Sandre (Kitts) Jimenez. Sandre is a professional dancer and married to dancer, Rafael Torres. She has toured with some of Spain's major compa-

nies. Right now she is doing tablaos in Madrid Mallorca.

*Aside from studying and teaching so intensely, what have been some of your other activities in relationship to dance?*

I have performed solo or with my students for different audiences. For many years I had an on-going program for the public schools as solo performer for Young Audiences of Western Montana. The program was on hispanic culture. I presented the culture of Spain through language, anecdote, actions and ways of thinking, costumes, pageantry, geography, history, crafts and art forms. Of course I incorporated a lot of dancing and participation by the students. I have given lectures and demonstrations at the University of Montana, schools, clubs, associations and institutions throughout the Bitterroot and Missoula valleys. I have also served on many committees and projects: Chairperson for dance programs of the Missoula Festival of the Arts, Board of advisors for the Montana Dance Co., Missoula city chairperson as well as teacher for the Montana Dance Arts association (MDAA) teachers Association, Advisor for the Dance/Drama panel for the Montana's Arts Council, Co-teacher at the University of Montana's concentrated summer session...The Language of Religious Art: Dance and Religion, and many others. It is funny because I am not a "chair" person at all. I have to force myself to accept such positions, but it gets me out of isolation and in contact with new people and situations.

*You have certainly had a full and extensive career in teaching. Apparently the people of Western Montana have responded favorably to the introduction of Spanish dance and culture.*

People love to see dance performances of flamenco and classical Spanish. But they seem fearful about trying to learn to do it. They think it is too difficult, there fore they do not try it. They would see they could do it is they would try it, just as the children do when they try it.

Yes, but children are more open. They are not inhibited like adults.

That's right...children's minds are not shut. Part of my message to young audiences is "Do not be set in your mind on any way of thinking, otherwise you mind sill only go as far as your eye can see." There is an Arab saying "Children are the flowers of the household." I add to that..."and my students are my garden." I teach them to go beyond.

*How do you keep abreast with the dance world?*

I enjoy traveling and getting out of the isolation of this valley. Although, it is a wonderful place to be peaceful and creative for both of us. I keep active with my interests in dance. I read dance publications, listen to music all the time, and attend workshops. I enjoy being with other dancers. I used to go to Teresa's at Jacob's Pillow and Jose Greco's and Nana Lorca's in Dallas, Texas and Teo Morea's workshop in Bellingham, Washington as well as other workshops throughout the USA...flamenco pleases me just because it does, "porque si". I like the temperament, the pride and all the things that are obvious about it. I like it in the sense that it is similar to my own life style. Dance is not something you do just during your working hours or for other people during their play time and then forget about it. The rhythm continues in your life. It just never stops. You do not retire from it. It is there as long as you breathe. Even when I am sick, I incorporate it inside, I visualize myself dancing. There just is no other way of seeing it. I know it's very much the way flamencos think. It is my way too, and I feel very close to it.

Elenita Brown has also been a coach in drama, a ceramics and art instructor, language tutor, and has designed and produced silk batiks for commercial outlets for over twelve years. Elenita Brown believes: that all art forms have a relationship and are part of whole, that creativity may be transferred from one art form to an other without losing continuity.

The Elenita Brown Dance Studios now include one in Darby and one at the ranch as well as the on-going ones in Stevensville, Missoula and Hamilton. All within a seventy mile radius. there are also summer workshops.



## FLAMENCO IN SAN FRANCISCO

### FESTIVAL GITANA

Rosa Montoya and Company presented .....  
 guest artists dancer Roberto Amaral, flamenco guitarist Guillermo Rios,  
 classical guitarist Charles Ferguson along with her regular company mem-  
 bers.

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### FLAMENCO IN THE MISSION

[from the North Mission News, February 1988 - San Francisco]

El Gallego, a restaurant offering traditional Spanish cuisine (their Paella is a must!) has been open since 1975, run by owner and chef "Don José", who initiated his introduction to the street by getting out a broom and sweeping down the sidewalk. He came form a successful career as a chef with a strong background in Spanish regional foods. His interest in the neighborhood growth prompted him to co-found the 24th Street Merchants' Association, he was the first president of this organization, working with other business owners, to create the 24th Street Fair. Throughout these previous years, he



Rosa Montoya in Viva Gypsy (photo by Charles Kennard)



Isa Mura of Grupo Utrera (photo by Michele Maria Boleyn)

kept sweeping the street, attending meetings and persistently worked to improve business for 24th Street. It takes someone of rare patience to have worked for thirteen years to improve a street that has seen many years of a debilitated attitude. Now, 24th Street is getting ready to POP!, and Don José is taking the next step.

In January of this year he decided to begin a program of flamenco for his dinner patrons, in the beginning on a once-a-month, basis, with the idea of a once a week performance when things get going. His contact with Isa Mura, an extraordinary dancer-teacher-singer in the flamenco tradition gave him the opportunity he had been looking for.

Here is where the situation gets interesting. Rather than following the usual course of restaurant owners, expecting the Grupo Utrera to perform on the old floor without lights or a decent sound systems, this rare person spared no expense and installed a new track light and sound system, and is proceeding with redecoration of his walls to show case the performance. The door cover charge \$5.00 per performance goes entirely to the performers. Amazing!

Isa Mura has been the artistic director, dancer and singer of Grupo Utrera y Familia since 1976. She has been teaching and performing at the Mission Cultural Center since 1983, and is recipient of a "California Arts Council Sponsorship". She has lectured at universities and trained with "Flamence Puro Dance Troupe", "Maestro Manolo Marín", "Maestro Ciro y Maestra Cintia - Madrid, Spain", and the "San Francisco Conservatory of Ballet".

A good guideline is to remember that the cover is for each show, not for all three shows. This is important and requires the understanding that the cover charge is the only way the performers get paid for their work. So dinner with a show would last for approximately one hour, and those with reservations for the second and third shows would have priority seating.

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## FLAMENCO IN SAN ANTONIO

[Josie Neal responds to *Jaleo* inquiry about the Noriegas of the Olé restaurant.]

Dear Jaleo,

In answer to your question about the Noriegas: They have moved to Tampa, where Gisela is dancing at the Columbia Restaurant. Last I heard, San Antonio dancer Oscar Treviño was appearing with her. Andre Stegman took over the choreography and direction of a new group of dancers at Olé, who looked promising, although not as strong as the original company, when I saw them during the summer.

As for other San Antonio Spanish dance news, Eduardo Montemayor and his company, *Fantasia Española*, have begun a series of tours throughout the United States, performing for high school Spanish language students. The first tour last fall was very well-received. Montemayor is currently working on plans for local Spanish dance concerts.

Timo Lozano rejoined María Benitez during the summer and fall portions of her U.S. tour, and has returned full of plans for his National Spanish Dance Company.

La Chiqui and José Linares continue with their *La Compañía de Arte Español*, and Teresa and Curro Champion continue with their *Los Flamencos at La Mansión del Río*. Ballet Folklorico de San Antonio remains active as well.

Many of your readers will be saddened to learn of the death on January 7 of the great ethnic dancer La Meri, who grew up in San Antonio and retired (for the second time) here in 1984. I began working on her biography last summer, and am still amazed at the scope of her career! She was a delight to interview - full of wonderful stories about her world tours. A grand lady.

Sincerely,

Josie Neal  
Dance Critic - *San Antonio Light*

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## DANCE TROUPE'S PERFORMANCE TOP-NOTCH

[from *San Antonio Light*, June 18, 1987, sent by Josie Neal]

by Josie Neal

*La Compañía de Arte Español* turned in one of its most impressive concerts in several seasons Wednesday night at Beethoven Hall. The dancers seemed unusually "up" for the occasion, moving with great spirit and vivacity - and best of all - an emerging sense of their individuality as performers.

Ensemble work was close to top-notch (with only a few uncertainties in the beginning of the program), particularly in "Aragón," the bouncy, bubbly Jota Aragonesa that most surely be Spain's most exhilarating dance.

But it was the solos, duets and trios that stood out.

Top honors of the evening went to La Chiqui, choreographer and occasional (too occasional) soloist. Her appearance in this performance lent soul and substance to the fine, but less experienced, offerings of the company dancers.

Her "Andalucía," a classical piece set to music of Granados, was a fine study in contrasts: warm and amouldering one minute; cold and proud the next. She was, by turns, precise and delicate, supple and undulating, and when she turned her back on the audience and walked slowly upstage, no one could mistake that she was very much her own mistress.

Her "Omaira," a very Moorish-flavored flamenco tangos, was a marvel of subtlety and restraint. Dark, somber and introspective as the piece began, she erupted into a tempest of movement, punctuating the music with intricate staccato steps.

Just as suddenly, she was still, and her stillness was eloquent testimony

to the notion that a flamenco dancer dances even when she doesn't move.

Other soloists more than held their own.

Rocio's "Cordoba," in the classical portion of the program, was beautifully expressive, with serpentine arms and pliant torso underscored by the gently insistent trills of her castanets. Her flamenco "Te Encontre en la calle," a soleá por bulerías, was equally fine.

Melina Martínez was a provocative delight in "Aires de Madrid," a caracoles, and María del Amor and Rolando Sosa were wonderfully tempestuous in "Guajira." \*\*\*

## "COMPañ" GROWS UP

[from *San Antonio Light*, September 15, 1987, sent by Josie Neal]

by Josie Neal

One of the nice things about a regional critic's job is the opportunity it affords to watch a local company grow through a sometimes precocious childhood and a not-always-attractive adolescence into the promise of maturity. *La Compañía de Arte Español*, now eleven years old, has weathered the first two of those stages; its performance Saturday night at Beethoven Hall showed it happily on its way into the third.

The program, a repeat of last summer's San Antonio festival offering, "Rincones de España," was a fine showcase for the company's growing abilities, which find their fullest flowering in the work of La Chiqui, choreographer and sometime soloist.

La Chiqui is maturity at its roost vibrant, an exemplary mentor and model for her dancers. Her two solos were sensitively balanced between control and passion, with technique used, not at an end in itself, but as an expressive means. Her neo-classical "Andalucía," with delicate footwork and trilling castanets embroidering the melody, was a beautiful realization of the Granados music to which it is set, restrained and quietly eloquent. Restraint gave way to a torrent of emotion in "Omaira," a tempestuous flamenco tangos, in which she danced as though exorcising some dark, private demons.

The dancers looked technically stronger and more stylistically correct than ever in their classical and regional dances. The opening ensemble piece, "Panaderos de Madrid" was a charming example of the classical style, with its balletic springiness, precise steps on the balls of the feet, and rounded arm movements. Also lovely were Diana Vidal's "Cádiz," with its slow, spiraling turns and coiling hands, and Rocio, gliding across the stage with supple grace in the lyrical, introspective "Cordoba." Nice work, too, from Melina Martínez, Rolando Sosa and Homero Gonzalez in the love triangle, "Leyenda del Beso." The vibrant regional dance, *Lagarteranas*, from Toledo, was done with irresistible spirit by Gabriela and Sosa.

The company's flamenco still depends too much on relentlessly hammering zapateado and not enough on subtle contrast, and it still seems more about entertaining an audience than an outpouring of deep feeling. \*\*\*

## A SPARKLING NIGHT OF EFFERVESCENT SPANISH DANCE

[from *San Antonio Light*, October 19, 1987, sent by Josie Neal]

by Josie Neal

*La Compañía de Arte Español* took advantage of cool, fall evenings last weekend to present its work at Ameson River Theater. Great idea. It's nice to see a performance in that attractive venue sans the sultriness of summer. The series of four performances began Friday; two more will be presented this weekend.

The program is nicely in keeping with the carefree River Walk atmosphere, a night of Spanish gaiety rather than passion. Even the flamenco - often a dark, brooding, intimate expression - was light and teasing.

As it happens, this light touch is one that allows us to see the company at its best. Indeed, several of the sixteen shorter pieces presented Friday

night were so effervescent they fairly sparkled. "Lagarceranas," a folk dance from the region of Toledo, was one: a real charmer with busy feet and castanets, danced with flirtatious zest by Melina Martínez and Homero Gonzalez.

Another was "Viva Navarra," the bubbly jota from Navarra by the ensemble. With its fast, tiny, crossed steps and springy little hops done on the balls of the feet, it was a delight, the more so at this outing because of Rocio's solo entrance in the middle of it with castanets chattering a mile-a-minute.

Rocio played a double role as dancer and choreographer in her lovely vignette of gently-bred Spanish lady of a bygone time, "Goyescas." As befits a lady, she was very discreet coquette, chastely dressed in white, gliding across the floor in a smooth, gentle waltz. Several poses, in which she shielded her face behind her fan and slowly folded it to reveal beguiling eyes, were an echo of a similar gesture by Pilar Rioja at her concert here last month.

When Rocio reappeared during the flamenco portion of the program in "Caracoles," she might have been the same lady turned gypsy temptress, ravishing in a turquoise dress with the ruffles of its trailing bata de cola lined in brilliant magenta, provoking us this time with curving, coiling arms and twisting, turning fan.

There were other provocative gypsies: Martínez, a sleek, stunning vision in black and white, setting her bata to flying in "Caña," a smoky duet with Gonzalez; Diana Vidal, a saucy tease in "Guajira," dancing with Sosa in a you'll-have-to-win-me-first courtship played out with trilling castanets and stamping feet; and a spirited "La Gitana" was the object of two men's attentions in "Fandangos," a trio with Sosa and Gonzalez.

Gabriela, out to conquer us with fluttering hands and rolling hips in an

impertinent "Tanguillo," did; and Rosa Reygadas was equally tempting in "Farruca," a duet with Sosa, even though the footwork of both was a little muddy. Sosa and Gonzalez, not to be outdone, held up the masculine side of flamenco with sharp, syncopated zapateado and sudden, emphatic stillnesses in "Almoraima."

The ensemble's "Castilla," and "El baile de Luis Alonso" were prettily danced, though the cut of the costumes made the dancers look somewhat thick-waisted. Costumes for "Benamor" were quite attractive, although the dance itself, for two sets of lovers, is a melange of Spanish dance, modern dance and ballet that strains a bit too hard for its effect.

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## FLAMENCO IN WASHINGTON D. C. Alicia Díaz Gives Master Classes

Alicia Díaz, former principal dancer for Antonio and his "Ballet de Madrid" and the National Spanish Ballet, is teaching master classes this summer in the theatre and dance department at the George Washington University.

Díaz's appearance is sponsored by the Embassy of Spain and the Spanish Dance Society at GWU.

## Marina Keet Honored Lorca and Amaral Guest at Marvin Theatre

"Marina Keet, who insists that Spanish Dance is exciting, proved her point again on Friday and Saturday. [November 21 and 22 1987] The principal dancers - guests Marina Lorca and Roberto Amaral and the resident



Alicia Díaz giving Master class at George Washington University



Guest artist Marina Lorca in Washington DC performance.

Jaime Coronado have Spain in their Veins." George Jackson, The Washington Post. The season was sold out and patrons turned away, as even the standing room was filled.

Marina Keet, professorial lecturer at the Department of Theatre and Dance at George Washington University and Artistic Director of the Spanish Dance Society, was honored with a Special Achievement Award by the Hispanic Institute for the performing Arts.

Marina Keet was trained at the University of Cape Town Ballet School. After studying in London and Spain, she lectured Ballet history and taught Spanish Dance at the UCT for seventeen years. During this period, she directed many productions for the UCT and CAPAB Ballet and published her book on Spanish dance. After four years in Rome, where she founded the Spanish Dance Society in Italy, she moved to Washington DC and founded the Society there. Her book on the history of Ballet in South Africa, was published in 1981, shortly before her arrival in the USA and she has contributed articles on Ballet and Spanish dance to encyclopedias in the USA, Great Britain and South Africa. In 1982 she joined the dance faculty at GWU.

Photo right: guest artist Roberto Amaral in Washington DC performance.

## FLAMENCO IN ILLINOIS

The renowned Spanish dance artist, Manolo Rivera, taught master classes in Spanish Dance in February hosted by Teresa y los Preferidas at Ballet Arts Studio of Wilmette, Illinois. Students from the Chicago area, Missouri and Wisconsin participated in the workshops that included advanced choreography for tangillo and bulerías. Basic students worked with Manolo on form, technique, and applied these movements for fandangos.

The tangillo was a choreographic masterpiece with castanets and the bulerías contained complex rhythms and timing which provided a challenge to the well-seasoned dancers attending.

A summer workshop was given by Maria Alba. This master artist choreographed a sizzling and flirtatious rumba, and worked on a siguiriyas, providing lovely braseo movement for cante sections and intricate castanet and footwork rhythms that deliver the frenzy and intense drama Maria is noted for. Technique classes were given in position, braseo, castanets, and footwork clarity.

Prior to the workshop, Maria worked with Las Preferidas in staging choreography in a co-production with the Chicago-based opera Factory in their presentation of the zarzuela, "El Barbero de Sevilla", May 20, 21 and 22. The company premiered Maria's new choreography for caracoles that was included in the zarzuela presentation. Both the zarzuela and the dances were well received. Maria has been asked to return for a Fall workshop.







Above and left and right: students in attendance at María Alba's flamenco workshop in Illinois.

## FLAMENCO IN THE NORTHWEST

The Arte Flamenco Dance Company which features dancer Diana Solano, singer-dancer Faly de Cádiz, and guitarist José Solano has been performing throughout the Northwest and monthly at the East Avenue Tavern in Portland.

The company which operates out of La Zambra Studio, provides flamenco classes, promotes juergas, and serves as the area's local flamenco peña. In March of this year dancer Gerardo Madrigal and singer Pepe Luque de Madrid joined the company for a performance at the Tavern.

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Gerardo Madrigal, Diana and José Solano of Arte Flamenco Dance Company

## REVIEWS

## MARÍA BENÍTEZ SPANISH COMPANY

[from The New York Times, December 10, 1987; sent by George Ryss]

by Jennifer Dunning

The María Benítez Spanish Dance Company presented a compelling program on Tuesday at the Joyce Theater, 175 Eighth Avenue. But there was one moment that stood out. It came with a farruca performed by Eduardo Montero. Choreographed by José Luis Ayuste to traditional music, the solo gave Mr. Montero, a guest artist with the company, a chance to let loose with steely, lacy fusillades of foot beats of such exquisitely precise timing and dynamic range that one watched breathlessly. And near the end of the solo, Mr. Montero extended his arms to the audience, his face crumpling, just a little like a singer drawing in his listeners triumphantly as he hits a final, exhilaratingly exhausting high note.

It was a fitting gesture, so challenging a virtuosic tightrope did Mr. Montero probe, at one point seeming to "play" his feet like a complex musical instrument. In those few seconds, Mr. Montero offered a perfect, living thesis on artistry and the relationship of the artist and the audience. He spun. He glided. He drifted across the stage on the velvet texture of his footwork like the sleepwalker in George Blachine's "Sonambula." Then suddenly, at the end, he slowed to an amble, shrugged and walked off the stage in the best boulevardier tradition.

Mr. Montero epitomized the cool in the fire-and-ice art of Spanish dancing. And there is a good deal of cool in the performing of Miss Benítez and her company, who will be at the Joyce through Sunday. At first the slightly distanced quality of Miss Benítez's performing was puzzling. No tearing the stage to tatters here, except in the most reasoned of ways. But that distance is one of thoughtful good taste and a kind of purity that connotes great seriousness about one's art.

That was evident in Miss Benítez's dances, among them "Andaluza," a new solo choreographed by Rosita Segovia to music by Manuel de Falla. Here and throughout the program, there was much to admire in her long line and lyric articulation of hands and fingers, as well as in the lean and hungry way she moved into the dances, a quality that was nicely enhanced by Mr. Montero's genial and courtly partnering.

The ensemble pieces on this program of ten dance numbers included three fascinating pure-dance excursions into another culture. There was the sexy, hypnotically precise "Zapateado" choreographed by Mr. Montero and performed by Rosa Mercedes, Faustino Ríos, Mónica Flores and Miguel Díez, in gaucho-style clothes with the men wielding swords. With its high kicks and earth-hugging gallops, "Viva la Jota!" choreographed by Pedro Azorín to music by Echegary-Caballero, offered an exuberant argument for the popularity of this dance from northern Spain. And "Sonata," choreographed by Miss Segovia to music by Scarlatti, was a sweetly merry exercise in the escuela bolera style of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, complete with ballet-style beats. The cast was led by Miss Mercedes, who darts like a hummingbird through her dances, and completed by Ana Díaz, Cristina Masdueño and Xiomara Prats.

There were slow stretches in the first half of the program, but the evening came to an exciting traditional close with "Jaleo" and "Finale," with solos for most of the company, which also included Dolores Espinosa. The dancers were accompanied by Cuquito de Barbate, the ensemble's rousing singer, Paco Izquierdo, the fine solo guitarist, and Guillermo Ríos, also on guitar. Craig Miller designed the strong lighting for this well-staged program.

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RENE

HERDIA

## FLAMENCO MUSIC IN HIS SOUL

[from Denver Post, February 14, 1988; sent by René Heredia]

by J. Sebastián Sinisi

Next month, in New York, flamenco guitarist René Heredia will give a solo concert at Carnegie Hall for the third consecutive year - a record not too many Denver based performing artists can claim.

Then again, Heredia - who was born in Granada in the south of Spain - is no stranger to New York or San Francisco, Los Angeles, London or Paris. He has performed in concert halls, often with orchestras, in each of those cities plus Boston, Kansas City and, closer to home, in Santa Fe. That's partly because, as he puts it, "I can't depend on making a living as a flamenco guitarist only in Denver."

Heredia, who has lived in Denver and Santa Fe almost continuously since 1968, recognizes that flamenco music is unfamiliar to many Westerners. But with recordings and a video, Heredia hopes to bring flamenco to a wider audience.

Although Heredia had nearly four years of formal music training in Paris, he learned flamenco from his father, of Spanish Gypsy stock who was an ornamental iron worker by trade. The family moved from Spain to the United States when René was 9, but neither New York nor Chicago or Texas suited the elder Heredia. Los Angeles, however, he liked and they stayed. René grew tired of Los Angeles, "where you live in a car. I realized I could be spending all those hours practicing instead of driving." His first Denver gig was at the old Taylor's supper club on West Colfax.

Five years ago, he met his wife, Candace - a photographer - when he needed a publicity photo. They've been married four years.

Along the way, Heredia has performed at Red Rocks and with the Denver Symphony and Denver Chamber orchestras, won the equivalent of a Grammy award in France and has played for Gerald Ford, Princess Grace and Prince Rainier of Monaco and for Governor Dick Lamm. But, when it comes to audiences, he is fondest of the hundreds of students he has taught over the years.

"Most of the acoustic guitar players in this area are either students of mine or students of students," he said. "I'm proud of that."

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## FLAMENCO GUITARIST WINS AUDIENCE

[from The Lawton Morning Press-constitution, February 19, 1988; sent by Ronald Radford]

The Passion and skill of flamenco guitarist Ron Radford took the

audience in The Little Chapel of Lawton into gypsy heaven Thursday. Every pew was packed.

Radford's music takes listeners inside another world, to a mystical land where pathos and ecstasy merge.

Flamenco not only takes one into southern Spain, it leads to glimpses of where it came from. Flamenco is exotic northern Indian sounds, chants of Moslems and Jews, and today even Cuban rhythms and jazz.

Radford, who grew up in Tulsa, didn't hear flamenco until his seventeenth summer. Amazingly though, he has a magical empathy, an insider's grasp on this music. Speaking to the audience alternately with a friendly Oklahoma lilt or in Spanish, the gifted artist related the history and feeling of flamenco. But more than his lively narratives, it was the man's music that carried the flamenco landscape into the hearts of his fellow Oklahomans.

Flamenco offers a communal aspect. Radford explains the music is the people and the people are the music. Clapping or wailing, celebrating or saddened, flamenco is shared feelings.

However shared, the music also holds personal elements. It is somehow supernatural.

"Listening is an art," he told his audience. Feelings are only evoked by a flamenco guitarist — the people who listen give as much from themselves. The key is to listen with love, rather than analyzing, he said.

The intensity of Radford's music leaves no choice but to listen with love. Sounds of drums, ancient Eastern instruments, concertinas, mandolins and many other instruments rise from Radford's guitar.

Radford, who spent part of his early career in Lawton while stationed in the Army, dedicated his concert to the late Bill Crawford, fine arts critic and editor of the Lawton Constitution and Morning Press.

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## RONALD RADFORD: A REVIEW

[from Chickasha Daily Express; sent by Ronald Radford]

by Richard Underwood

"How often do you get a chance to shout 'óle!' here in Chickasha?" Mr. Ronald Radford asked the audience which almost filled the USAO Chapel to hear and see his flamenco guitar concert last Sunday, the first of five Pro Musica Series events. Since there is a scarcity of both bull fights and flamenco in Chickasha, the question was rhetorical; but the audience soon entered into the spirit of the powerful and emotional "gitano" or gypsy music which poured from Mr. Radford's talented fingers and brilliant tones of his Spanish guitar. By the end of the concert loud "óle's" followed each of the numbers, and any member of the audience who listened with eyes closed could have sworn that they were at least two guitars and twenty fingers needed to produce such a flood of music...Flamenco music is unwritten; it is learned by ear — even by a seventeen-year-old Tulsa youth who fell in love with the music of Carlos Montoya, the most famous flamenco guitarist at the time, and set out to learn to make such music himself. How well he succeeded was amply demonstrated to those discriminating people who heard his concert Sunday afternoon.

Since flamenco singing — "cante flamenco" — and dancing are really at the heart of gypsy music, the metamorphosis of the guitar from a mere accompaniment to a solo instrument has been gradual and dependent upon such artists as Ramón Montoya and his nephew Carlos, who was Ronald Radford's first teacher. Spontaneity is the chief characteristic of flamenco, and according to Mr Radford each concert or "juerga" — "jam session" — is informal and loosely composed of many traditional phrases and effects, always allowing the artist freedom to improvise, embellish, and ornament the basic themes. In this spirit Mr. Radford had no printed programs for his concert but instead introduced each number by telling the audience what kind of music they were about to hear, its background, and its characteristics, plus, quite often, a story of his own experiences with it in his travels throughout Spain.

For example the "Sacta" is the story of the Holly Week procession in Seville. Mr. Radford crossed the two bass strings on his guitar and by

strumming them and by using his fingernails on the wood of his guitar he simulated the approaching drums; then with the same hand he used the higher-pitched strings to produce the sound of trumpets. As the procession passes, the singing, chanting, praying, and all the other sounds of the marching faithful were portrayed by the artist's six strings and agile fingers, until again the drums recede into the silent distance.

Except for two short "composed" classical guitar pieces, Mr. Radford's whole program consisted of flamenco: a "soleares" — a type of "cante minero" — a lament of the andalusian miners; an ancient "zambra" — going back to medieval times; and the most popular and best know of his repertoire, the "Malagueña con verdiales" — a lively dance piece from Málaga. His final selection was a "rondeña" — a deep song, full of "soul" depicting the first moments of dawn.

It was a disappointment to Mr. Radford that none of his hearers had brought castanets nor were they proficient in the other traditional accompaniment to flamenco guitar, the "palmas" — a sharp hand clapping in syncopated rhythm. But he was able to involve the audience in one number in which, despite his disclaimer of being no singer, he "approximated" the cante flamenco and was accompanied between verses by a spirited hand clapping from out front.

It was not necessary for anyone there to have ever heard flamenco guitar to appreciate the brilliant musicianship of their fellow Oklahoman. The audience was enthusiastic in its reception of his rendering of this most passionate and highly sophisticated form of folk music — the Spanish gypsy flamenco. It is a mark of his own dedication to flamenco that on Monday Mr. Radford gave free concerts to the Chickasha school children at Intermediate, Lincoln, and Middle Schools, concerts made possible by Pro Musica

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## THE RHYTHMS OF SPAIN BY DEL CONTE COMPANY

[from The New York Times; sent by George Ryss]

by Jack Anderson

Because some of its forms make use of castanets and stampings, Spanish dance can be an art of sound as well as sight. But sounds and sights were occasionally blurred in the program that Andrea Del Conte and the American Spanish Dance Theater gave Thursday night at the Triplex Theater of borough of Manhattan Community College.

The public address system caused taped accompaniments to blare. It was often hard to relate the dancers' castanet playing and heel wark with the recorded music in "La Vida Breve" and "Benamore," two new dances choreographed by Luis Montero, who was also a guest performer.

His most ambitious choreography was for a new version of "El Amor Brujo," a dramatic work dating from 1915 that is blessed with a marvelous score by Manuel de Falla and cursed with a story that is notoriously difficult to tell. The plot concerns a widow who is prevented from meeting the man she really loves by the cruel ghost of her slain husband. Mr. Montero complicated matters with his casting. Instead of being cruel as the ghost, he seemed appealingly ardent, whereas Manolo Rivera, another guest artist, was stern as the lover and Ms. Del Conte had a tendency to pose too obviously as the widow.

Everyone looked better in a flamenco suite. For one thing, these dances, choreographed by Manolo Marín, Tomás de Madrid, La Cintia and Mr. Montero, had live music by Dominico Caro, vocalist, and Rafael Cañizares and Basilio Georges, guitarists.

Although excessively fond of pained facial expressions, Ms. Del Conte nevertheless brought dignity to a "Siguiriyas" with Mr. Montero. Mr. Rivera danced a forceful "Soleares." Mr. Montero made his heel beats grow from dry, castanet-like whirrings to sounds resembling hoofbeats in his "Farruca." And in a "Tientos" filled with unison steps and passages in which the dancers mirrored one another with their movements, Jacqueline Kalata and Clara Mora effectively emphasized the tension between the choreography's strictness of form and their own emotional intensity.



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## TOUCH OF ANDALUSIA IN HIALEAH

(from The Miami Herald, April 8, 1988; sent by H.E. Huttig)

by Laurie Horn

In Seville it is called simply La Feria de Abril (The April fair).

Families set up booths called casetas at the fairgrounds, inviting friends in for a bit of dry sherry. Children, adults and the famous Andalusian horses are decked out in finery — the horses' manes braided with little tassels. Riders and horse-drawn carriages parade through the fair, stopping at one caseta and then another. The air fills with the distinctive rhythms of Sevillanas - a couples dance that is a cousin to flamenco. The dancing and music continue until the wee hours of the morning.

Fairs like the one in Seville erupt all over Andalusia all summer. South Florida's first Andalusian-style fair will be this weekend in the gardens at Hialeah Race Track, complete with the traditional riders and horse-drawn carriages. Incorporated now as a nonprofit festival, the fair is the labor of love of organizers Ilda Fernandez-Shaw, wife of Spanish consul Carlos Fernandez-Shaw, and Maria-Cristina Suárez.

"If you think of Andalusia, you think of happiness," Suárez said amid stacks of papers and picture-books of Spain in the gracious Coral Gables home of the Spanish consul.

At Hialeah, private corporations instead of families will sponsor the casetas, Suárez said. Among the sponsors are Bacardi, Barnett Bank and Banco de Bilbao.

"Each caseta is going to have entertainment. But there will also be a separate stage," Suárez said.

Musicians and dancers are coming both from Spain and from the Miami area, Suárez said.

"A group of Andalusians that live here have recorded a cassette" of Sevillanas with lyrics about Miami, she said. Called "De Miami a Sevilla", it includes sevillanas titled "Calle Ocho de Miami" and "Los Barrios de Miami".

The musicians are Juan de Alba, Antonio Serrano, Pedro Cortez Jr. and Amparo Heredia, who perform under the name, Los Andaluces. Other performers scheduled to be at the fair include the duet Los Españolismos; Luces de Sevilla, a choir; the Sevillanas group Los Tarantos and flamenco performers from local tablaos including flamenco dancers La Repompa, Parra and Luisita Sevilla. Spanish singing idol Lola Flores has also been invited, although she is not officially scheduled to perform.

Tonight has been set aside as a gala evening, with tickets at \$75 and tapas catered by Costa Vasca. But Saturday and Sunday admission is \$5. Gates open at noon and activities are expected to continue at least until midnight.

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## A SPANISH ARCHETYPE

(from The New York Times, spring 1988; sent by George Ryss)

by Jack Anderson

Pilar Rioja is a great Spanish dancer and a great dancing actress. Her program Tuesday night at Repertorio Español's Gramercy Arts Theater (138 East 27<sup>th</sup> Street) included refined Escuela Bolero dances and tempestuous flamenco solos. Yet her sensibility resembled that of our century's pioneers of modern dance, who sought to give choreographic form in inner experience. Whereas the specific form Miss Rioja employed was Spanish dance, her themes were universal experiences of joy and sorrow.

Often, she appeared to create imaginary characters, even in plotless dances. Her graciousness in "Sonata" suggested that of an aristocrat at a formal party. Wearing an elegant gown designed by Guillermo Barclay, she was joyous in "La Jota Navarra," which was filled with jumping steps. Yet she always preserved her dignity amid her merriment. Another light-hearted solo was "La Cachucha," a tribute to a Spanish dance beloved by 19<sup>th</sup>-

century ballerinas. Gliding and whirling in soft slippers, Miss Rioja seemed entranced by the chatter of her own castanets.

"Las Alegrías" was a dance of pride in which heels stamped vigorously. But when Miss Rioja let her feet simply brush the floor, she could have been whispering secrets. In "Albaicín," another proud solo, she let her skirts swirl and raised her arms assertively. And her hand claps both rang out in triumph and rasped with agitation.

She portrayed a specific character in "Doña Rosita the Spinster," based on Federico García Lorca's play about a woman waiting in vain for her absent fiancé. With only a few movements, Miss Rioja traced the course of a life, wrapping herself wistfully in a wedding veil and then withering away.

She stalked about the stage in "Tangos." Equally ready to curse or bless or shrivel anyone she encountered with her scorn, she often made beckoning gestures. But who would dare approach such a ferocious woman?

Miss Rioja's New York season continues through May 8 with performances scheduled at both the Gramercy Arts Theater and the Equitable Tower Auditorium. She is well worth seeing.

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## RIOJA DANCES FROM LIFE, TOUCHES THE SOUL BEETHOVEN HALL RECITAL A FEAST OF PASSION, ARTISTRY

(from San Antonio Light, July 20, 1987, sent by Josie Neal)

by Josie Neal

There are occasions in the theater when we are moved to the point of tears. It can happen as a tragedy unfolds upon the stage - an opera, or a play. There are rarer occasions when it is no grand opera or epic drama that stirs us, but a solitary figure, dancing - dancing about life and love and joy and pain.

Pilar Rioja's recital Sunday at Beethoven Hall, sponsored by the Mexican Cultural Institute and Radio Festival, was one such occasion. Midway through her opening dance, I stopped taking notes. The words just were not there. What I was seeing went far deeper than easily described virtuosity and prettiness. Rioja's art is one of great and profound beauty; it touches the soul.

There is music in Rioja's hands - rarely have I heard such clarity and nuance of tone in castanet work.

In the opening "Sonata," one of three sparkling examples of the Escuela Bolera style, castanets trilled out delicate little cascades of melody that caressed us with their sweetness; in "Arabesques," they seduced us, weaving exotic tracers of sound around the music of Debussy; in "La Cachucha," Rioja's recreation of the Spanish folk dance made famous by nineteenth century Romantic ballerina Fanny Elssler, they teased us with their sparkling chatter; in "Zapateado," they threatened to engulf us with their rushing torrents of sound.

There is music in Rioja's feet as well: gentle courtly patter that evokes the pastimes of royal folk of bygone times; subtle melodies of the Orient that whisper to us; thundering marches that shout their triumph.

Rarely have I seen such purity of line, such brilliance employed with such restraint - here is technique at the service of artistry. Rioja's flamenco gives meaning to the word duende, the spirit that drives the gypsy to dance and sing and play. Her "Alegrías" is a jubilant expression of that spirit and it's a compelling one, indeed: provocative eyes tease us from behind a fluttering fan; curling arms and discreetly snaking hips promise erotic delights. But insistent feet that erupt into furious stamping let us know that although she may win us, we will never entirely win her. This gypsy is very much the mistress of her own heart.

The spirit is more intense and sober in "La Caña" and "Tangos." Here Rioja is truly driven, in private communion with dark forces — perhaps the very forces of life and death. There is passion in every gesture, every line of her body, but it is held severely in check and succumbed to only briefly. Stillness and composure are as much a part of these brooding dances as

tempestuous movement, and Rioja's stillnesses speak volumes.

Rarely have I seen such choreography. "Three Dances," a neo-classical work set to music of twentieth century Catalán composer Carlos Surinach, is a seamless blending of disparate forms: escuela bolero flamenco and modern dance. As it begins, Rioja, dressed in a long, simple purple dress and sitting with her feet widely planted to the sides, evokes the image of Martha Graham in "Lamentations," or perhaps one of Lorca's tragic heroines.

There is yearning in the sinuous coils of her arms; poetry and dreams in her turns; stern, womanly pride in the set of her spine; authority in the stamp of her feet.

The artistry of Rioja was beautifully matched by that of cantaor Enrique Iglesias, whose vibrant jondo voice was full of deep, profound emotion, and of pianist Jesus María Figuerola, whose effervescent rendition of the jota, "Viva Navarra," was a delight, and she was ably served by the accompaniment of guitarists José and Gerardo Negrete.

Rioja, when asked earlier in an interview what advice she would give to young students of Spanish dance, had said the usual things about discipline and work and patience — not wanting it all too quickly. And then she said, quietly: "Life teaches you." Life, then, is the best teacher of Spanish dance. Rioja has learned its lessons well.

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### A TAP-FLAMENCO UNION

[from The New York Times, May 28, 1988; sent by George Rys]

by Jennifer Dunning

"Espectáculo Flamenco Tap-Dance," presented by Casa de España on Thursday night at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, certainly was spectacular. It would have been enough to present either Cristóbal Reyes, a member of Cumbre Flamenco of Spain and a gypsy dancer of great fire and originality, or Harold Nicholas, who danced as one of the Nicholas Brothers with his brother, Fayard, in movie musicals of the 1940's. But this was a rare coming together of the two very different but complementary dance forms — and a heartwarming and dazzling dance spectacle that will likely be long talked about by those who witnessed it, cheering and coaxing the dancers along.

The program opened with sets from each and ended with a "challenge" that pitted Mr. Nicholas and Mr. Reyes against each other in a tap competition very like the closing event in a tap-dance program. Fascinating similarities and differences between the two forms were revealed as the two men performed together, dancing tango and bulerías rhythms in a final number with fusillades of rapid-fire footwork that skimmed the stage and echoed like thunder in the dark and cavernous cathedral. Both dance forms require articulated feet for the heel, half-toe and whole-foot beats and a gift for the imaginative and virtuosic interpretation of set rhythms. The use of the arms and torso and the expression of passion tend to be different in the two forms.

This was a battle to the finish, with warm hugs and laughter at the end. There was no hiding the professional interest of each in the other. Mr. Reyes watched intently as Mr. Nicholas danced. Mr. Nicholas' left foot pawed the floor, like the bulls referred to in flamenco gesture, as he watched Mr. Reyes. And then the musicians and singers took over for their own star dance turns, with La Tobala as impassioned in her dancing as in her exciting singing, and amusing solos from Diego Losada, Tito Losada and Chiqui, the guitarists. Yeye de Cádiz, a singer, completed the group.

Mr. Nicholas was accompanied on the piano by the genial and gifted Michael Renzi.

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### GROUP AIMS TO PRESERVE AND PROMOTE FLAMENCO

[from Los Angeles Times, July 13, 1988; sent by Scott Alley.]

by Susan Linnee

*Jerez de la Frontera, Spain (AP)* — Matilde Nuñez gripped the edge of her wooden chair and strained to watch the little girl as she grabbed her ruffled skirts and sashayed across the stage. "That's it, *Bonita*, that's the way to

do it," wailed the proud aunt of the seven-year-old Manuela Nuñez, whose dancing stole the show at an outdoor performance about Spanish Gypsy life. "That's the way to keep it alive."

Keeping flamenco alive is what both the new Andalusian Flamenco Foundation and Matilde Nuñez want to do.

She and her gypsy family and neighbors in Jerez's Santiago neighborhood don't have much time for lectures on the evolution of the *cante hondo* — the song from the depth of the soul — or arguing about the origin of the word flamenco.

But they do turn out in force, complete with bottles of sherry, ham sandwiches and babies, for "This Way of Life," a show that tells the story of Spanish gypsies through dancing, singing, guitar playing and hand-clapping in a style that has come to characterize the rhythm of southern Spain.

The show by author Tomás Rodríguez-Pantoja and director Manuel Morao features many Jerez gypsies and was the highlight of a conference in June, "Two Centuries of Flamenco," sponsored by the foundation — its first official activity since inauguration in May.

To conserve the memory of flamenco, to promote research into the art, and to make contemporary flamenco known to as wide a public as possible are the principal aims of the foundation, according to director Joaquín Carrera.

The foundation, housed in a refurbished 18th-Century mansion in the heart of the Santiago neighborhood — the shrine of flamenco for many — has a record, video and book library as well as a dance hall. It has a \$350,000 budget.

"Flamenco itself is a world of conflict," Carrera said. "Flamencologists have a tendency to expostulate, not to ask questions, and we thought this might take up too much time, especially for the foreigners who were attending."

When a Mexican conference attendee asked about the meaning of the word flamenco, there was an embarrassed silence, as though someone had asked about the origin of the word Christian in a church.

But Bernard Leblon, professor of gypsy and Andalusian culture at the French University of Perpignan, offered the explanation that the term referred to the Gypsies who had been forced into military service in the fire and drum corps of the Spanish regiments fighting in Flanders in the Low Countries in the 17th Century. Flamenco is the Spanish word for a Fleming or a native of Flanders.

Another theory has it that the word derives from the Arabic *felamengh*, or immigrant peasant, and that many of the *cantes* or styles of flamenco songs were influenced by Moors who occupied most of Spain for eight centuries.

Although opinion varies over the current health of flamenco, most "flamencologists" concur that the art form was first pulled from near oblivion by Spanish composer and musician "Manuel de Falla in June, 1922, when he organized a *cante hondo* contest in Granada.

After fierce suppression after the 1936-39 Spanish Civil War, flamenco was appropriated by the authoritarian regime of Gen. Francisco Franco.

The publication of "Flamencología" by Anselmo González Climent in 1957 marked the acceptance, once again, by the intelligentsia of flamenco as a basic element in Spanish culture.

But many students of the art point out that flamenco is not universally popular in Spain.

Critic Angel Alverez Caballero said flamenco has serious box office problems. In a country where about one hundred flamenco festivals are held each summer, half lose money and few would be possible without the support of local city or provincial councils.

Many aficionados have taken refuge in *peñas*, private flamenco clubs that invite artists to perform regularly, perpetuating the essentially intimate nature of the art.



## FLAMENCO IN LOS ANGELES



L to R: Pilar Moreno, Yaelisa, Antonio Duran, Bruce Paterson, Lourdes

### Celebration of the Feria De Sevilla

by Yveta Williams

In celebration of La Feria de Sevilla, the Los Angeles area was blessed with a most exciting treat of wonderful flamenco music, dance, song, palmas and enthusiastic aficionados. Bruce and Yaelisa Patterson organized a show and juerga at the banquet room of Chateau Briand Restaurant, 8528 Rosemead Blvd. in Pico Rivera on Monday night April 4, 1988.

The crowd arrived early in order to get good seats. There were so many people that the tickets were sold out a week before the event. There were about 150 people in attendance which was all that the room could accommodate. Many thanks to Katina Vrinós and other friends for their great P.R. work in helping to make the evening such a great success.

The evening opened with guitarist Bill Freeman playing an exciting program of solo flamenco guitar music to set the mood. Bill entertained while tapas were chosen and wine was being poured. After everyone was seated with their tapas and wine the flamenco show began.

Guitarists Bruce Patterson and Antonio Durán accompanied the cante of Pilar Moreno and dancing of Lourdes Rodríguez and Yaelisa. Pilar sang wonderfully with expression, sensitivity. Lourdes and Yaelisa are both graceful, expressive, knowledgeable, well trained, strong dancers and a joy to watch. Each has her own style and each is exciting. The guitarists played very well together taking turns one playing falsetas while the other played rhythm complementing each other to make a beautiful and exciting accompaniment for the song and dance. The show opened with bulerías and included sevillanas, alegrías,

tientos, soleares and rumbas. There was much joy in the show and all performed as if they were having a wonderful time and enjoying themselves to the maximum. The audience was caught up in the mood and was very enthusiastic and supportive. The last rumba of the show led into the juerga and many performers shared their talents to make an unforgettable evening.

Some of the singers were Antonio de Jerez, Miguel de Málaga, Yorgo the Greek, Pepita Sevilla, and Pilar and a gentleman who sang "Doce Cascaables" and other favorites accompanied by Benito Palacios.

Guitarists were Bill Freeman, Yveta Williams, Alberto de Almar, Benito Palacios, Antonio Durán and Bruce Patterson.

There were dancers from San Diego to Santa Barbara and everywhere in between, many of whom I am not privileged to know their names and I apologize for not including them in the list of dancers. Some of the dancers included Pepita, María (Cha-Cha) Bermúdez, Linda Vega, Roberto Amaral, Juan Talavera, Paco Vera, Juan Martínez, Yorgo the Greek, Katina Vrinós, Basilio, Anna Konya and Yaelisa and Lourdes.

A special thanks to Yaelisa and Bruce for organizing this juerga and doing so much work, and thanks to Bruce for building the professional stage and making it portable for future programs and for the good sound system.

We all had a wonderful evening with the joy of flamenco still giving off a warm glow long after. Yes, we had fun! Thanks to all the wonderful people with great talent and those who love flamenco who shared in the Celebration of La Feria de Sevilla here in Los Angeles, and who help to make sure flamenco continues to be well, alive, authentic and to provide an atmosphere where the aficionados, students, professionals and novices can come, enjoy and continue on their flamenco adventure. One person was overheard saying "I could swear I was in Madrid - This is wonderful and unbelievable to find such wonderful flamenco, here!"

A video tape of the show is available for \$25.00, or \$30.00 with postage and handling from Jay Kamia, 25021 Rivendell, El Toro, CA 92630. Tel. (714) 586-4153.

For more good flamenco let's support the performers and restaurants such as El Cid, Madrid, Barcelona and enjoy flamenco often.

Photos this and following page by Dick Williams.



Yaelisa dances accompanied by the cante of Pilar moreno and the guitar of Antonio.





The juerga begins. Pepita dancing.



Enthusiastic support is given from the side lines from Michele Long, Linda Vega, Roberto Amaral and Juan Talavera.



Linda Vega joins in.



Antonio de Jerez sings for the baile de Katina. Left Miguel de Málaga, Bruce Patterson on guitar.



Singer Miguel de Málaga, along with guitarists Benito Palacios and Bruce Patterson accompany Lourdes dancing.



Anna Konya dancing in vestido gitano.

[FISL NEWSLETTER, continued from page 34]

## NEW BOOKS AND RECORDS

## Books:

Pohren, Donn. "The Art of Flamenco, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed." Society of Spanish Studies, Sevilla, 1967. Revised, enlarged and updated from first edition. Contains philosophy, cante verses, general discussion of dancing, guitar. In English. Pictures. 270 pages. Available at most Spanish bookstores or at the F.I.S.L.

## Records:

"Canta Jerez" Hispavox HH 10-341 (LP). Cantaores: Terremoto, El Gorrico, Sernita, Manuel El Sordera, Diamante Negro, Romerito. Guitar - Paco de Antequera, Paco Cepero. Contains fandangos de El Gloria, bulería por soleá, siguiriyas, cabaes, bulerías de nochebuena, soleá de Juaniqui, martinete, fiesta por bulerías.

"Guzman Alvea, Cante Flamenco". Vol. 3. Hispavox HH 16-615 (45rpm). Cantaores - Guzman Alvea. Guitar - Juan Maya, Ramon de Algeciras. Contains tientos, tarantas, soleares..

"Mi Cante por Fandangos, Vol. 1" Hispavox HH 16-640 (45rpm). Cantaores - Gordito de Triana. Guitar - Melchor de Marchena (All fandangos).

"El Flamenco Tradicional de Bernardo el de los Lobitos, Vol. 1". Hispavox HH 16-657 (45rpm). Cantaores - Bernardo el de los Lobitos. Guitar - Luís Marvilla. Contains soleares de Utrera, malagueña de Gayarrito, malagueña de El Canario, cartegenera.



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REVIEWS: Continued from page 48.

## Semana de la Casa de España in New York

by The Shah of Iran

The Casa de España, in conjunction with the Ministry of Culture and the Consulate-General of Spain, presented in the middle of this past May, a week-long celebration of Spanish culture which included both the graphic arts and the performing arts. This latter category on which we shall pass comment here consisted of a puchero composed of ingredients for every taste, some better than others.

Certainly the most outrageous representation of the festival was a play written by Pablo Picasso during his sojourn in Paris during World War II. "El Deseo Cojido por el Rabo" is a stream-of-consciousness drama that voices in the manner of the theater of the absurd the physical hardships and yearnings of the flesh that Picasso and his compatriots endured during the winter of 1941 while Paris was under Nazi occupation. A wacked-out but nevertheless straightforward account; look for no deeper significance. The play was done in the flamenco idiom and featured such oddities as a farruca danced by someone dressed up as a huge foot, a salacious rumba danced in a bath tub, a Zapateado showing only legs under a table, much vulgarity of speech, etc. As to the quality of the dancing and choreography, it was poor to very poor if those responsible for it are considered to be professionals and are judged accordingly, but acceptable, ni más ni menos, if we consider the performers as amateurs who in the course of their acting were called upon to dance. The play itself must be considered at best a curiosity, being the product of a genius in one field of endeavor turning his hand to another type of task and acquitting himself tolerably well, no more. Ionesco can rest in peace; his primacy is not in danger.

The flamenco-jazz section of the program gave us the chance to hear a person and for the first time the music of Pata Negra, a group much touted by the young people in Sevilla. Our curiosity is satisfied; they are two performers of "pop" flamenco and although capable guitarists, they are shallow artists and creators. Much better was the toque of Gerardo Nuñez who followed them the next day. As for the Catalán group Benavent-Amargos that closed out the flamenco-jazz events, the reputation of their latin-jazz tilt was such that we did not bother to attend. Also in the category of "did not attend for lack of sufficient flamenco content" was the joint flamenco-tap dance production featuring Cristóbal Reyes and Harold Nichols. This sort of thing, of course, would not appeal to serious flamencos; if it's fast feet you want to see, you are better off at the race track.

Some of the sweeter moments of the festival were savored at the concert in homage to Maestro Andrés Segovia which was held in the cavernous cathedral of Saint Patrick in Manhattan. Lucero Tena, the incomparable mistress of the castanets, held forth in concert, clattering her crotalos in accompaniment to classical guitarist Carmelo Martínez from the Conservatory of Granada, and of Michael Lorimer, a student of the former. The flamenco guitarist on the program was none other than the young winner of the Premio Nacional de Flamenco awarded in Sevilla in 1984, José Luis Rodríguez who, if our math is right, must have been all of seventeen years of age at the time. The artists who appeared in this program were the best news of the festival. The second best news of the festival was that the admission for most events was free, for which reason we withhold fire from the heavy artillery. And the hand having written, moves on...



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