

# *Jaleo*

OCTOBER 1991



# JALEO

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**Punctual Mailing:** This issue was mailed by bulk mail, which delayed delivery. We apologize for this delay. The next issue will go to the Post Office early enough to avoid this. Thank you!

### Flamenco Videos

In response to those asking for information about flamenco about videos, here is some good news. Alegria Productions is distributing a series of videos from Spain. Please write to: Alegria Production, 666 West End Ave, Ste 14-J, New York, NY 10025, (212)874-5772.

### **...in Los Angeles...**

La Macia Restaurant and Casa Rafael continue their flamenco entertainment, and Linda Andrade and others can be seen at La Macia while Maria Bermudez is in Spain.

### **Flamenco at the Fountain**

The Fountain Theatre in Los Angeles continues its flamenco series with Roberto Amaral as Artistic Director. The series dates are Sunday, October 20, November 3, November 17, and December 1, 1991. Showtimes are 3:00 PM. For reservations: (213) 663-1525.

### **THE JUAN TALAVERA SPANISH AND FLAMENCO DANCE THEATRE**

Juan Talavera, the internationally known Spanish and Flamenco dancer/actor who can currently be seen in a dynamic new Diet Pepsi commercial called "The Audition," featuring Ray Charles, and a new Moody Blues video, is slated to appear with specially selected members of THE JUAN TALAVERA SPANISH AND FLAMENCO DANCE THEATRE in FLAMENCO TALAVERA! in the CELEBRATIONS! CONCERT SERIES at the Spiral Court in California Plaza, 300 South Grand in Downtown Los Angeles, on Wednesday, October 30, 1991 at 12:00 noon.

FLAMENCO TALAVERA will spotlight Southern California's finest Flamenco talent. Featured in the CELEBRATIONS! Concert at the Spiral Court at California Plaza will be soloists Antonia Lopez, Luana Moreno, Lourdes Rodriguez, and Juan Talavera. Providing the throat searing flamenco song will be Pepa Sevilla and Antonio Alcazar.

Benito Palacios and Antonio Triana will accompany on their flamenco guitars, and Patric Halago, a flamenca percussionist, will stir audience pulses with his exotic flamenco rhythms.

### **JOSE MOLINA'S BAILES ESPANOLAS**

The Jose Molinas Bailes Espanoles is touring the country with a troupe of eight under the auspices of the National Theatre. The company made numerous appearances at elementary and high schools throughout the state of Michigan.

Molina, who has a special rapport with young audiences, designed the programs to introduce and educate students to Spanish Dance and culture. In a highly captivating manner, Molina communicates to the student the basics of footwork, palmas, castanets and audience participation.

Molina gives his all for the young people as he does in any of the major theatres throughout the world in which he appears. Ester Suarez gave captivating performances in both classical and flamenco dances.

The Jose Molina Bailes Espanoles will perform at the Ambassador Auditorium in Pasadena, California on November 23-24, 1991.

### **NEW YORK, NEW YORK**

The Ararat restaurant continues their venue of flamenco with shows through the month of October and will feature dancers: Cristina Rey, Barbara Romero, Lisa Botallico, Jose Antonio, Shigeko, Micaela, Gabriela Granados, Jorge Navarro and Liliana Morales and singers: Domenich Caro, Luis Vargas, Paco Ortiz and Fernando de Triana. Arturo Martinez is the guitarist for the series and is also co-producer.

During September the group Flamenco Latino was seen at the Orfeo Restaurant Theatre. Along with Aurora Reyes, Basilio Georges and Sonia Montes were guests Nellie Tirado and Maya de Silva.

The Sol y Sombra Dance Company headed by Maria Loreta presented their second concert at Suffolk Community college, Long Island--this group was similar to the Huntington Concert and featured Jose Molina dancers Maria Loreta, Lisa Bottallico and Chana with guitar Carlos Rubio and the cante of Dominico Caro.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art is showing an exhibit entitled "The Spanish Guitar" which will run from October 1st through January 5th. In conjunction, the Department of Musical Instruments is presenting a series of four recitals of internationally acclaimed soloists representing music for the guitar from the Baroque era to modern classical and will include Victor Monje "Serranito" playing the flamenco guitar. The schedule of the guitar series is:

- Hopkinson Smith (vihuela, Baroque guitar), October 9th
- Jose Miguel Moreno (vihuela, Romantic guitar), October 30th
- Victor Monge "Serranito" (Flamenco guitar), November 20th
- Manuel Barrueco (modern Classical guitar), December 11th

The four programs will be held in the Museum's Uris Center Auditorium and advance ticket purchase or subscription is advised. An information telephone number is 570-3919.

-George Ryss-

## FLAMENCO IN AUSTRALIA

La Campana restaurant features flamenco Friday and Saturday nights with two shows nightly. Performing currently are Diana Reyes (dancer), Antonio Soria (singer) and Michael Arrighi (guitarist). Sherry Sasson "Charo" reports that many of the dance centers which offer Spanish or flamenco dance in Sydney will present a fiesta once a month for professionals and students. Notice is made of the Anita Ortega Dance Center and for the Antonio Vargas Flamenco Dance Theatre.

## FROM THE EDITOR

As a prelude to "WORKSHOP" I would like to offer some ideas about learning which are based on personal experiences with the guitar and from insights which have come along the way from artists, primarily musicians, who are involved in a broad spectrum of musical forms as well as flamenco. I have used myself as an example because, for however one might evaluate my playing ability, it has not come easily. If a dead end existed, I found it. So perhaps I can alert some of you who have started with the guitar recently to a few of the many pitfalls which line the trail.

In my opinion, the study of the flamenco guitar can be approached with various attitudes these days, especially with the modern trends which are evident. However, when learning as a foreigner to the culture, I recommend that you know early in the game why it is you want to play flamenco. It really is important to know why, as it simplifies the learning how. When I took private lessons it was my responsibility to tell my teacher what it was that I wanted to learn. I always knew what I liked, perhaps not in great depth, and I knew the direction I wanted to go toward. I requested certain falsetas that my teacher played, or I asked to learn "stylings" which he had. I knew what I wanted to learn and without that interest on my part there was no lesson -- except perhaps a lesson on how to be prepared to learn. Knowing the compas and basic structure of the forms was my responsibility unless I referred to something admittedly subtle or esoteric. As soon as I was able to accompany dance classes and rehearsals I did so at every opportunity and I know that the advice given by many top players is right on when they say, "learn the compas, the compas is number one". The music coming from Spain is so ordered and logical that when played without an understanding of the rhythm it has a particular sound which is unmistakable. It is the sound of imitation, of contrivance, of "academia", and perhaps it could be said that we have the responsibility to keep our efforts within the boundaries of tradition until we are capable of "crossing over" and keeping the feeling, the funk. Duke Ellington wrote the words and Ella Fitzgerald sang the song, "IT DON'T MEAN A THING", (if it ain't got that swing). That is the most heartfelt advice I can offer but under closer scrutiny there are countless helpful hints to use as guides to learning.

It is significant to me that young children are able to learn such a vast amount of stuff in such a relatively short amount of time. One quality which, in my opinion, makes some children perfect students is their honesty about what they don't know. This may sound simplistic and evoke a yawn, but when the unknown is recognized as such then learning becomes a matter of course if there is the interest.

## WORKSHOP: Part I - The Guitar

The technique I would like to investigate in this first workshop is the rasguado, referred to as the "triplet". It is a technique I have enjoyed developing because it was very difficult and I wanted it so much. Without going into a long history I will just say that as far as I know the triplet was invented or at least developed to state of the art status by guitar players from the area of Granada who were dance accompanists and quite possibly the one person most responsible for the development and application of the triplet was Juan Maya, "Marote".

As a rule, when a particular technique seems to be unattainable, or at best very difficult, I believe the thing to do is spend your time and energy with those things which are attainable, the techniques which can be developed with a reasonable amount of effort. But in my case with the way my hand is shaped and also the way the nails grow that advice would have really indicated that the guitar was not the instrument for me. Unfortunately, the flamenco cello was not the rage when I got started in 1961, so I went after the guitar. The triplet was one of those techniques which seemed to be so easy for some players and gave me so much trouble. When I tried to do it the way I saw the guitarists in Spain play it, I would tear off my thumb nail every time. After a while I noticed that the players I was watching all had a similar size and shape of hand, and that included the shape of the thumb, which bent back at the first joint. I almost broke my thumb one time trying to get it to bend back like that. After I gave up on that idea, I did figure out how to play the triplet with a straight thumb and the result is a little different than the norm. This explanation of how I do the triplet may be interesting to those of you who have a little trouble getting it under control, and those of you with straight thumbs -- take heart. The "triplet" is possible.

This will be in two parts: one, being how I practiced the mechanism and the other, the way I applied it, and they are different. First: The practice. It was important for me to have a fixed idea in mind of what I wanted to do with the rasguado -- that is, how I wanted it to sound and the answer to that was: full. I wanted to be able to play the triplet very fast against a slow base rhythm and maintain the character of the base rhythm. For example, in three beats of a twelve beat compas such as solea, I will play triple time or three complete cycles of the triplet per beat, ending on the first sound of the next cycle. I will go into the playing aspect later. For now let me just say that I wanted the sound to be very full. In order to gain the strength and control necessary to do this I developed a way of practicing which gave me the results I wanted.

The first idea to have in mind is to think of a syncopated rhythm in six counts rather than three, as the name triplet might suggest. The six beat pattern I used has accents on 3 & 5 which, if viewed from the inside-out, is a triplet but made of smaller parts. Mark the meter of 123456 with accents on 3 & 5 and you have buteria - - just take away the counts. It also is a triplet. The basic mechanism of the triplet is: The thumb plays two strokes, one down and one up, and the fingers, held together, play one stroke down. Those are the three movements which make the three sounds of the triplet. Now I will describe it in a little more detail. For the sake of communication the movement of the thumb, down across the six strings from 6th to 1st will be beat #1, followed by

the thumb reversing its direction and playing up across the six strings from 1st to 6th (beat #2) and continuing upward until the entire hand is above or on top the sixth string. Then, keeping the thumb held up, play the fingers down across the six strings from 6th to 1st on beat #3. That then leaves you ready to repeat the cycle with the thumb down. For now, think of the movements in the order I described as #1, #2 and #3. However, rather than begin the next cycle with #1 again, the thumb playing down now will be #4, the thumb playing up is #5, and the hand playing down is #6. Go through the cycle keeping track of the six movements and place an accent, that is, a slightly delayed and slightly pulsed motion, on #3 and #5. That results in the first accent occurring on the fingers and hand playing down in the first set of three movements and the second accent on the thumb playing up in the second set of three. Within those described movements are a couple of "trouble spots." When the thumb plays up the fingers must follow and close slightly so that the finger tips touch the palm of the hand. When the fingers play down it is important to keep the thumb held where it is and not let the movement of the fingers playing down bring the thumb down. This point in the mechanism was difficult for me and the reason is, I think, that my fingers are a little long and the knuckles of the hand would tend to collapse rather than maintain a slight curve. At this point is the application of the importance of focusing the effort of the fingers into the ring and little fingers and as much as possible, leaving the first and second fingers out of the picture -- just let them follow along. Having the entire pattern in mind with the accents the next thing to work on is starting the rasguedo on beat #5 or #6. The effect, and application, is that of a pick up, or up beat. Having begun like this then puts the hand ready to play the thumb down and the beat # is 1, which is an unaccented beat, which is good because playing an accented stroke down with the thumb is where the thumb nail usually leaves. As explained before, the first accented sound will occur when the fingers play down, which is beat #3, then again on beat #5, with the thumb up. The entire cycle takes two times around with the hand. Practicing like

this will give the hand the strength to articulate when the rasguedo is played as music rather than a study. While playing as a study be sure to avoid using force in the wrist. It is important to isolate the movement into the finger(s) or thumb as called for. After some strength has been developed and the cycle can be played with a fixed tempo, as with a metronome, then gradually begin to allow the wrist to back up the movement with a slight rotation. There is a particular feel to search for in the hand and that is keeping the motion of the hand free from the motion of the wrist. Conversely, when you push with the wrist past the ability of the hand to keep up then everything falls apart. When the coordination and strength are sufficient to maintain a roll at any speed then practice with a measured tempo but when the hand begins to tire to the point of losing the roll then do not continue. The biggest enemy of capturing the technique is trying to go too fast too soon.

Playing the rasguedo as music rather than study requires first, as is normal, doing it without thinking too much about what the hand is doing and just let it do what you want it to do to create the result you want. All the explanation about beats and numbers does not apply when playing music but when practiced as described, the hand can be prepared to respond as needed. I will change the accent pattern within the rasguedo from double time to triple or triple time to double, but how to do it is explainable only by restating the importance of developing the strength to accent with the downward motion of the hand and the upward motion of the thumb. It is beneficial to be able to play the cycle accenting the roll only on the upbeat or only on the downbeat, as desired. When the technique is under control it can be used for rhythmic meters of four counts as easily as those based on three (or six, twelve, etc.).

Watch for "Workshop" in the next issue.



HE FINALLY FELT 'DUFHDE' THE OTHER DAY...  
AND IT TURNS OUT HE DOESN'T LOVE IT!



## THE EPOCHS OF FLAMENCO HISTORY

[From *Encounters Magazine*, August 1991, by Eric Patterson]

It is probably safe to say that flamenco bears the ironic distinction of being one of the most widely recognized performance art forms in the world while simultaneously being one of the least understood. People everywhere can readily identify the common caricature of the "flamenco dancer" -- a pose struck with an arm thrown over the head with a snap of the fingers, a stamp of the foot, and the assumption of an air of hauteur. Flamenco guitarists are commonly expected to play anything from bullfight "corridos" to excerpts from Bizet's "Carmen", from the Argentine "tango" to "La Bamba," while the general public's reaction to the microtonalities of flamenco singing is often a bewildered and nervous embarrassment.

The art form is often disdained -- even within Spain -- as the product of a socially-marginal minority, yet when the singer Antonio Cruz Garcia (known as Antonio Mairena) died in 1983, telegrams of sympathy were sent by the Casa Real, the President, the Vice-President, and the Minister of Culture. Contradictory attitudes toward flamenco typically abound among writers and artists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For example, the Spanish intellectuals of the Generation of 1898, such as Pio Baroja and Eugenio Noel, actively dislike the art form on nationalistic and philosophical grounds, while others -- Diaghilev, Stravinsky, Glinka, de Falla, Garcia Lorca, Gautier, Havelock Ellis, Carl Van Vechten, Merimee, Washington Irving, and Ignacio Zuloaga among them -- declared themselves to have been deeply and enthusiastically moved by it.

Argument also exists about whether flamenco is best performed in small and informal settings or in theaters, whether women can sing as soulfully as men, whether castanets are proper or not, and whether non-Spaniards can authentically perform the art. Small wonder, amid such confusion, that flamenco remains little understood. A brief look at the history of this folk art will perhaps aid in gaining a clearer understanding of it.

To speak of the art of flamenco is to speak of a form of song, dance, and guitar playing which developed in southern Spain, largely among the gypsy population. Historians of the art have generally divided flamenco history into five major epochs:

pre-1800	Gitanerias
1800-1850	Tabernas
1850-1910	Cafe Cantante
1910-1950	Theatrical/Decadence
1950-present	Resurgence

## GITANERIAS

The year 1492 witnessed the end of the long struggle for the reconquest of Spain which had begun in 718 when the Moors were defeated in the battle at Covadonga. Immediately, the Catholic monarchs set about unifying Spain culturally and religiously, as they had territorially. Beginning in 1499 with a pragmatica issued

at Medina del Campo, and continuing for more than a century, the Spanish monarch attempted to promote either the conversion or expulsion of such marginal peoples as Moors, Jews and gypsies. To this end, the gypsies were ordered to abandon their itinerant life and to give up the use of their language, traditional dress, occupations, and other manifestations of their culture. A number of them settled in gypsy quarters or *gitanerias* due to this pressure, although some resisted assimilation and managed to maintain their old habits and traditions.

In these semi-rural *gitanerias*, such as Triana and Santa Cruz in Sevilla and in villages like Jerez de la Frontera, Lebrija, and Utrera, what is now called *cante gitano*, or gypsy song, developed during the last third of the eighteenth century.

*"Like the forge  
my insides glow like gold  
when I recall you,  
and I weep..."*

--Martinete

Many of the earliest song forms, the tonas, the seguidillas, and the martinetes, were created by gypsy blacksmiths at their forges and were originally accompanied by the sound of hammer upon anvil. Yet because these creations were private and took place within the rather hidden world of the gypsy quarter, scholars today know almost nothing substantive about the development of flamenco during the *gitanerias* epoch. The little that is known has been inferred from literary rather than historical sources. For example, we know from Cervantes that as early as the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, gypsies were known for their dancing and singing. In one of the exemplary novels, "La Gitanilla", Perciosa and other gypsies were said to dance and sing seguidillas, "jacasas" romances, and zarzuelas, among their other entertainments. In his "Memoirs" of 1767, Casanova mentions gypsies dancing "fandangos", and Jose Cadalso, in his famous "Cartas Marruecas" of 1774 tells of gypsies performing the song of "podo".

From these and similar references, some important inferences may be drawn. First, since many of the songs and dances cited by these and other early literary sources are considered to be non-gypsy in origin, it seems likely that the gypsies within the period functioned primarily as performers rather than as creative artists when interacting with Spanish non-gypsy society. In spite of the injunctions against their traditional pursuits, gypsies had always been sought out by "payos", or non-gypsies, who wanted a fortune told, expert advice on livestock, or wished to hire flamboyant entertainment. And while public gypsy song and dance tended to reflect a compromise with requirements of the payo community, it can nevertheless be suggested that near the end of the eighteenth century, *cante gitano* was being developed in the privacy of the *gitanerias*. This *cante gitano* was a powerful, passionate, dark manifestation of the harsh realities of the time, as well as of racial memory. Flamenco of the *gitanerias* epoch was formative, secretive, gypsy and amateur.

(Continued on Pg. 6)

# THE LANGUAGE OF SPANISH DANCE

By **MATTEO Marcellus Vittucci**  
 With **Carola Goya**  
 Foreword by **Richard Cragun**  
 Drawings by **Louis Gioia**  
 Flamenco Guitar Music by **Peter Baime**  
 Piano Arrangements by **Marc Saint-Germain**



"Although we've been watching Spanish dancing for decades, we must confess that what we don't know about it could fill a book. Recently, it has, in fact: a big, remarkable volume from the University of Oklahoma Press."—*The New Yorker*.

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"With the weariness of death  
I crept to one side;  
with the fingers of my hand  
I tore at the wall..."

--Martinete

## TABERNAS

The name tabernas, sometimes applied to this period of flamenco history (1800-1850), is meant to suggest that the art became semi-public at this time. In Triana, during the first half of the nineteenth century, we begin to discern some of the individual artists and interpreters of the early flamenco -- Tio Luis el de la Juliana, Jan Pelao, the Caganchos, and the master Planeta. Many of these artists were blacksmiths and met in taverns -- tabernas -- late in the day to sing, and it is a compelling image that crowds of passers-by would gather outside a tavern to hear the singing through the windows. Moreover, not only would the residents of Triana hear this *cante gitano*, but Sevillanos from the other side of the Rio Guadalquivir would cross the Triana Bridge on horseback or in carriages for an evening of revelry.

This era of relative openness bore its literary witnesses, who in a series of memorable volumes, painted vivid, first-hand pictures of the time. Among the earliest to evince interest were foreign travelers -- for the most part British -- who acted in accord with Dr. Samuel Johnson's exhortation of some 75 years earlier: "Na country is less known (than Spain) to the rest of Europe...I would have you go thither." George Borrow in the 1830s, Richard Ford in 1845, and Walter Thornbury just after mid-century demonstrate a typically Victorian curiosity, infused with a sense of natural superiority, in their descriptions of gypsy singing and dancing. From the accounts written during this time, it is clear that flamenco was viewed as quaint, primitive, romantic, and rather incomprehensible. Such was not the case, however, when Estebanez Calderon wrote "Escenas Andaluzas" in 1847. As a sympathetic Spaniard, he made an attempt to be historical and observant when writing about an evening of song and dance he saw in a tavern in Triana.

## CAFE CANTANTE

By the middle of the nineteenth century, flamenco developed a new manifestation and outlet -- the commercial performance. "Cafe Cantantes", or cafes-for-singing, sprang up in large numbers throughout Spain, as the non-gypsy audience discovered and delighted in this new-found form of entertainment. Because of the *cafe cantante* performance often required as many as fifteen or more artists, the demand for performers became so great that non-gypsy professionals began to perform in significant numbers.

This era, which lasted until roughly 1910, is often termed the "Golden Age" of flamenco. So intense was the competition between performers and among cafes that extraordinary heights of artistry and creativity were reached. The artists of this period are considered, in retrospect, to have been among the finest in flamenco history. To an aficionado, such names as El Nitri, La Malena, Silverio, Enrique el Mellizo, Estampio, Javier Molina, and Paco Lucena, to name but a few, evoke images of a level of performance and creativity rarely seen after their time. It was not unusual, in the earliest years, for a *cafe cantante* to have half a

dozen performers a night and for these to include animal acts, magicians, jugglers, and folkloric song and dance in addition to flamenco. By the 1870s and 1880s, however, flamenco itself had come to be the sole *raison d'être* for the hundreds of *cafe cantantes* found in Spain.

The proliferation of flamenco artists during this period was paralleled by a proliferation of song and dance forms. The need to present performances of varied content and of sufficient length to ensure commercial success served as the impetus behind this. Some of these creations were the result of a sophistication of cruder folk styles; some were based upon song and dance styles popular in the Spanish Western Hemisphere; and some were the personal creations of artists of the time.

Thus the years between the opening of the first *cafe cantante* in 1842 and the closing of the last one in 1920 were of critical importance in the evolution of flamenco. Yet if the commercialization of the art spawned a "golden age" of creativity and competition, it also compromised some of the purer and more powerful qualities of the art in the interest of pleasing an ever-growing audience. On this note, Antonio Machado observed as early as 1881 that flamenco, as the inexorable price of its popularity, was becoming decadent. His prescience was to be verified by events occurring during the first half of the twentieth century.

## DECADENCE

Anselmo Gonzalez Climent, in his landmark book "*Flamencologia*" published in 1955, provided a telling list of characteristics which he found common to much of the flamenco of the decadent epoch. Although he was speaking specifically of that type of decadence now called "*operismo*", his criticisms apply in large measure to the period 1910-1950 as a whole.

He decried the rise in orchestral accompaniment and the consequent lessening in importance of the tradition of guitar accompaniment, a change generally attributed to the presentation of flamenco in theaters following the closing of the cafes. Another sign of the decline of flamenco, in Gonzalez Climent's view, was the increasing popularity of light, frivolous songs against the relative lack of understanding of the earlier *cante grande*. He added that the lyrics of the more serious songs were becoming hyper-sentimental and gave as an example the following *fandango*:

"They toll the bells for all the dead,  
and for my poor mother they did not;  
it was not because she had not confessed,  
it was because she had no money,  
and without that, my poor mother  
was buried without bells."

Gonzalez Climent finds flamenco song of the decadence to be gaudy, overly-stylized, pretentious, materialistic, and lacking in intellectual rigor or guidelines. The runaway success of this type of flamenco far overshadowed the efforts of such authentic, but commercially unsuccessful artists as Tomas Pava, Manuel Torre, and others. Along with decadence in the singing, this period also saw the dance come to dominate the art in the eyes of the audiences, since large theatrical productions were tailor-made for the costumes, movement, and excitement of the dance.



Alarmed by these trends, Manuel de Falla, Federico Garcia Lorca, and others staged the famous Concurso of Granada in 1922 in an attempt to discover and reward authentic artists. This effort, although valiant, could not stem the general decline in the art of flamenco, a decline which persisted for three more decades. By the middle of the century, many aficionados were convinced that the art had been compromised so badly that it would never recover its genuine form and voice.

At this time, large touring companies were promoting a picturesque and exciting, but highly theatrical version, of flamenco dance. The recording industry, meanwhile, had been supporting flamenco singing for many years. Its support, however, was marked by a strong emphasis on the gaudy, the sentimental, and the lightweight, as personified in the enormously popular figures Pepe Marchena, Antonio Molina, and Conchita Piquer. In sum, flamenco had attained broad popularity in its most commercial and theatrical form, but the castanets and polka dots had obscured and largely negated its deeper, more profound impulse.

### RESURGENCE

After some seventy years of decline, flamenco began to recover something of its original personality during the decade of the 1950s. Fundamental to this recovery was the founding of the Tablao Zambra in Madrid in 1954 by Feman Casares. Until it closed in 1975, this club was a mecca for those seeking some of the best and most honest flamenco of the time. The artists who worked at the Zambra, the guitarist Perico el del Lunar, dancer Rosa Duran, and singers such as Pericon de Cadiz, Rafael Romero, and Bernardo el de Los Lobitos, were traditionalists whose work reflected the integrity of times long past.

In 1954, a group of French recording company executives who saw the show at La Zambra were so moved by its purity and authenticity that they proposed issuing a record of it. The result was the now famous Hispavox "Anthology of Cante Flamenco" -- a three-record set. When released, this set created a minor sensation in Spain, for it recalled to many Spaniards a heritage whose profound significance they had forgotten.

If the Zambra and the Hispavox anthology presented the art of flamenco, it remained for scholars and critics to examine it. In 1955, a pivotal work was published and was written with such insight, candor, and venomous sarcasm that its importance was assured. "*Flamencología*", by Anselmo Gonzalez Climent, reassessed the art form in the light of its recent decline and eloquently defended its more authentic manifestations.

Many tourists have experienced flamenco in the so-called "tablaos" of Spain. These flamenco clubs, which in many ways call up the *café cantantes* of a century earlier, first appeared in the 1950s and restored commercial flamenco to a more intimate venue. Such establishments as Arcos de los Cuchilleros, Torres Bermejas, and Corral de la Moreria consistently presented major artists to both Spanish and tourist audiences until the 1970s, when they began to be replaced by festivals and staged contests as the places to see serious flamenco.

Another factor influencing the resurgence of flamenco was the establishment in 1958 of the *Catedra de Flamencología* in Jerez de la Frontera. This helped renew an intellectual interest in the art. Under the sponsorship of the *Catedra*, workshops, panel

discussions, and publications have studied, in a productive and critical way, the nature and history of flamenco song, dance, and music.

These influences, the importance of the recording industry, the emergence of contests and festivals, the support of the art by groups of enthusiasts, and lastly, the fortuitous appearance of artists of great charisma and genius, such as Antonio Mairena, Carmen Amaya, Paco de Lucia, Manuela Vargas, and others, have reestablished flamenco as one of the world's most powerful and exciting folk art forms.

The changes wrought on flamenco during the past two centuries, however, have transformed the art. What first developed in a largely rural setting has now become an urban phenomenon and what was originally a largely gypsy folk art is now performed and shaped by non-gypsy Andalusians, by non-Andalusian Spaniards, indeed even by non-Spaniards. Finally, what was from the outset an amateur expression has now become, in its public form, commercial and theatrical. Yet each of the stages through which the art has passed retains at least a modicum of life. In our day, purely amateur singing, dancing, and guitar playing flourish within family gatherings, parties, ferias, and fiestas, while the professional face of the art is seen in tablaos, festivals, contests, and elaborate stage presentations.

Which is the "real" flamenco? All are, because the art exists in all of its manifestations. Moreover, this reality helps clarify some of the confusion noted at the beginning of this article. The richly textured history of flamenco gives it, at once, a simplicity and a complexity. It can be as theatrical as the Spanish Ballet Nacional with its cast of fifty artists, its crew of one hundred technicians, and its audience numbering in the millions around the world, or it can be as personal as the song hummed by a gypsy auto mechanic as he fixed a car's radiator in a garage in Madrid. In all of its expressions, flamenco has been for over two centuries one of the most compelling and powerful, if enigmatic, of Spanish popular arts.

*"Look how flamenco I am;  
If I see you are in trouble,  
everything I have is yours."*

—Buleria

*Eric Patterson has been studying and playing flamenco guitar for 25 years, and teaches a course in Flamenco History at the University of New Mexico.*

### Flamenco Dance Classes

with

*Linda Vega*

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**INTERVIEW: JOAQUIN RUIZ**

**August 8, 1991, Sante Fe, New Mexico**

Q: *First of all, the usual questions. Let's start with your birthplace and your date of birth.*

A: My name is Joaquin Ruiz Gomez. I was born in Madrid on the 25th of January, 1959. I live in Madrid.

Q: *What I am interested in is the evolution of flamenco. What is happening today with the guitar I see very easily, where they are getting their ideas from, in jazz, in South American music. But what is happening in the dance?*

A: In the dance it's happening, too, there is a little change or evolution. I think that the guitar has been the thing that has evolved the most, but in the dance it is not so easy to get away from the rules because you cannot blatantly take away from jazz or modern dance or the types of dancing without breaking the existing aesthetic of flamenco. But what is happening lately is there are artists who have started with the base of flamenco; for example in the past there were artists who would take a few steps from the flamencos who had the old tradition, and they would more or less stay there. Now there are people who come from the academies who have learned from Spanish classical and other dances. They have developed a little more in general and they have also learned flamenco and have combined both, the schooling of both, keeping the flamenco.

At least this is what is happening in Madrid for the male dancers, and a bit also in Sevilla. I don't know if this is exactly what you were asking. Of course, there is a lot of influence of other rhythms, for example I am a person that is interested in all kinds of music since I was young and for instance, right now I am choreographing some Tangos and I have based it in a lot of rhythms from salsa and other influences...you know, I am developing it. I have intended to get the rhythms and movements, the way you try to get little things, but you don't overdue it.

Q: *Do you know how you want your career to progress in the dancing?*

A: Yes, I always have had a goal. An important thing for me which is not exactly a goal to achieve, but rather a thing to avoid is to be like some artists who reach fame and stay there. They are good artists, but they stay there without changing and taking a chance. But not for me, I am very restless. If I do something I do it one time and tomorrow I want to do something else. I am always trying to do something better, but always changing and changing and always searching because I also play the guitar and lately with the timing...I have always liked to search and get my own style, and my own way of listening, seeing and conceiving flamenco. So that is my path, to find my own personality and create my own style. And of course it takes a lot of years because you

cannot obtain it from one day to the next. But what happens in order to maintain yourself dancing in Spain, you can dance alone in some places but you need to have an *espectaculo*. I am 32 years old and right now I am preparing a piece with a script, a theme, in which Ciro is helping me and it's very interesting because apart from the flamenco aspect I like the part of acting. Ciro was a teacher of mine and he helped me a lot. He was the one who recommended me to come here to Santa Fe in his place after he injured his knee. We've been collaborating for awhile. I put together a company and we went to Brazil, about twenty people and Ciro was there for two months with us.

Q: *Are you interested in maintaining a big company?*

A: No, not a big company. What I want is a few people with good quality that are marketable with about 9 artists. More than that is just crazy. An exception would be if more artists were demanded for some kinds of work. But really the base would be 8-9 people, 4 dancers plus guitarists and singers, but with the goal to do a good job. The problem that exists in Spain is that because there isn't sufficient subsidizing, and the jobs are from day to day and I don't have a company formed, *per se*. All the work there is day to day, for instance, they come to you and say something is needed for tomorrow... but you are not ready because you don't have a company. So what I do is take two or three things and the end result is something very poor. Because there is no time or money and it is very sad, because it goes against the shows and the way they are presented. So the only companies that can do a good presentation and that have the work are companies like the ones of Christina Hoyos. They have the money and can afford to keep a stable company and pay their people. This is the bad thing in Spain; there aren't enough companies. So there aren't enough permanent companies, and when there is work they form again for that specific work. When it's over, they dissolve and maybe two months later, reassemble again with different people and of course lacking the stability and the seriousness that is required to produce quality work.

Q: *Are there not many artists that know each other well and can form a group easily?*

A: Yes, but what happens is you can get something together and each dancer does his own stuff...is that what you're asking? That's kind of hard, because there are also guitarists and singers who might know how I dance, but they may not know the choreography. I think that for a company to succeed it has to have a continuity and work! That is basically the problem in Spain. It's not like here [U.S.] where there are companies that have been together for years and years with a tradition...do you understand? The truth is, there is no money.

For instance, sometimes I have done a great amount of work in putting together a piece for a month or two and then I lose the job and people leave and then later on if something comes up, I can't do it because if I am going to have to sacrifice the quality I don't want to do it. It's very difficult. In Spain there used to be many more before; not even Mario Maya has a company formed. Antonio Gades is re-forming just now because they have something in Japan. Right now even he doesn't have a stable company, maybe the Ballet Nacional is the major one. It's a very sad situation.

Q: *Among you, Ciro and other established dancers, what opinion do you have of Fred Astaire?*

A: Everybody admires him alot, and I think there have been alot of things that have been borrowed from him. I think that Fred Astaire, of all the dancers, is a real dancer. He really dances..he dances with all of his body. What I think, maybe I am mixing things up but in my opinion, when they talk about Fred Astaire there has been alot said about what is *puro* and what is not *puro*. There have been alot of steps in flamenco that have been done for many years, very old things, things that Farruco does, that have been borrowed from American musicals. [Sr. Ruiz demonstrated several examples for the interviewer.] Steps like this are steps that didn't exist before, which didn't exist in flamenco before. Flamenco really has evolved alot. For instance, even Marin Maya has taken things, which is alright, you know! If you bring it to your own area and you do it well, it's fine. And you could also say the opposite. I see that alot of things in modern ballet have borrowed from flamenco, like the short breaks that Michael Jackson does...these have been borrowed from flamenco. I remember that before modern dance movements were less sharp or choppy, like this...[another demonstration]. This comes all the way since "West Side Story." What is clear to me is that flamenco has alot to offer other dance forms as well.

Q: *I'm interested in your opinion about flamenco in America.*

A: Considering I haven't been here in 10 years...but from what I've seen there is very little flamenco that comes here, perhaps because the agents feel they don't need to bring anybody from Spain, because maybe there is a level of artist very high or they find what they need here, because it has been a number of years now that I know that any company has come from Spain. And of course this situation in one way or another does influence the American artist and it must be a bit discouraging because not having contact, not seeing people from Spain--I'm not saying that what's being done here is not good--but you always need a source of inspiration. For instance, there are countries with less tradition of flamenco than the U.S., like Holland, England, even Italy that for the short time they've been interested in flamenco, are growing in numbers (not in quality) of people involved...you can't believe it. I myself have gone to Holland a great number of times and in a short time Italy is full of dance schools. Everyone is throwing

themselves into flamenco. This summer was full of concerts with artists from Spain, so in other words, it is much more supported. The problem here (U.S.) is perhaps because it's alot farther away from Spain [than Europe] or the agents were dissatisfied with previous companies or artists from over there [Spain]. I think that there are not enough people that come here--people need motivation to see new people. There are not enough things happening here.

But apart from that, the artist needs a certain competition...when the artistic level is high, he pushes himself up but if he sees that everything is nice and easy he also becomes like that. Of course, I'm talking without knowing very much about the present situation of flamenco in the U.S. I'm telling you the truth, because as I said, it has been 10 years since I was here. Maybe everything is too calm--in other words, there is a need to see more and to be up-to-date. It could also be that they [American artists] are tired and bored, at least the dancers. Things are different for the guitarists. They have contact with Spain through records. But in the dance you have to see it and unless you see videos...in the dance you have to be over there or have some teachers come here. I don't know, perhaps I'm talking about something which I do not know very well!

I think that there is disconnection or lack of contact. In the past the U.S. was a popular place to come and all the artists from Spain used to come and tour here and there were alot of places to perform, but now it seems as if this era is over. Of course, this is going to be noticed especially in the *aficion* of the people--because people do like flamenco as we can see with the success of Maria Benitez. But you need that direct contact. In Japan there is more flamenco than here. Each year 10 or more companies tour there, sometimes adding their own [Japanese] artists.

Q: *You have to be at the Hotel Picacho in 10 minutes for the rehearsal, right? We had better leave quickly!*

*Sr. Ruiz was in the midst of choreographing for the Maria Benitez Spanish Dance Company and graciously took time out from his busy schedule to have this interview.*

-Editor-

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## DANCING WITH THE TORMENT AND PASSION

[From *The New Mexican*, July 1991, by John Gwynn]

It was the fearsome Fourth and to escape the amateur fireworks on the streets, we ducked in to see Maria Benitez's Estampa Flamenca at the Picacho Plaza Hotel.

On stage were fireworks of a different order: They were rhythmic rather than random outbursts conveying emotions sharpened through the centuries. Flamenco is every bit as explosive, and many times more resonating, as anything bought at a roadside stand.

The atmosphere of the intimate Maria Benitez Club is swiftly charged when the houselights are doused. In darkness the zapateado begins, the pared-down beat of heels and palms. And even before spotlights come up on darkly clad, starkly fierce figures, we know that something heavy is going down. And that we are somehow involved.

Frankly, traditional flamenco of this caliber is and should be a little on the scary side, and like a Hopi Snake Dance, it's impossible to stay aloof. Flamenco, an anguished but never despairing response to the persecution of Spanish Gypsies that began in the 16th century, calls upon chivalric code of honor and human dignity that smart bombs cheered on by yellow ribbons just can't hold a candle to.

Maria Benitez knows like a water-witching dervish how to tap into that torrent of pride and passion. It's her depth of feeling, rather than virtuosic brilliance alone, that has propelled the Taos-born dancer to international stardom, the most celebrated *prima ballerina assoluta* of flamenco of her generation.

For more than two decades now, following world tours, she has returned home to Santa Fe like a prodigal summer storm, one of the perennial wonders in this city's cultural climate.

Even so, through three acts of her current show, I thought the queen might be in trouble - the fire quenched or reduced to banked embers of fame. Then, having coyly flirted with the routine, which is anathema to flamenco, Benitez erupted again, reducing all doubts to ashes.

Her present company is not the ideal support vehicle of years past. Chief among the pluses is "Chuscales," a flamenco guitarist of consummate artistry and sensitivity. He sets the emotional tone for each set and then follows the improvising soloists like a coach spotting an acrobat.

Paco Pinon, who sings the wailing "coplas" of lost and unrequited loves, is less strong than clear, and somehow doesn't manage to drench the stage in woe.

Both male dancers, Angel Atienza and Alfonso Simo, return from last year and both are scintillating in their own right. Simo has balletically expressive hands that counter-point his crisp foot work and perfect mask of disdain. Atienza's later solo is even more amazing in terms of timing, with instant accelerations and abrupt terminations symbolizing precise emotional control.

Monica Flores and Ramona Garduno are too invisible as the other female dancers, leaving one to speculate whether they are holding back or being stifled.

The partnering is disappointing. For all their vigor, Atienza and Simo are too puppyish to strike the right mature chemistry with Benitez. The performance is geared throughout to her star presence, with numerous solo entrances and exits. The burden and the expectations steadily grow.

They are not met by a lyrical solo done with white shawl to a taped piano score. This Isadora-like piece exhibits Benitez's range and suppleness but contains only tantalizing hints of flamenco. Benitez ups the ante, betting all on the ecstatic trance-like *duende* of her finale. It's a risk that pays off.

When Maria Benitez finally pushes off, gently at first, on her solo journey, space seems to both expand and contract. Her magnificent shawl sweeps the room like a gravitational broom, whisking us into the black hole of her introspection. It's a totality that can't be comprehended in words. So we might choose a detail unique to Benitez: a certain outstretched placement of her foot that focuses every eye in the house on the few square centimeters where arch turns into ankle.

With skirt hitched a notch to reveal the beautiful angularities at work, Benitez's feet search and stamp forward in exaggerated, almost compulsive extensions. It's one detail among many, like picking out a single stick in a bonfire and watching it burn, when all the while you can't escape the heat from the whole.



MARIA BENITEZ



In conjunction with the performances of the Maria Benitez Spanish Dance Company in Santa Fe this summer, the Institute for Spanish Arts presented workshops on Spanish and flamenco dance under the direction of Maria Benitez. The workshops were well attended and well organized. Joaquin Ruiz, as well as being invited to choreograph for the Company, taught a Master Repertory class. The majority of dancers enrolled in the Master Repertory Workshop were not at professional or even advanced levels required to benefit from the level of expertise which Sr. Ruiz was offering, and his frustration with the inexperience of the attendees and the absence of pre-screening by workshop sponsors was evident during the first days of the workshop. After adjusting to the level of ability, Sr. Ruiz taught tangos and solea por buleria.



**Alfonso Simo**



**La Monica**



**Paco Piñon**



**Angel Atienza**



**"Chuscales", the heartbeat of the show**

Photos: B. Patterson

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**ON STAGE****PACO PENA'S FLAMENCO DANCE COMPANY;**

*Paco Pena with Raul, Belen Maya, Belen Fernandez, Jose Losada, Diego Losada, Dieguito, Ye-Ye de Cadiz and Tomas de Jerez. Enmore Theatre.*

[From Australia, by Graham Pearcey, August 1991, sent by S. Sassoon]

It's pronounced "Penya" and in any language it means flamenco, not only because Paco Pena is probably Spain's most celebrated flamenco guitarist but because of his devotion to the art form itself and to bringing it to the world.

And flamenco more than any other art form is the product of its components - even the clapping hand is a vital part of the ensemble, able to drive or alter the flow with the slightest shift of emphasis or tempo.

The sum of this performance was a spellbinding feast of energy and the audience devoured it. Importantly, flamenco is improvised and, although this does not mean the company starts from scratch for every performance, the way that it develops will be unique.

Pena's authority is complete yet discreet and the dancers in particular are given free license to work within the confines of the *falsettas*.

And the dancing was exquisite. Belen Maya and Belen Fernandez set the stage ablaze in a cascade of colour. They moved with an uncanny fluidity and grace that at times was difficult to comprehend. They strutted, thundered and fluttered across the stage, so birdlike they seemed almost to fly.

The voices of Dieguito and Ye-Ye de Cadiz, an equally important part of the tableau, provided a bizarre counterpoint to the female coquettishness. Wailing like mullahs, they were the masculine archetypes paying a compelling homage to love, tragedy, joy and the female form.

If the female dancers teased and tempted, Raul, the single male performer, was devastating. He is the definitive flamenco dancer, the drawn bowstring that embodies the tension and passion that is part and parcel of the flamenco tradition.

The second half of the performance opened with Pena in solo, an all-too-brief glimpse of the breadth of his virtuoso skills, followed by accompanied pieces with guitarists Diego and Jose Losada.

The Enmore Theatre is not the most suitable venue for flamenco.

**PRIVATE PASSION**

[From the *Australian Star*, August, 1991]

Paco Pena's music is as passionate and raw as he is smooth and good-looking. His music transports audiences to another world. Yet he will not look at an audience while playing for fear of breaking the music's magical flow. Suggest to the world-renowned

flamenco guitarist that he is another smooth, Spanish performer in the mould of Julian Iglesias and he laughs nervously.

"Like most Spaniards I suppose I am a sensual person but not in the way Julio is said to be," he quips, adding he has no intention of declaring undying passion to half the world's population (the female half). "I certainly feel sensual when I play, but in a private way - it is a very personal experience."

But one thing Paco will admit undying passion for is his famous brand of flamenco music and his much-loved favorite guitar. It has been with him for most of his professional career which began at the age of 21 when he took London by storm in 1963.

"Of course, I have a number of guitars - about 20," Paco says. "But put me in a room and ask me to choose one and I will pick my solo guitar every time. It's responsive to me and my moods," he says.

Obviously, because 26 years on, the pair are still going strong and ready to tour Australia for the eighth time. But this tour will be an act with a difference because Paco is bringing his very own flamenco dance troupe along.

"This time it will be flamenco in its complete form," the 48-year-old says from his Spanish villa. "The three dancers, who are human dynamites, will give my music added feeling. "Dancing adds a visual side which of course makes up so much of the music's history, swirling skirts, clapping hands - that sort of thing."

Not that his music was lacking anything before - everywhere Paco travels his playing is met with critical acclaim. "Even those who know little about flamenco music are converted and can be heard to cry "dazzling, exhilarating, bravo!" Paco says he was born with the sweet sounds of flamenco in his ears.

"It's a way of life in my country and especially in my family," he says. His father played, his brother played and his seven sisters danced to it. "It is one of the ways my people have always expressed their feelings," he says.

"If flamenco was a person he would be extroverted, boisterous, outgoing - and would do everything in the extreme. Flamenco is raunchy and rowdy but passionate and spontaneous. It was a way for me to come out of my shell when I was a young, shy boy."

After being in the international spotlight for years Paco concedes he is not that same introverted performer today - although he still cannot look at an audience while he is playing. "To be concerned with actual physical elements breaks the magic of the music," he says. It is my job to move the people out of their seats and into another time, another place."

But to the modest maestro - who spends hours practicing every day but never feels he will master the art of flamenco guitar playing - the most important thing is to stay true to the music's roots.

"I could say it would be nice to be as big and well-known as a rock star," he says. But that is unrealistic and I couldn't because I am too involved in the music. It is the major part of my performances, not me."



**Paco de Lucia**

*La musica clasica, como reto de un guitarrista flamenco - R.G. (Madrid)*

[Sent by S. Di Palma, August 1991, Madrid, Spain]

El guitarrista flamenco Paco de Lucia interpreto ayer por primera vez en Espana un tema de musica clasica, el *Concierto de Aranjuez*, de Joaquin Rodrigo, en el teatro Bulevar de Torrelozanes (Madrid). Con la Orquesta de Cadaques, una formacion fundada en 1988 por jovenes musicos europeos y norteamericanos, y dirigida por Edmon Colomer, Lucia inicio asi una nueva experiencia dentro de su carrera, que califico de reto personal -- "yo no tengo la tecnica ni el sonido de un guitarrista clasico" -- y de enriquecimiento musical.

Paco de Lucia senalo que lo que en principio fue en encargo -- "como todo en my vida, se produjo por accidente" --, que realizo sin demasiada ilusion, se ha convertido en una curiosidad musical y personal, que le puede abrir distintas perspectivas. "Yo soy un guitarrista flamenco y no voy a ser otra cosa, pero tampoco quiero encerrarme en ese mundo del flamenco, que es tan pequenito". Sin embargo, Lucia quiso resaltar que el *Concierto de Aranjuez*, cuya interpretacion ha realizado dentro de un enorme respeto por la partitura, es un tema espanio "inspirado en raices populares y flamencas". "Yo no estoy interpretando a Mozart, ni a Beethoven, sino algo absolutamente enraizado en mi pueblo y en mi gente".

A sus 43 anos, el guitarrista gaditano, que ha interrumpido su gira para este concierto, no quiso echar las campanas al vuelo sobre si esta aproximacion a la musica clasica le puede animar a introducirse en un futuro en este campo. "Me tengo que oir, que todavia no me he oido. Tengo que tener la perspectiva suficiente como para saber si hago el ridiculo o no".

[JALEO MAGAZINE feels it is important to include at least one article per issue in Spanish for our reader's benefit.]



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## SANTA BARBARA'S FIRST ANNUAL SPANISH DANCE FESTIVAL

-Lucia Morales-

On Friday, July 12, 1991, Fiesta Talavera! Spanish Dance Concert was presented at the Lobero Theatre in Santa Barbara in a nearly sold out crowd. The evening represented quite a mix of ages, sizes and shapes as the companies and dance schools of Kathy Cota, Rose Marie Cruz, Linda Vega and Juan Talavera's Spanish and Flamenco Dance Theatre shared the stage at the Lobero.

Of these four groups, the Kathy Cota and Rose Marie Cruz Spanish Dancers showcased youth with dancers ranging from ages 5 to 17 years old, demonstrating classical dance forms with adorably cloned choreography. I cannot critique the dancing, as it was quite obviously done in recital format with anxious and enthusiastic families turning out to support their delightfully groomed Spanish dancers. The essence of youth was refreshing and delightful, and Santa Barbara is most certainly supporting this art form in all aspects.

Linda Vega showcased 6 dancers in "Alegrias", and sung by Antonin Alcazar, with some very clean, classical lines and flirtatious, *gracioso* moments in a piece done with largely unison movements. Juan Talavera, the evenings' Artistic Director, opened the professional side of the show with "Zapateado", which was dramatically appropriate for the night's festival. Swift, clean and solid, he can pas de bouree on his heels forever. Talavera can really rivet the audience with his intensity, and his footwork and inner strength are hypnotising.

The next three numbers were exciting and individual. I was pleasantly surprised by the "Tientos" solo of Isa Mura, a guest artist from San Francisco, who was also a brilliant singer in the second half of the show. Without using any props, this woman in a very simple costume created more percussion and rhythmical styling with her *taconeo*, *pitos* and *braseo* than I had seen thus far. Ms. Mura was definitely as well choreographed and honed in her technique as Talavera's class of dancer.

The next surprise was a Tango Argentino danced by Loreen Arbus and Alberto Toledano that was coolly performed by the couple, with daredevil accomplishment to taped music. Their control and non-verbal foot/ankle communication as a couple was phenomenal.

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A flamenco quartet followed the Argentines and it was a very hot number thanks to the Gypsy styles of Maria Bermudez, Luana Moreno, and the versatile Lourdes Rodriguez. Juan Talavera danced with each woman with tasteful decorum and enhanced each of their own personal styles. Talavera is a great presence on stage, almost as hypnotic as someone like "El Farruco." He concluded the first half with a breakneck "Bulerias" accompanied by over thirty dancers on stage, the exciting climax of which left one reluctant to pause for intermission.

Cuadro flamenco began the second half with Lilia Llorens' Cuban "Guajiras", followed by Ana Galindo's searing "Sofares." Lourdes Rodriguez danced a Martinete with castanets, fused with a Gypsy, middle eastern style that was mesmerizing. She followed in "Siguiriya", with tremendous stage presence and musicianship displayed throughout her dance. "Alegrias" as danced by Luana Moreno was crisp, cool and without foolishness. Moreno is a stately dancer who doesn't aspire to be anything but herself. Antonia Lopez followed with her "Tientos", and Maria Bermudez raged fiercely through her "Solea Por Bulerias." At this point in the show, the cuadro had been on stage for about an hour and energy levels there and in the audience seemed to wane. Juan Talavera closed this section with a solo that had some interesting improvisational moments by trading licks with the percussionist Patric Halago. Guitarists Antonin Duran and Antonio Triana played tremendously throughout, though it was the artistry and accompaniment of Mr. Duran which provided the depth required for such an extensive program.

The evening finished with a complete cast por fiesta, which brought a standing ovation from the audience. It is remarkable that Juan Talavera coordinated each of these groups and choreographed, directed and danced in this festival. He deserves respect for pulling this once-a-year flamenco extravaganza together. The Lobero Theatre needed two evenings to accommodate this show, which ended after 11:30 PM. Muchisimas gracias, Juan, from everyone.

*Lucia Morales is a writer, musician and former dancer. Her studies and travels have taken her around the world; she lived among the Gypsies in Southern Spain for five years before returning to her native New York in 1986. In 1990 she relocated to the Los Angeles area.*

### ***Taranto Christina***

Ballet de Christina Hoyos, Conde Duque, Madrid.  
By Angel Alvarez Caballero

[Following articles sent by S. Di Palma, translated by P. Moreno.  
El Pais, Madrid, July 17, 1991]

The taranto that Christina Hoyos danced was memorable. A personal expression but transferable to history of that art, which she dominates with authority and class. An art that she feels, suffers and enjoys when she surrenders herself to the ritual with passion and reverie.

You cannot penetrate any deeper into a dance. Its another thing to incorporate your body to the dance, as if one and the other were one self or being. Or one single feeling to whose command Christina Hoyos danced marvelously, with imagination, with a profusion of ideas and original solutions and beautiful.

Christina Hoyos is able to make the "jondo" shine without the limitations that theatrical arrangement imposes onto the individualistic flamenco expression. She also showed it in the "solea por hulerias", another portent of personal execution, and also in apotheosis of the final "bulerias."

The group of dancers for the Company also shined, above all, in the "tangos" which was done exclusively with the accompaniment of zapateado and palmas, and in the "alegrías" too. You could denote the creative impulse of Manolo Marin, with whom Christina collaborates in the choreography. The guitarists and singers were also at the same level.

### **Run, Jeronimo!**

Jeronimo Maya, Leonides and Felipe Maya, Juan Parilla, Ramon Parrina. Cante: Pansequito with Moraito Chico.

[August 2, 1991, El Pais, Madrid, by Angel Alvarez Cahallero]

Jeronimo has grown up. He is around 14 years and about 1.7 meters tall. Its hard to call him a boy. He has also grown up in his art, (this art has also grown) and in what way! He plays better than ever, with complete control of all the techniques, even with authority and with ease which he did not have until recently.

Above all, he plays more "flamenco" and more "jondo" every day. When he performs by himself Jeronimo lets himself go toward the pure sentiment. He can overpower us with feelings of pain with one single note just barely caressed. Jeronimo's music disarms us, we surrender to it with pleasure, enchanted by it and grateful. In Madrid we have a genius of the flamenco guitar and he is not a child prodigy.

But there was a surprise in this concert. It turns out that Jeronimo has a brother five years younger than him. His name is Leonides -as if the name is nothing- and he made his debut in this occasion. These are his first steps- logically-but someday we might have to take off our hats before him. It reminds us of Jeronimo when he was beginning; that freshness and naivete in the

elementary treatment of the "toques", but at the same time his intuition, his unusual sensibility to adjust to the limitations that are presented by the inexperience. Jeronimo is going to have competition in his own home. If he doesn't want to be caught, he is going to have to keep running.

Pansequito sang, he sang with mastery. His total and absolute control of all the cantes and compas, his astonishing capacity to make a "cante ligado." In this nobody can dispute his supremacy. He was great singing cantiñas, soleares and bulerías. And next in Jeronimo was, like it should be, the guitar of Moraito with its warm and beautiful sound.

### **RECORD REVIEW**

*Maria Solea. Embrujo del Cante toque: Antonio Jero. Coliseum D-01071. Sevilla, 1991.*

Hearing Maria Solea, one thinks that if there is authentic genius of race in the singing there is not better embodiment than she.

Maria began performing before the public only a few years ago, following the death of her brother Fernando, and the truth is nobody was coming forth with the mission of occupying the place left empty by him which seemed impossible. Today Maria Solea is noticed in her own right as perhaps the greatest "cantaora" that Jerez has ever produced.

She stands as an example and a paradigm of genius of a race which in the singing gave so many exceptional artisans. That way in which she laments, that deep hearted union with the true roots of the cante, the mystery of those expressive forms which at times have no possible explanation, are gifts reserved for the gypsies and in this, Maria Solea is privileged. It is so difficult to sing as she does, with that "media voz", to transmit that flow of emotion, saturated with infinite depth. And how easy it seems for this woman, who accompanied by the guitar playing of Antonio Jero, she offers us a handful of authentic jewels.

***Roberto Amaral***

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FROM THE EDITOR (cont. from p.2)

During the last six months, Jaleo Magazine has received quite a few letters from friends and supporters all around the country, and the goodwill toward the re-emergence of Jaleo is heartening. We are grateful for the support necessary to "start up" and I want to take this opportunity to especially thank George Ryss who has sent us bundles of reviews, photographs, articles and programs from the New York area. I half expect George to show up at my door, typewriter in hand, ready to help. George-I look forward to meeting you someday and I hope you drink bourbon. Again, on behalf of Jaleo and those artists you so tirelessly support, thank you, George.

-Editor-

Mariano Córdoba



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PILAR RIOJA IN 2 STYLES OF A SPANISH ART FORM

[THE NEW YORK TIMES, AUGUST 19, 1991. Sent by George Ryss]

By JENNIFER DUNNING

Pilar Rioja has carved a solid place for herself in the dance life of New York City, serving as a model of what many dancegoers think Spanish dancing out to be. Her audience at a gala performance on Thursday night at the cozy Gramercy Arts Theater (138 East 27th Street), where Miss Rioja performs through Sept. 2, responded to her like eager, loyal students to a beloved teacher. Indeed, the charismatic performer's new program is a clear exposition in dance and in words, in an accompanying anecdotal lecture by Robert Federico, of two styles of Spanish dance.

The first half of the program is devoted to "bailes estilizados," or dances created for the stage, incorporating elements of traditional folk, classic and flamenco dancing. In the second half, Miss Rioja performed an alegrías, a solca and a farruca with the grave, cool passion and technical skill for which she is known, and with an intriguingly new, harder and more biting attack.

Miss Rioja does not tear passion to tatters in the manner of many flamenco artists who perform in New York. And her delicate opening "Danza Nueva," set to music by Granados, is an elegant showcase for Miss Rioja's restrained approach to her art and an interesting example of the way Spanish dance of the 18th and 19th centuries absorbed elements of 18th-century ballet. But the two pieces that followed, which drew from Andalusian, Bolero School, flamenco and modern dance, were comparatively tepid pieces in the old "interpretive" style of modern dance.

The highlight of the evening came in the first section with "Tener la Esperanza Muerta," a dance based on a story by Federico Garcia Lorca, which Miss Rioja tells in the flamenco idiom. The story is about a woman who realizes that she has become a spinster, with no hope of marriage. But the dance is a powerful picture of resignation.

At the start, Miss Rioja's arms rise and her hands open out as if the woman were releasing a bird, or perhaps hope. Another gesture wistfully suggests an imagines caressing of her cheek. But this is a woman who is meeting her fate with a kind of stoicism found, too, in New England lore. And with the dance's last gesture, that fate has become personified as a figure very like Emily Dickinson's gallant, unstinting Death.

The program also included musical interludes performed by Jose Luis Negrete and Hector Talavera, guitarists; Enrique Iglesias, a singer, and Diego Ordaz, a pianist. Guillermo Barclay designed Miss Rioja's exquisite costumes. Mr. Federico designed the unobtrusively dramatic lighting.

**DICE DON QUIJOTE..**

Over the last couple of decades the flamenco world has witnessed the emergence of a new type of musician-one whose strengths include flawless technique, a drive to be creative and inventive, and a curiosity to experiment with non-flamenco elements in the toque. The intrusion of non-traditional elements, whether of forms (rock, jazz, blues, bossa nova) or of instrumentation (sitar, flute, electronic keyboard, saxophone, etc.), does, of course, have a precedent in flamenco history.

During the Cafe Cantante era (1840-1920) non-Andalucian intrusions such as farruca and garrotin became part of the body of flamenco, as did the so-called "cantes de ida y vuelta," at the turn of the century. And later, dances for cana, seguidillas, and even martinete became acceptable additions to the art. Guitar technique slowly expanded with the inclusion of various classical effects which would have seemed quite foreign to the earlier "thumb and strum" players, while piano and orchestra each had its day as the mode of accompaniment.

These additions and experiments seem, in retrospect, to be sincere manifestations of the evolutionary process of a folk art, and just as in nature, the process of evolution leads to dead-ends and declines (dinosaurs, little toes, canine teeth) as well as to progress, so there have been flamenco "experiments" which have led to little -- one does not hear the cante for farruca much anymore, one does not often see the garrotin, one does not hear the Vidalita or the twenty-odd extinct forms of tonas. And while the dance for martinete was an unforgettable signature piece for Antonio Ruiz, it does not seem to figure as a dance form which must be mastered by the students of today.

But I suggest that while the natural course of things has led to legitimate experimentation and attendant change over the past century and a half, much of the experimentation of the last two decades has been of a somewhat different type, a type which, to borrow a botanical metaphor, has seemed more of a "forced" or "hot-house" variety. The imposition of foreign musical forms and instrumentations may be attributed to the honest desire to create a new sound, but on the other hand it may simply mask a lack of ideas on the part of some musicians. It may open new avenues for sophisticated composition by the few real geniuses playing today, but in most hands it does no more than trivialize, commercialize and confuse a most powerful folk art form, and because the "jazzy" approach seems so appropriate (and admittedly, beautiful) when used in playing the lighter flamenco forms, such as bulerias, tanguillos, sevillanas, rumbas, etc., and so dangerous and inappropriate in the serious forms, like solea and seguidillas, the international audience for flamenco is in danger of only knowing the art form in terms of its least significant manifestations. Flamenco may come to be nothing more than a sort of Spanish "be-bop" or salsa.

Or, are we to have two art forms: the first of which is commercialized, international, trivialized to the point of insipidity, created by musicians who listen to, and compete with, each other without making any reference to the roots of the art, catering to audiences who will applaud technique over feeling, danced by dancers who grin through a seguidillas, and sung by singers who will have made the "cuple" rather than the letra the basis of the

cante and who will have forgotten the "sonidos negros" of Manuel Torre; while the second is rooted in a culture and system of values which goes back centuries and whose legitimacy is described not only in historical terms but also in terms of human emotion; an art in which some things, as in life, are left to chance?

Not so long ago, we could hear Ricardo and Perico missing notes with abandon, we could hear Melchor play the same falsetta four or five times on the same record, we could hear musicians accompany with nothing but rasgeados...but, we could also hear the emotion of these players. Their playing was poetic, inasmuch as it conjured up for the listener some of the emotions of an underlying culture; and flamenos's strength and appeal has always been at least partly due to the fact that it is the artistic expression of a culture and people and not a mere "art" form. It is a truism that serious students and aficionados of flamenco have always had to study the language, customs, psychology and history of those Andalucians and gypsies whose cultures form the roots of the flamenco phenomenon. Those who would not study these things have always been condemned to only the grossest and most external sort of mimicry and only the shallowest of understanding.

Flamenco is not, no matter who speaks to the contrary, an international art form, and while we must certainly understand the financial needs of the young artists who are seeking an ever-larger audience, we can, at the same time, only hope that their willingness to compromise their traditions is not limitless. And we can certainly deny and disclaim the various hideous "nouveau flamenco" promoted as international pop music by sundry dabblers and hacks who, if nothing else, know when to hop onto a bandwagon.

-Don Q.-

*The column by 'Don Quijote' does not necessarily reflect the views of Jaleo Magazine.*

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