

PROGRESS

Apart from their music, the traditional flamencos are natural actors. Their preferred life is in the streets and *cafés*, where they can see and be seen, admire and feel admired. They enjoy being nattily dressed, and they have an indestructible attitude of being somebody unique. Armed with these assets, and a glass of two of *aguardiente*, they strut like cocks, being at once expansive, authoritative, friendly, condescending, formal, dignified, and, above all, individualistic. They are not ambitious, and are capable of living happily with only the basic necessities. The concepts and developments of progress are incomprehensible to them. They scorn the rat race and its participants, together with such obnoxious modern phenomena as demanding traffic lights, motor-cluttered streets, shining stainless-steel *cafeterías*, and grim, unseeing civilization bustling to no destination.

Inevitably traditional flamenco philosophy will give ground to progress. Materialism, life insurance, grave sites on installments, and pressing demands will take their toll, and self-confident flamenco faces will cloud with doubt and insecurity.

This is progress as it affects flamenco.

PART II THE ART OF FLAMENCO

ORIGIN AND BACKGROUND

Contrary to a widespread belief, the Spanish gypsies were not the sole creators of the mysterious art called flamenco. Rather, it is generally agreed that flamenco is a mixture of the music of the many cultures that have played important roles, directly or indirectly, throughout the centuries in Andalusia, the most important of these being the Muslim, Jewish, Indo-Pakistani and Byzantine.

When did flamenco begin? No one knows. It seems reasonable to suspect, however, that folklore similar to flamenco existed in Andalusia long before it became known as flamenco. The Arabs (centuries VIII-XV) and the Sefardic Jews, particularly, both had advanced musical cultures, as did some of Andalusia's earlier rulers, particularly the Greeks and Romans. It would be ridiculous to believe that the common people of those epochs did not air their sentiments through song, dance and musical instruments.

When did the gypsies enter the scene? One wave of gypsies came to Spain in the XV century, after having been persecuted and expelled from India by Tamerlane around the year 1400 A.D. Apparently, after their expulsion many tribes wandered west, spreading throughout the Middle East and along both sides of the Mediterranean. Other tribes traveled north through Russia, the Balkans, Germany and France, finally arriving to Spain in 1447. This migration, and its eventual arrival to Barcelona, is confirmed by various documents and manuscripts of that period.

Other theoreticians insist that there was another migration of gypsies to Spain long before the XV century. This migration, they say, took place in the VIII century, when many tribes of gypsies entered Andalusia as campfollowers of the invading Muslim forces. This theory is reinforced somewhat by the notable differences found between the gypsies of northern and southern Spain. The language, customs, temperament and even general aspect of the two vary considerably. The gypsies of the north are, generally speaking, far more determinedly aloof from Society and typically «gypsy» in appearance, while those in the south, whose families have theoretically been in Spain seven centuries longer, have mixed to a considerable degree with the inhabitants of Andalusia, losing much of their gypsy appearance and many of their customs in the process.

Be that as it may, most theorists agree that flamenco as we know it today did not begin its development until the XVI century, which is when the Kingdom of Castilla decided to rid Spain of minority groups in an effort to propagate pureness of race and religion (a lamentable policy that so depopulated Spain of its professional, mercantile and laboring classes that Spain was plunged into a decline from which it is recovering only today). All Jews and Muslims that refused to convert to Christianity were expelled from the country, and all gypsies who would not leave the open road and settle down to useful sedentary occupations were also encouraged to leave (the decree against the constantly-moving gypsies was much harder to enforce, needless to say, and many of them escaped expulsion). These laws were enforced by the Inquisition, which took serious steps against those of the forbidden cultures who refused to obey, or who were considered insincere in their newly adopted Christian religion.

As a consequence, these three persecuted cultures, the Jewish, the Muslim and the Gypsy, with outwardly little in common, found themselves united against a common foe — the hated Inquisition. Many of the rebellious elements of these cultures grouped into bands in uninhabited mountain regions, hiding in the wilderness and making forays against Christian communities and caravans for food and provisions. They were soon joined by many Christian fugitives and dissenters, who added a fourth distinct culture.

It is thought probable that from the common life of these persecuted peoples appeared the first semblances of flamenco, as we know it. Muslim, Jewish, Indian and Christian religious and folk music blended, developing over the years into a musical form clearly sophisticated in many ways, yet developed at a primitive level by an outcast society. (In my opinion, the flamenco forms created and developed in this underground atmosphere make up much of flamenco's repertoire. There are others, however, the folk forms of the «straight» Andalusian, that developed apart and quite normally, and have only recently been included under the common heading of Flamenco) (1).

The reader might wonder why I suggest that the East has had such a strong influence in the development of flamenco. Mainly, this is the contribution of the gypsies, who arrived, as we have seen, from India and Pakistan (2). In my opinion, it is mistaken to suppose,

(1) The *trilleras*, *bambras*, *temporeras*, *caleseras*, *nanas*, *campanilleros*, *marianas*, *sevillanas*, *verdiales*, *zorongo*, *guajiras*, *milongas*, *vito*, *columbianas* and *garrotin*, to name the most likely.

(2) It has been demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the most meticulous historians and researchers, that the gypsies came from these countries. Their language derives from Sanskrit, many of their traditions and legends are similar or identical to those of the nomadic gypsy tribes living in India and Pakistan even today, and (a lesser proof) many moments of flamenco singing and guitar closely resemble instrumentation in ragas and the *cante jondo* of those countries. There is also considerable resemblance between the flamenco dance and certain forms of Indian dance.

as a surprising number of flamencologists do, that the gypsies arrived to Spain with no music of their own, having come from countries so well-developed musically (1). Many of these same theoreticians also deny even the possibility of Arabic and Jewish influence in flamenco when they insist that flamenco developed solely among the Andalusians, free from outside influences. This argument is full of naive patriotism, but a patriotism in favor of whom, or what? What is an Andalusian if not a mixture of various cultures, predominant among them precisely those the theoreticians choose to deny: the Arabic, Jewish and Gypsy.

Let us study another riddle. Where did the term flamenco come from? Again, no one knows, but theories abound. The word «flamenco» originally meant (according to Spanish dictionaries) «Flemish» and «flamingo», today also means «coarse and flippant». Naturally, these formal meanings have given rise to theories. One of them, embraced by several English-language encyclopedias, is that the term was applied to the art form because certain positions of the dancer are reminiscent of the flamingo bird (a bit ridiculous, but colorful). The «Flemish» theory is more feasible. It claims that the Spanish Jews who migrated to Flanders were allowed to sing their religious chants unmolested. These songs were referred to as «flamenco» songs by their kin who remained in Spain, who were forbidden them by the Inquisition. The other theory derived from the dictionary meanings of the word «flamenco» says that as the flamencos were «coarse and flippant», the already-existent word «flamenco» was applied to them. However, in my opinion the flamencos have been around longer than this meaning of the word, which just dates back to the last century. In other words, I would say the word «flamenco» acquired the new meaning «coarse and flippant» in the last century precisely because the flamencos, already so-called, were coarse and flippant.

Possibly the most likely theory states that the word «flamenco»

(1) These flamencologists argue that if the gypsies brought flamenco to Spain with them, the many tribes that stayed in countries along the way (Russia, Germany, France, the Balkans, Turkey, Greece, Italy, to name a few) would also play, sing and dance flamenco. I respond to this by repeating that the gypsies did not bring flamenco as such, but only had a share in its development, once in Andalusia, by their Indo-Pakistani contribution. Why then, ask the doubters, have not gypsy tribes in other countries developed some sort of musical tradition, even if it is not flamenco? The answer is, many have. What of the gypsy violins of the Balkans? The gypsy guitars of Germany-France (in this century playing jazz; i.e. Django Reinhardt)? The more primitive song-dance of the Russian gypsies? And so forth. Nevertheless, they say, many other tribes do not seem to have any musical tradition whatsoever. Why? The answer to this is that some gypsy tribes were (and are) much more musically inclined than others. Like the Hindus, whose profession is designated them from birth by the caste system, each gypsy tribe traditionally practiced a trade. Some tribes (not many) were basically music minded, others worked metal, others weaved baskets, others bred horses and beasts of burden, others made pottery. Thus, it is not strange that all gypsies scattered around the world today are not musically inclined. In addition, another factor is involved. It seems reasonable to suppose that the social and musical atmosphere of the adopted countries would strongly affect the progress and even survival of the gypsies' music. In other words, in countries, or regions of countries (such as Andalusia) where music flourished, the gypsies' contribution was absorbed and a new musical form developed. In musically poor countries and regions that showed little interest or economic support for the gypsies' music, the music merely died out.

is a mispronunciation of the Arabic words «*felag*» and «*mengu*» (*felagmengu*), which means «fugitive peasant». It is likely that this term was borrowed from the Arabs (Arabic was a common language in Andalusia at that time) and applied to all the persecuted people who fled to the mountains. Through usage in Spanish «*felagmengu*» was transformed into «*flamenco*», until eventually the term flamenco was adopted by the fugitives themselves and in turn applied to their music.

The main form of flamenco at that time, the *cante jondo*, expressed the suffering of these outlawed people, who through the years were condemned to serve in the galleys, in chain gangs, and in the Spanish army in America, were prohibited to talk their own language, and who, during one prolonged period, suffered the death penalty for just belonging to a wandering or outlawed band. Somehow their spirit remained unbroken, and their mode of expression — their flamenco — developed to magnificent heights through the centuries, culminating in the *Café Cantante* period of the last century. From this «Golden Age» flamenco declined sharply, passing through a period of decadence and abuse in the first half of this century which nearly caused its extinction. The reasons for this decline, as well as for the present trend of renewed purity and hope, will be discussed later in the book (in the section «Hard Times and Present Trends» and the appendix «Flamenco Records of Special Interest»).

WHAT IS FLAMENCO?

Present day flamenco consists of

singing (*cante*)
dancing (*baile*)
guitar playing (*toque*)
jaleo (rhythm accentuation) and reciting,

each of which I shall deal with separately in succeeding chapters. They are all distinctive arts in their own right, and can stand alone, although the complete visual, musical, and emotional image of flamenco can only be grasped through the participation of all of these fundamental components. This is not to say that during a *juerga* particular solo numbers featuring a soloist or any combination of performers cannot be a rewarding experience. It merely suggests that to achieve the perfect moment in flamenco, the singing, dancing, and the guitar all have to blend together in complete harmony.

A past experience of mine can serve as an example. I attended, as the only non-Spaniard and one of the few non-gypsies, a homage for the singer Antonio Mairena. The guests of honor, other than Mairena, were Juan Talega, the old master of the traditional school of *cante jondo*, la Fernanda and la Bernarda de Utrera, the guitarist Diego del Gastor, and others.

The *juerga* began in the traditional manner, with dinner and quantities of wine, erupting around midnight into gay dancing, singing, and *jaleo*, totally carefree and uninhibited. We carried on in this state during the emptying of many more cases of wine, amid the excellence of the gay *cantes* of Mairena, la Fernanda, la Bernarda, and others, until a quiet expectancy slowly settled over the gathering. The time had arrived when moods were mellow, and bodies and throats wine-warmed and flexible. Diego began drumming a slow, melancholy *siguiriyas*. Mairena, infected with the *duende* of Diego's playing, started singing this despairing rhythm amid absolute stillness. He sang beautifully and with great emotion, finishing on a note of tragedy, pervading the room with a quieting depression. La Fernanda was shamelessly weeping. The guitar sounded again, this time the sluggish, persistent call of the *soleares* (loneliness). Juan Talega began singing, and despondency deepened. He sang interminably, in ancient ways that are nearly

forgotten, slowly, methodically. Suddenly a barefoot girl was dancing. No one saw her begin; they only saw her somehow appear in the middle of the dirt floor, surrounded by the mahogany faces of spell-bound gypsies. She moved in a tortuous way, dancing in the superb manner that the moment demanded, moving only her hands and arms, completely lost in the trance of the charged flamenco atmosphere. The singer sang to her, the guitarist played for her, and she moved toward them, responding with a pureness of dance and movement that had the effect of somehow exalting the crowd, while at the same time intensifying their desolation. They had reached the culmination, flamenco's perfect moment, when all of flamenco's components were combined in a rare purity of expression. The monotonous, beating rhythm continued, slower and slower, until, without warning, the guitar seemed to die at the perfect time. We were all quiet a moment, completely entranced, a little ashamed of our raw emotions, and yet savouring the impact of the experience that we knew would rarely be repeated.

That was the climax of the evening, and not long after, the *juerga* broke up. Further performing was meaningless. *Ya estaba todo dicho*. Everything had been said.

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The major scope of flamenco (singing, dancing, guitar) can be divided into four categories:

- profound or deep flamenco (*jondo* or *grande*)
- intermediate flamenco (*intermedio*)
- light flamenco (*chico*)
- popular flamenco.

The *jondo* flamenco is the means by which a manic-depressive society expresses its black moods. Serious and melancholy, it is comparable, emotionally, with the authentic blues of the Negroes of the southern United States. Of all flamenco, it is the most difficult to understand and the most difficult to interpret properly. Those who master this deep-rooted base of flamenco (and its masters are few) are the true *maestros*, deeply respected within the world of artists and *aficionados* of integrity and real understanding. These *maestros* appeal to a small, select following, and rarely achieve the monetary success of the popular flamencos, or even that of the good intermediate or light flamencos. Nevertheless, the *jondo* artists are the nobility in the world of flamenco.

The fact of being a virtuoso in his field, be it song, dance or the guitar, does by no means qualify an artist for this category. The true flamenco *grande* artist may, or may not, have an outstanding technique, but it is imperative that he possess the abilities of identifying himself with the *duende* that he is unfolding, and, of equal importance,

of being able to transmit this emotion, or series of emotions, to his audience. It cannot be overemphasized that flamenco, above all, the *jondo* flamenco, is basically an emotional art, and that the artist needs only enough technique to enable him to transmit his emotions to himself and to his public. The improving of technique to the point of virtuosity is not usually synonymous with the improvement of the artist's ability to communicate. Conversely, the opposite is more often true. The virtuoso often becomes a cold machine, too concerned with his technique, too complicated, too entangled in his own virtuosity, too conscious of the fact that the majority of public is awaiting this virtuosity more than any *duende* he may impart.

Many exponents of flamenco insist that only the Spanish gypsies and the Andalusians possess the inherent temperamental qualities necessary in the true flamenco. This argument is close to the truth, but there have been exceptions. It is inevitable that the aspirant have an extremely sensitive and receptive nature. Armed with these qualities, he must sally forth, firstly to attain a reasonable technical proficiency, and secondly in search of the elusive *duende*, for without the *duende* flamenco is often vulgar and dull, and always disappointing. The quest for the *duende* is particularly difficult for those living outside of Spain, as it can only be attained through long and constant association with true flamenco in Spain itself, almost necessarily in Andalusia. This statement is sustained by the many inconsolable examples that I have witnessed of recent arrivals to Spain who attempt to dazzle the local flamencos with a sharp technique gained through years of arduous lessons, practice, material pilfering from records and tapes, etc., and who are almost invariably dismissed with a shrug and a «*no dice ná*» «he says nothing». What these students have to realize is that they have taken only the first step. The second, the search for the *duende*, is more difficult, and yet a delightful and adventurous undertaking, for the search will bring one into contact with emotional, vibrant people who are living an alluring philosophy; a philosophy difficult to understand by those outside of it, and impossible to absorb if not in constant contact with it.

Flamenco *intermedio* consists of a set of forms that tend towards the flamenco *grande*. The main difference is that the *grande* is the true foundation of flamenco, the root from which all the rest of flamenco stems, while the intermediate is a less pure offspring, not as difficult to perform properly, and not as profoundly moving.

Flamenco *chico*, in comparison with the *jondo*, will usually have the opposite impact on the spectator. It is a multitude of things; gay, vivacious, frivolous, sensuous, tender, amorous, poetic, fleetingly sad; and very charming when done well. Regrettably it is not usually done well, due to a mistaken belief by artists and onlookers alike that great quantities of noise, shouting, stamping, and frenzied move-

ments are the framework of Gaiety. Obviously (or perhaps not so obviously), it is not necessary to sacrifice dignity in order to be gay. Of course, the artists and the non-*aficionado* public (even in Andalusia the large majority of people cannot distinguish good flamenco from bad) have become ensnared in a vicious circle. The artists give the public what they believe the public wants, and the public wants what they are accustomed to. Nevertheless, of the three categories that we have discussed, you are much more likely to see good *chico* than good *jondo* or intermediate flamenco.

Popular flamenco is that conglomeration of colorful garbage that has managed, in the brief span since the *Café Cantante* period, to gnaw at the platform of pure flamenco, causing its decadence and near collapse. It is a base commercialization of all forms of flamenco. It knows no taboos or untouchable gods. In the course of one theatrical «flamenco» show you may squirm through the debasement of all types of pure flamenco (*grande, intermedio, chico*), as well as the flamencoization of Spanish and Spanish-American regional music, North American and French popular and folk songs, and so forth. This popular malady is the «rock and roll» of Spain, aimed at the immature, uneducated public, rocking them away from any music of worth or beauty.

It can safely be said that a large portion of the organized flamenco that is offered in and out of Spain will belong, sadly enough, in this category. This includes the major part of the flamenco offered in theatres, tablaos, night clubs, caves, and other commercial establishments.

Improvisation and Compás

As in American jazz, improvisation plays an important role in flamenco. An experienced artist, mature and imaginative, will improvise at will. Many imaginative guitar instructors will not remember the improvisations taught in a preceding class, much to the annoyance of their pupils.

Each of the *cantes* and *toques* of flamenco has become adapted to a certain basic set of guitar chord structures. Within these structures, and the *compás* (if the *cante* or *toque* is rhythmical) improvisation is encouraged. Occasionally an artist will innovate new elements or a new style within a traditional *cante, baile* or *toque*, which innovation, if deserving, may be informally associated with its creator (*soleares* de Joaquín de la Paula), or with his home town (*soleares* de Alcalá/town near Sevilla), or both.

The beginner should become extremely well-versed in all aspects of flamenco before attempting to improvise, or the chances are that

he will come up with non-flamenco improvisations that are meaningless. Many artists never reach the degree of excellence which permits them to improvise freely and well within the bounds of flamenco, even after a lifetime as a flamenco.

Of equal importance and difficulty in the art of flamenco is the keeping of the *compás*. Rhythmically, flamenco is divided into those *cantes* and *toques* (1) having a set *compás* (rhythm), all of which are danceable, and (2) those of a free, undetermined *compás*, which are rarely danced due, of course, to the lack of a danceable *compás*. There is very little abstract dancing in flamenco, although it is becoming increasingly fashionable in theatrical circles.

The beginner will notice that many of the *cantes, bailes*, and *toques* seem to have the same, or a very similar, *compás*. In reality this is true; the basic *compás* of several *cantes*, for example, may be identical, but the accentuations, inflections, and moods of the *compás* vary considerably. The artist of many years experience will often not recall that the *compás* is the same in two *cantes (bailes, toques)*, as he has such a well-defined notion of the above-mentioned differences between the two that to him they are entirely dissimilar. In time all *aficionados* arrive to this desired state. Until then, the *compás* is a confusing business.

Commercial and Juerga Flamenco

It is necessary to emphasize throughout this book the wide gulf that separates commercial from *juerga* flamenco. Although the basic forms performed are the same in each (when they are done seriously), their impact is quite distinct. An obvious and very significant difference is that of the atmosphere in which the flamenco takes place. The small *juerga* is all intimacy, wine, friendship, while the commercial is cold and indifferent. Artistically speaking, the difference is just as great. A good *juerga* artist will not usually go over on stage, where his all-important personality is largely nullified, nor will a good commercial performer generally fit into the more roughhewn, spontaneous atmosphere of a *juerga*. The contrast might be summed up as primitivism versus polish, warmth versus anonymity, creation versus rigidity, emotion versus intellect, instinct versus schooling, fun versus formality.

When one considers that flamenco, like the blues, must remain a primitive, intimate art if it wishes to retain its whole foundation of being, there is little doubt which of these forms is preferred by the sensitive and well-versed *aficionado*. Readers who, after having experienced both forms, find themselves disagreeing with this point are very likely those that hyper-civilization has left with an appreciation for only the polished. In that case, I respectfully suggest they turn to the more refined classical fields.

THE SONG

The *Cante* (Song) holds the select position in flamenco. It is the preferred mode of expression (as opposed to the dance and the guitar) of nearly all Spanish *aficionados*. I emphasize «Spanish» *aficionados* as this is not true of non-Spaniards, who will generally prefer the guitar and dance to the singing due to the unfamiliar, oriental style which characterizes the *Cante*, and to their lack of understanding of the verses. It is too drastic a change for the Western foreigner steeped in the vocal styles of his country, and he has to become accustomed to the *Cante* by degrees. To achieve a complete appreciation of the *Cante* flamenco, one must develop a taste for it, slowly learning to savour its flavor and grandeur like the novice introduced to good wines and brandies. More important than the understanding of what is being sung is the appreciation of how it is being sung; in good or bad taste, with a well or badly-guarded *compás*, with authenticity, with *duende*...

The basic breakdown for the *Cante* is as follows:

cante grande or *jondo* (*hondo*)

cante intermedio

cante chico.

The *cante grande* (*jondo*) is the original expression of flamenco. It is the pure *cante*, the trunk from which all other *cantes* branch. In its oldest form it was derived from ancient religious chants and songs, which later developed into a more generalized lament of life.

This category, consisting basically of *cantes* originally gypsy-inspired, includes by far the most difficult group of *cantes* to interpret. It has to be dominated by the full use of the lungs and throat, and it demands great emotion and effort. When sung properly, it has the power to sweep the *aficionado* on its melancholy course. When sung badly, it is pitiful and often grotesque. Realizing this, the singer of integrity who is not of the *grande* caliber will wisely refuse to sing *cantes* of this category.

Not many decades ago it was commonly believed that only a gypsy, or a person of Oriental descent, had the special something in his throat to enable him to emit the proper sounds for the *jondo*; that is, the

possession of a voice «*afillá*» (1). Such a voice is still considered most desirable, as it can greatly assist the singer to express the wild, primitive cry that is the *cante jondo*. However, the «*voz afillá*» by no means predominates in the *cante jondo* today. As more and more non-gypsies take up the *jondo*, and as the gypsies continue losing racial purity due to widespread intermixing with non-gypsies, this vocal quality is virtually becoming a rarity. But those gypsies who do possess a «*voz afillá*» today are still highly esteemed, perhaps more so than ever, to the point that they are considered by purists the singers whose *cante grande* most profoundly reaches the heart.

The *cante intermedio* is less intense and more ornamental than the *cante grande*, although still very moving and difficult to interpret. Many of the *cantes* categorized as *intermedio* are characterized by certain strange discords and rare oriental melodies, obviously the influence of the Moorish rule in Spain, such as can be observed in the *tarantas*, *taranto*, and *cartageneras*. Its *cantes* are mostly without *compás*, which is to say that they are sung with a freedom unimpeded by a set rhythm (and are therefore not danceable). It is believed that this group of *cantes* were basically Andalusian-developed (non-gypsy), which seems to be borne out by the fact that a clear, melodious, rather high-pitched voice is more in keeping with them than a gypsy «*voz afillá*».

Nearly all of the *cantes intermedios* were conveyed from the *fan-dangos grandes*. Some have been created by toiling miners, others by mountaineers, farmers, fishermen. In the main, due to the lack of the grating raucousness which the gypsies brought to the *cante grande*, the *cantes* of the *intermedio* category are the most sophisticated and vocally beautiful of all flamenco.

The *cantes chicos* are both technically and emotionally the least difficult *cantes* to interpret. Consequently there are many more *chico* singers than singers of the other categories. This does not mean to say that the *cantes chicos* are by any means easy to sing; all well-sung flamenco is difficult.

The *cantes chicos* are characterized by an emphasis on the rhythm, and by their optimistic outlook. Their verses deal poetically with love, women, animals, and Andalusia and its people. There are country *cantes*, mountain *cantes*, inland *cantes* and sea *cantes* from the southern Mediterranean coast, all characterized by one power; the ability to stimulate, exhilarate, and sweep away one's cares.

The *cante* is often referred to in terms of various vocal types, styles, and manners of delivery, into which I go into some detail in

(1) The term «*afillá*» was derived from Diego el Fillo, a singer of the early last century, who is said to have had the perfect *jondo* voice, which had a rough, coarse quality and could be cracked, or split, at will. This quality is also referred to as «*eco gitano*» and «*rajo*» (raucous).

Lives and Legends of Flamenco. Here we shall only touch upon three basic categories:

cante gitano
cante bien
cante bonito.

Any individual *cante* can be delivered by either or all of these ways of singing, although particular singers will have a voice and style that will almost invariably fit into only one of these categories. There are very fine differences between these styles.

The term «*cante gitano*» implies that it must be sung by gypsies. Generally this is true, although there have been non-gypsy singers who have been able to sing with the special gypsy air and manner of delivery (i.e. Silverio Franconetti). In almost all cases the *cante gitano* singer possesses either a voice *afillá* (Manolo Caracol, Fernanda de Utrera, Manolito de María, Terremoto de Jerez, etc.), or is capable of injecting a great deal of *rajo* (raucousness) into his *cante*, although his voice is not actually *afillá* (Manuel Torre, Antonio Mairena, Juan Talega, Niña de los Peines, etc.)

The singers included in the *cante bien* category have smooth voices devoid of *rajo*, and are consequently not able to achieve the roughness so desirable for the *cante gitano*. Their voices are, therefore, better suited for the non-gypsy *cantes*. There are exceptions. There are gypsies born with clear voices, some of whom sing excellent *cante gitano*. Tomás Pavón was one such gypsy singer, and he is considered one of the great gypsy singers of all time. However, it is generally agreed that could he have produced more *rajo*, more coarseness, in his *cante*, he would have been a far more emotionally *jondo* singer in addition to his outstanding techniques and vast knowledge of the *Cante*. Among the famous non-gypsy singers in the *cante bien* category we can list Antonio Chacón, Juan Breva, and today, Aurelio Sellé, Pericón de Cádiz, and many others.

The style disparagingly called *cante bonito* (pretty song) is that conglomeration of bad taste that falls under the already-mentioned «popular flamenco» category. This type of *cante* is characterized by the following:

- (1) art succumbing to the desire for money and mass recognition.
- (2) irresponsibility.
- (3) the tendency to mix different styles of a particular *cante*, or different *cantes* themselves, capriciously, in an effort to achieve originality, or to display virtuosity or knowledge.

Since the mixing of different styles of a particular *cante*, or different *cantes*, is so often confused with originality, not only by the public but even by the performers, some clarification of this point seems necessary.

Over the years each *cante* has been subjected to the extremely strong personalities of the truly ingenious and inventive interpreters. These exceptional *cantaors* have left the stamp of their genius on their favorite *cantes*, which is distinguishable to the truly knowledgeable *aficionado*. Also, certain regions within Andalusia may develop a «school», which will sing a particular *cante* with a peculiar flavor. This growth or maturation of a *cante* leads to various styles within that *cante*. Let us select one *cante*, the *soleares*, as an example. There are many styles within the *soleares*, each with its singular personality and emotional quality. For instance, there are the *soleares* that were perpetuated and further developed by the late Joaquín de la Paula, one of the past geniuses of the *Cante* from the town of Alcalá de Guadaira. These *soleares* are referred to, therefore, in two equally as common ways: the «*soleares de Joaquín de la Paula*» and/or the «*soleares de Alcalá*». By the same token, the *soleares* developed in the town of Utrera are known interchangeably as the «*soleares de Utrera*», or by their most famous developer, Merced la Sarneta («*soleares de la Sarneta*»). The same is true of the *soleares* developed by the famous Enrique el Mellizo, which are known as the «*soleares del Mellizo*» or by his home town, the «*soleares de Cádiz*». And again with the «*soleares de Jerez*», also known by their creator, Frijones («*soleares de Frijones*»). And so forth.

Purists consider it inappropriate to intermix these various styles during the interpretation of a particular *cante*, as this entails the clashing of personalities and drives, tending to confuse the continuity and emotional intensity of the *cante*. By this they mean that if one is to interpret the *siguiriyas* of Manuel Torre, for instance, he should limit himself strictly to that style throughout his entire *cante*, a happening that rarely occurs. Mostly, I believe, in an attempt to expose knowledge, nearly all singers jump from style to style during a *cante*, such as singing a verse of Manuel Torre, then one of Marrurro, then one of another singer, etc.

The mixing of more than one *cante* is a much graver sin in the minds of the purists, excepting some endings of *cantes* which we shall discuss later in the chapter. It is felt that a mixture of styles within a *cante* is really not so bad, and could even be done through ignorance, but that a *cantaor* could not mistakenly confuse two *cantes*. A well-known «mixer of *cantes*» is Pepe Marchena. One of his famous mixtures begins with the *soleares*, continues with the *bulerías*, then the *caña*, and ends with the *fandangos*. This is ridiculous to the knowledgeable *aficionado*, a classical example of saying nothing as, of course, he never approaches the essence of any of these *cantes*. This type of misusage is still very common among the vaudeville type of flamenco performer. Understandably enough, I might add, considering that Pepe Marchena has become a rich man through such blatant impurities, a

circumstance that does not cast too favorable a light on the general public.

The *cante bonito* is the style that is preferred by a majority of non-*aficionados*, whatever their nationalities. Its interpreters are highly paid singers, some of whom can sing good flamenco but who find the *cante bonito* more lucrative. The most notorious of these singers are:

Pepe Marchena
Juanito Valderrama
Antonio Molina
Niña de Antequera
Niña de la Puebla
El Príncipe Gitano
Angelillo
Enrique Montoya
Miguel de los Reyes
Rafael Farina.

Another important distinction is made between singers who sing in a natural manner, and those who utilize unnatural vocal tricks, shout, or strain their voices excessively. It is generally felt that the pure *cante* should be sung in a natural way, which is less flashy and more difficult, and the only way to arrive directly to the essence of the *Cante*. This is especially true in the *cante gitano*. There is another school of thought on this point, however. There are those who feel that to really reach the ultimate in a gypsy *cante* the singer must «fight with it» (*pelear*), by which they mean he should struggle through a *cante* beyond his physical capabilities, or, if he can normally sing it with ease, purposely sing it in such a high tone as to have to unnecessarily strain his voice, oftentimes having to actually shout, in order to keep his voice from breaking. To their way of thinking singers «put more into it» in that manner. To my way of thinking it is a senseless practice that tends to grate on one's ears and take years off the singer's career. As for the feeling of the *cante*, I would say that it suffers is the battle.

As we have seen, *cantes* and styles of *cantes* have come to be known by the towns or regions in which they were developed. Let us consider this important point in a little more detail.

The *Cante* was developed throughout Andalusia. Each region contributed one or two or more *cantes*, and even today, although regional boundaries and traditions are fast disappearing, nature and prefer their original contributions. These overall areas and their basic *cantes* are:

Provinces of Sevilla and Cádiz, including such centers as Triana (Sevilla), Jerez de la Frontera, Puerto de Santa María, Puerto Real, Cádiz, Alcalá de Guadaira, Utrera, Morón de la Frontera, etc. These provinces were the birthplace of the gypsy *cantes*, which include most of those of the *cante grande* category, and many of the *cantes chicos* (see breakdown, Appendix I).

Within this gypsy area quite distinct styles developed of the same *cantes* as they spread from region to region, town to town, and singer to singer, as we have seen previously in this chapter. This is also true of the *cantes* in all of the regions that we discuss in continuation.

Province of Huelva. This province gave birth to the Andalusian *Cante*, including the *cantes fandangos grandes* and *fandanguillos*.

Province of Málaga. The province of Málaga bolstered the Andalusian school, developing several *cantes* based on the *fandangos grandes*, which include the *malagueñas*, *verdiales*, *jaberas*, and *rondeñas*.

Region of Levante (southeast Spain). This region contributed several Andalusian *cantes*, also based on the *fandangos grandes*, most of which developed in the mines of the southeastern costal area. They are, basically, the *murcianas* and *cartageneras*, *cantes* from the province of Murcia, *tarantas* and *taranto*, mining *cantes* from the province of Almería, and the *granadinas* and *media granadina* (often pronounced «*granaína*»), *cantes* from the province of Granada.

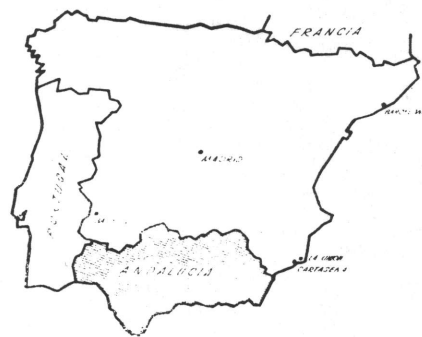
All of the breakdowns that we have studied so far may seem extremely confusing. Actually, they are not. For instance: Juan Talega, a *cante gitano* singer, sings, among others, the *siguiriyas*, a gypsy *cante grande*, in the «style of Triana» with a natural voice; la Paquera, a *cante gitano* singer, sings the *bulerías*, a gypsy *cante chico*, in the «style of Jerez de la Frontera» with a natural voice; Antonio Molina, a *cante bonito* singer, sings the *malagueñas*, an Andalusian *cante intermedio*, in a popularized version of the «style of Antonio Chacón» with a voice anything but natural; lastly, Aurelio Sellé, a *cante bien* singer, sings the *alegrías*, a gypsy *cante chico*, with a natural voice in the «style of Cádiz».

To burrow further into the core of the *Cante*, we can break each individual *cante* down into its component parts. As González Climent has written («Oído al Cante!», P. 32), each *cante* can contain various sections, called *tercios*, which are listed in continuation. Whether all or some of the *tercios* are included in a particular *cante* depends on the *cante* itself, as well as on the momentary inspiration of the singer (he may feel like singing the *cante* primitively short and direct, or lengthening it to his pleasure by means of singing more *tercios*, repeating one *tercio* more than once, or lengthening considerably one or more of those he chooses to sing). The *tercios* are:

- (1) *Temple* — warming up to the rhythm by modulations of the voice, without the use of words (often repeating «ay»).
- (2) *Planteo o tercio de entrada* — the entrance or introduction to the *cante*.
- (3) *Tercio grande* — the heart of the *cante*.
- (4) *Tercio de alivio* — relieving, or easing up, on the emotional substance of the *tercio grande*.
- (5) *Tercio valiente o peleón* — the personal touch of the singer,



IMPORTANT CENTERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF FLAMENCO



PRINCIPAL SONG FORMS FROM EACH PROVINCE:

Huelva: Fandangos.

Sevilla: Soleares, siguiiriyas, bulerías, cantes «a palo seco», fandangos and tangos from Triana, sevillanas, cantes camperos.

Cádiz: Solesares, sigüiriyas, bulerías, cantes «a palo seco», tangos and tangos from Triana, sevillanas, cantes campestres, tanguillo, chuflos, cantes camperos.

Málaga: Malagueñas, verdiales, rondeñas, jaberías, serranas, tangos del Piyayo, cantes camperos.

Córdoba: Soleares and alegrías from Córdoba, fandangos de Lucena, cantes camperos.

Jaén: Cantes mineros, cantes camperos.

Granada: Granaína, media granaína, zambra.

Almería: Tarantas, taranto.

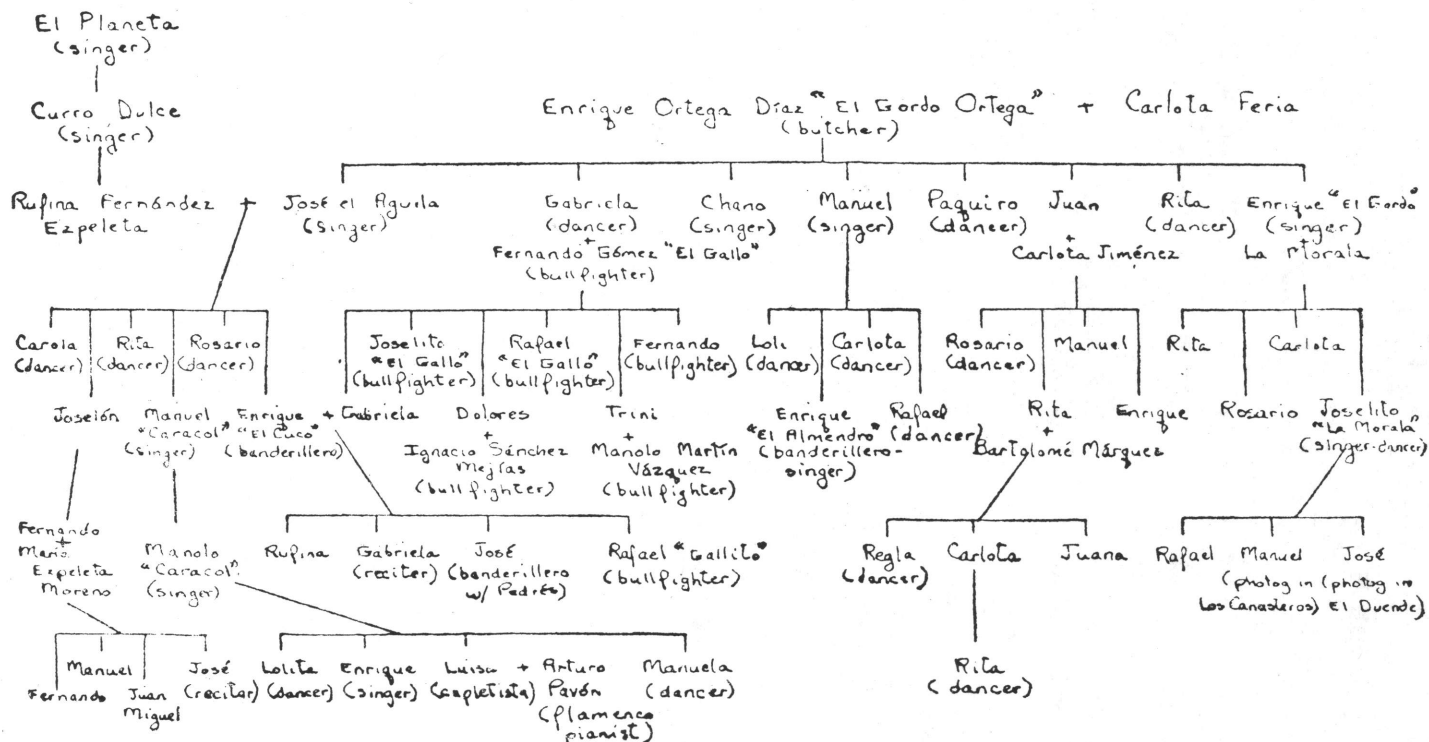
Murcia: Cartagenas, from Cartagena and La Unión.

Badajoz: Fandangos and tangos extremeños.

THE ORTEGA DYNASTY

The Ortegas, originally from Cádiz, are a typical example of the flamenco dynasties of the past, when everyone in the family, from grandma to grandchildren, was steeped in flamenco. At family gatherings everyone performed, although in this chart I have singled out as artists only those who became professionals in their specialties.

Until recent times members of flamenco dynasties and their partners in art, bullfight dynasties, stuck pretty close together. Thus in this chart, which encompasses approximately the period 1800 to the present, we see the Ortigas marrying members of other famous flamenco and bullfight dynasties, which included: flamenco — the Ezpeleta (Ignacio), the Jiménez (Enrique el Mellizo) and the Pavón (Arturo, Tomás and the Niña de los Peines); bullfight — the Gómez (Fernando «El Gallo» and his famous sons, Joselito «El Gallo» and Rafael «El Gallo»), Ignacio Sánchez Mejías, Manolo Martín Vázquez, and so forth.



his «flight of fancy», a little creativeness within the main body of the *cante*.

(6) *Cambio o remate* — the *cambio* is the closing of a *cante* by means of a specific variation to the theme, while still utilizing the substance of the same basic *cante*. For instance, utilizing another style of the same *cante*. The *remates* are the closing of a *cante* by switching to another very similar *cante*, frequently changing from a minor to major key. Oftentimes the singer will switch from a slow, melancholy *cante* to a gay, fast one, a kind of combining of the *tercio de alivio* and the *remate*. This practice has the advantage of advising the listeners and guitarist that the singer is about to finish singing, and the disadvantage of spoiling the effect achieved by the melancholy *cante*. On the other hand, the public is not left with their faces down to their knees, and the party surges on. In situations where the festive spirit reigns, I would say that *rematando* with a bit of gaiety is a good practice. On the rare occasions when the singer and the listeners really get into and are living the *cante*, however, it is perhaps too abrupt a change of mood.

To complete this rather technical discussion I shall briefly explain a few other terms and ideas that are an integral part of the *Cante*; namely, the *machos*, a *palo seco*, and the *compás*.

A *macho* is the singer's individual seal, an original or perhaps traditional passage with which he will usually close a particular *cante*. More simply put, a *macho* consists of a verse tacked on to the normal ending of a *cante*, any *cambio* or *remate*, for instance, that the singer habitually uses.

You will hear reference to a group of *cantes* referred to as a *palo seco*. This group includes the *martinetes*, *tonás*, *carceleras*, *deblas*, and *saetas*, all *cantes grandes* characterized by the lack of guitar accompaniment.

The *compás*, or rhythm, of a *cante* was kept by beating wooden staffs, or canes (*bastones*), on the floor until as recently as forty or fifty years ago. It is said that these staffs date back to the days when they were used as walking sticks, and, as guitars were scarce, they also served as a rhythmical guide for the singer. These staffs became a tradition and were used for many years, even when guitars were widely available, until their disappearance shortly after the decline of flamenco's Golden Age. Such staffs would still be a valuable asset in small towns and villages, where there is a dearth of guitars, and few guitarists who can keep a decent *compás*. In such localities the *compás* often suffers so badly at the hands of the local *aficionados* that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish just what *cante* they are interpreting.

There are *cantaors* who will purposely stray from the *compás* during certain passages of their *cantes* in order to gain the liberty

necessary for their self-expression. This is a very tricky practice, and should be avoided unless it is an absolute indispensability in the makeup of the artist, as most singers who vary the *compás* only accomplish the destruction of the mood and the authenticity of their interpretations.

In closing the *Cante* section, we might ask a basic question: is the *Cante* today a creative, spontaneous, breathing art, or has it fallen into the mummified stage, as happens with so many of the folk arts?

Mummification, I am afraid, is the tendency. There have been no new *cantes* introduced for many a moon, nor have any truly original styles of *cantes* made their appearance. At present, the old is being revived, and whatever creative instinct the *cantaors* possess is directed merely towards adapting these *cantes* to a more advanced age; which means to say, oftentimes taking old *cantes*, perfect in their simplicity and understatement, and lengthening them, usually at the expense of the very continuity and *duende* that made the *cante*, or style of *cante*, worthwhile. The possible reasons for this smothering of the creative instinct are discussed in the section «Hard Times and Present Trends».

The following is a list of some of the better flamenco singers, together with a few of their favorite *cantes*. All of these singers are capable of great purity of expression, although this will not always be the case (Manolo Caracol, for example, not infrequently sinks to the lowest depths of commercialism. Even la Fernanda and la Bernarda, until recently institutions of pure *cante*, are not above mixing popular ditties into their *bulerías* these days. The same can be said of la Paquera. And so forth). The list does not attempt to include all of flamenco's good singers, but only intends to serve as a guide for *aficionados* who want to be sure they are searching out the authentic. (A few of the listed singers have died recently, but their *cante* lives on in obtainable records).

In order to avoid an overly lengthy list of favorite *cantes*, I have used five general classifications, in addition to the names of individual *cantes*. The general classifications, and the *cantes* they include, are:

A palo seco — Tonás, deblas, martinetes, carceleras and saetas.

Cantes de Cádiz — Alegrías, tientos, tangos, romeras, mirabrá, cantiñas, and styles of bulerías, malagueñas, soleares and siguiriyas.

Cantes de Málaga — Malagueñas, jaberías, verdiales, serranas and rondeñas.

Cantes de Levante — Tarantas, taranto, cartageneras, granaínas and media granaína.

Cantes camperos — Trilleras, nanas, bamberas, temporeras and marianas.

Singers

Favorite cantes

Agujetas de Jerez	Siguiriyas, soleares.
Antonio Mairena	A palo seco, siguiriyas, soleares, bulerías.
Aurelio Sellé	Cantes de Cádiz.
Bernarda de Utrera	Bulerías, tangos.
Bernardo de los Lobitos	Cantes de Málaga and Levante, cantes camperos.
Camarón de la Isla	Bulerías, siguiriyas, soleares, tangos.
Chocolate	Soleares, siguiriyas, a palo seco.
Enrique Morente	Cantes de Málaga and Levante, soleares, siguiriyas.
Fernanda de Utrera	Soleares, bulerías, fandangos.
Fosforito	Cantiñas, mirabrás, siguiriyas, a palo seco.
Francisco Mairena	Siguiriyas.
Gordito de Triana	Fandangos de Triana.
José Meneses	Siguiriyas, soleares, a palo seco, tangos.
Juan Talega	Siguiriyas, soleares, a palo seco.
Juan Varea	Cantes de Málaga and Levante.
Luis Torre «Joselero»	Siguiriyas, soleares, malagueñas, a palo seco.
Manolito de María	Soleares, bulerías.
Manolo Caracol	Siguiriyas, soleares, bulerías, a palo seco.
Manuel Vargas	Cantes de Cádiz.
Niña de los Peines	Bulerías, tangos, peteneras, siguiriyas.
Paquera	Bulerías de Jerez.
Piriñaca de Jerez	Siguiriyas, soleares.
Pepe el Culata	Siguiriyas, soleares, a palo seco.
Pepe de la Matrona	Soleares, siguiriyas, serranas, a palo seco.
Pericón de Cádiz	Cantes de Cádiz.
Perla de Cádiz	Cantes de Cádiz.
Rafael Romero	Soleares, siguiriyas, caña, a palo seco.
Roque Jarrito Montoya	Cantes de Málaga and Levante, a palo seco.
Terremoto de Jerez	Bulerías, soleares, siguiriyas.

THE DANCE

Introduction

In the section «What is flamenco» I pointed out the wide gulf that exists between commercial and *juerga* flamenco. This difference is most pronounced and obvious in the dance, due to its more extroverted nature.

As most people who read this book will have contact with only the commercial side of the dance (this is not true of the *cante* and *toque* due to records and tapes), I have largely limited this section to a discussion of the finer points of good commercial dancing. I have, however, interspersed this and other parts of the book with enough references to the *juerga* style (country-gypsy, primitive) to give, I hope, the reader an idea of the basic feeling and difference between these two styles of flamenco dance.

The Dance

To the majority of public not well versed in flamenco, the dancer is the show stopper, the scene stealer of flamenco. The popular public considers the dancer *the* attraction, with the rest of the *cuadro* serving as noisemaking satellites. Nearly all theatrical and night club groups feature the dancers. They take the bows, coin the money, swagger to fame, and are often the least flamenco of the group. This is possible because the dance is the only component of flamenco that the popular public can vaguely understand. Even if completely ignorant of the art of flamenco, they can still appreciate the dancer's grace and sensuality, his (her) facial expressions, colorful dress, and polished movements. To the popular public the singer is shouting something or other, the guitarist is doing God-knows-what, and consequently all of their attention is riveted on the dancer.

Ironically, flamenco's greatest deficiency is its lack of good dancers. The number of *bailaores* that are capable of being profoundly moving can be counted on both hands, and many of them are nonprofessional unknowns. This is not to say that there are not many dancers who are enjoyable, having many excellent qualities in their dance. It is merely

that there are few truly great flamencos (just as there are few great personalities in any of the arts), and of the few that exist the dancers are in a definite minority.

In modern times various misconceptions and trends have diluted the commercial dance, including the over-emphasis on techniques, a lack of instinct in the dancer enabling him to differentiate the good from the vulgar, the introduction of castanets, and others that we shall discuss in the following paragraphs.

Within commercial surroundings there has traditionally been a sharply-defined difference between the dances of the *bailaor* and *bailaora*. The male dancer emphasized the footwork, a symbol of strength and virility, and the female dancer the *baile de brazos* (dance of the upper torso, literally «dance of the arms»), symbol of femininity and passion. In modern times the dance tends towards bi-sexuality, as do many of its interpreters.

The *bailaora* seems to have lost her instinct of natural femininity. Too often her arms and hands are stiff, her movements ungainly, her angles, not her curves, pronounced. The footwork aggravates this ungainliness, as the *bailaora* will show bony knees in awkward positions. The all-important techniques of moving the arms, hands, and shoulders, and arching the back, in a flamenco way, seem known to only a few. In place of these basic essentials the *bailaora* substitutes back-bending acrobatics, frenzied, shapeless movements, unnatural facial expressions, overly exaggerated body postures, and excessive tossing of her head, hair, and dress.

The male dancer, on the other hand, has a better idea of how to be masculine. He performs well his strong, intricate footwork, his body is rigid and straight, his fingers snap fire, he tosses his head like a stallion, his facial expressions are fierce... and yet, it usually just doesn't come off. Most male Spanish dancers (and dancers in general) are quite unmanly, and generally no amount of high caliber acting can alter the fact. This condition is passable in the Spanish Ballet, but leaves much to be desired in the *Baile flamenco*.

These impressions are aggravated if you see much flamenco dancing in theaters, *tablaos* and night clubs, as many of the dancers who are hired for such places are classical Spanish ballet dancers who also dance a little flamenco. The expression «also dance flamenco» signifies that they have studied the *compás*, footwork and mimicry, and have learned a few flamenco dance arrangements, which they perform night after night with unvarying loyalty. Many of these so-called flamenco dancers have to stumble to a stop if they confuse their arrangement, or if the guitarist happens to vary his accompaniment, of the dance. Certainly a study of, or a familiarization with, the dance techniques, together with arrangements with which to practice these techniques, is necessary in the *Baile flamenco*. But these techniques should become

second nature, and the dance arrangements digested and then forgotten; for these methods are only means to the end, not the end itself. The *jondo* dancer, when he feels himself moved during the course of a *juerga*, has to respond with the creation of his own flexible world, with a release of stirred passions and emotions that are far beyond arrangements or practical memories. The techniques help him achieve this end, the arrangements help solidify the techniques, but his inner passion is the motivating force. I have seen completely untrained gypsies and *payos* who can cause the spark, *que dicen algo*, while many highly-trained heroes of the *Baile* simply do not come through. La Chunga, when she started, came out of the gypsy quarter of Barcelona with a dance as natural as her beauty. She was born with all of the meaningful «techniques». She literally did not know that dance arrangements existed, and she was a constant source of *duende*.

In days past, in fact, this type of dance, which we could call «primitive» or «country-gypsy», was *the* flamenco dance, existing long before flamenco stepped upon platforms, and which has managed to survive behind the scenes even today. In this dance neither the men nor the women use footwork or castanets, but rely more on the dance of the upper torso and, even more important, on their personalities, or *gracia*. It is a completely spontaneous dance, and when done well gives one the exhilarating impression of just what flamenco was before it was caught up in the webs of commerce. The *bulerías* is its rhythmical mainstay, and a lively sense of humor indispensable for a proper appreciation of it. The best of its interpreters can «out-flamenco» (in contrast to «outdance») any of their more polished rivals.

These primitive-style dancers rely strongly on the accompanying verses of the *cante*, as their dances often consist of humorous little skits. Whether they rely on a singer, or sing themselves (very frequent), their dance will usually consist of illustrating what is being sung, and wild dance breaks (*desplantes*) between verses.

Some of the better of these dancers are:

Andorrano de Morón	Pepa Campos del Puerto
Ansonini del Puerto	La Pipa de Jerez
Beni de Cádiz	La Posaera de Triana
La Chicharrona de Jerez	Lola Flores (not her specialty, but
Paco de Valdepeñas	she can be most humorously fla-
Parrilla de Jerez	menco when she wishes).
Pepa de Utrera	Miguel El Funi

It is extremely difficult to explain what does, or does not, make a great flamenco dancer. As in all of flamenco, *duende* and *gracia* are prized possessions, followed by an instinctive *compás* and an underrated

«good taste». Other than these essentials, there are not any clearly defined techniques that have to be used. It is strictly up to the dancer to use whatever technique he wishes in whatever manner he wishes, within certain broad limitations, as long as they help him to express what he feels, whatever he is striving to communicate. Of course, only certain types of movements and techniques are accepted as being flamenco in nature. The knowledge of these is inherent, or acquired through constant exposure to good dancing, or both.

Although it is impossible to state that a good flamenco dancer has to do such and such at any given time, I can list the best qualities of, and, inversely, practices avoided by, the outstanding flamenco dancers that I have seen; the unconscious movements and techniques that make their performances exceptional, that give them a certain «something» that sets them apart. I shall divide this grouping into

- (1) *baile grande* (and *intermedio*) — female
- (2) *baile grande* (and *intermedio*) — male
- (3) *baile chico* — male or female
- (4) mixed dancing

(1) *Baile grande* (and *intermedio*), female. The *baile* of the arms, hands, shoulders, and fingers, the very essence of the feminine dance, is the main attribute that can distinguish a great from a mediocre performer. The arms are raised and moved fluidly and slowly, naturally curved without pointing elbows (with exceptions in certain arm positions), raised and lowered with the palms of the hands facing downwards (the underside of the arm facing downward). Facing the palms downward will, in turn, cause the shoulders to move properly, as the shoulders are moved together with the arms to the extent desired by the dancer. The hands move flexibly from the wrists in a circular motion in either direction, also slowly and fluidly. The fingers are placed together (1), or in exaggerated positions (mostly while posing), keeping in mind that the middle and ring fingers have to be utilized, with the thumb, for playing the *pitos* (finger-snapping). I repeat that in the *baile grande* the arms, hands, and shoulders are moved slowly and with great gravity.

The carriage of the dancer is very important. The back is arched backwards from the waist at an angle which should not exceed 45° and will usually be less, with the head generally inclined a little forward and to one side, eyes downcast. You will often see dancers do deep 90° backbends, which are nothing but acrobatics and are meaningless.

The facial expressions, if the dancer feels her dance, will naturally be *jondo*. You may wonder at the spectacle of a dancer performing a

(1) There are two schools of thought in the way the fingers should be moved. The modern Sevillan school advocates the moving of all of the fingers separately during a wrist-turn. Vicente Escudero is strongly opposed to the modern school. He claims that the fingers should be placed and moved together during a wrist-turn.

serious dance with a fixed smile pasted on her face. This signifies only one thing: she has no idea.

Sex-appeal is certainly a motivating force in the female *baile grande*. The hips are moved in a graceful, natural, sensuous manner, but always bearing in mind that the flamenco dancer is not Rosie la Derriere, bumping and grinding herself to a burlesque climax. This sounds facetious, but in actuality the burlesque routine is coming into vogue in flamenco, a development of such bad taste (performed by *bailaoras* and *bailaoras* alike) that it cannot be attacked with enough vehemence. It is done not by «bumping» so much as by «grinding», the circular motion of the hips in a cheap, suggestive manner completely out of keeping with the *Baile* flamenco.

In the *baile grande* the *bailaora* dances as stationarily as possible. This will allow her to concentrate on the *jondo* elements of her dance, and will better hold the public's attention. Rapid turns and sudden stops (minor climaxes), with a corresponding raising of the arms slowly and intensely, can be very effective.

The *zapateado* (footwork), used sparsely and with good taste, can intensify the female dance. If overdone, as it often is, the viewer will become bored and lose the trend of the dance. The *zapateado* (an intricate interplay of heel and toe taps, utilizing both feet) is often over-emphasized with the purpose of showing off technique, or of taking up time in an uninspired dance.

The playing of the *pitos* is a complex and effective practice. By snapping the middle and the ring fingers (rarely the little finger) against the thumb of the right hand, combined with the thumb and the middle finger of the left hand, a fascinating set of intricate rhythms and counter-rhythms can be played. In addition, a «secret» technique that is not often divulged to newcomers (unless they are astute enough to catch it) is used, which is a clacking sound made by the tongue which sounds very similar to finger-snapping. This same vocal technique is also used in conjunction with the *palmas*, and helps explain why one expert playing the *pitos* or the *palmas* can sound like an entire orchestra. The playing of the *pitos* strongly and well is difficult, and very important in both the female and the male dance.

The use of castanets is an excellent way to destroy the *jondo* effect of a dance. The castanets, if used at all, should be used in such regional-flamenco dances as the *sevillanas* and the *fandangos de Huelva*, and perhaps in a few other light rhythms. They should never be used in the *baile grande*, as they lend a distraction which is incongruous with the *jondo* and, worse, they detract from the hand and arm movements, the very basis of the feminine dance. The most *jondo* of flamenco dances, the *siguiriyas*, is being danced more and more with castanets, a development which causes it to lose much of its potential meaning.

Another time-honored way of cutting down the effectiveness of a

dance is to swing into a gay rhythm (usually a fast *bulerías*) at the end of a *baile grande*. This is done, strangely enough, so as not to leave the public with the very effect that the dancer has attempted to build up throughout her entire dance, and also as a proven way to draw more applause from an ignorant audience. There is little sense in crusading against this practice, however, as it is too strongly entrenched in today's flamenco dance. The most that can be asked is that the dancer use a slow «*bulerías a golpe*» at these moments, instead of a thoroughly non-esthetic fast *bulerías*.

(2) *Baile grande* (and *intermedio*), *male*. Only the *bailaores* who are, or can simulate that they are, honest-to-goodness men can effectively dance the *baile grande*. It is a dance of passion, virility and arrogance.

The scarcity of good, manly *bailaores*, I believe, is due to the fact that the *Baile* demands *bailaores* with a certain rare personality; a man who can exhibit his emotions and passions and body unconditionally, and yet remain uneffeminate. Most manly *bailaores* dance coldly, relying on their technique to transmit what they wish to communicate. They are afraid, or unable, to reveal their inner passions, to let themselves go, because it is just not in their physiological makeup. Others, of effeminate nature, have the ability to appear completely masculine when they dance. It can be said that the outstanding male dancers of the *baile grande* are of two types; those who are truly masculine and who are able to «let themselves go», and those who are definitely effeminate, but who possess the ability to transform themselves into *machos* (real men) when they dance. Both types are rare, with a resultant lack of truly moving male dancers.

The *bailaor* carries his body straight, perhaps bending back slightly at the waist. There is no pattern of movement, except that he moves around as little as possible within the possibilities of the effect desired. He is fluid, slightly exaggerated, developing his movements from slow and intense to perhaps suddenly rapid, with an unexpected stop. His footwork is strong, clear, pronounced, his arms and hands slightly curved, without the flexibility of the female arms. He does not move his hands circularly as the *bailaora*, but rather guards the strong line of the arm, his fingers straight except when playing the *pitos*. His *pitos* are forceful, as they are a strong asset for the *bailaor*. Showy acrobatics are avoided (sliding along the floor on the knees, throwing himself down on his hip and thigh, spinning around on the floor on one knee, jumping onto, and off of, tables etc.), as should the even less flamenco acrobatics of doing the splits, revolving on the legs and one arm, and such, which can be seen all too frequently. In short, we can say that the *jondo* dance of the great *bailaor* will contain passion, dignity, force, and manliness, as well as the essentials *duende*, tastefulness, and a superior *compás*.

(3) *Baile chico*, male or female. Here the same basic techniques are used, as described in (1) and (2), but the stoppes are lifted. Gaiety takes the place of melancholy, faces are illuminated, movements become faster, festive *palmas* and *pitos* and the rhythms and counter-rhythms of a driving guitar lead the dancers to a carefree exuberance. Increased footwork, flashing colours, whirling stops, slow, sadness-tinged beginnings again led by the song, guitar and *jaleo* into uncontained gaiety. The dances become lighter, more suggestive, humorous. Flowers fly from whirling heads, dresses rise above blurred hips. Merriment is the mood, Gaiety king, but... care has to be taken. Many *chico* dances are spoiled by the dancer completely abandoning restraint and frenziedly stomping about the floor in an ungraceful loss of dignity. Dignity is basic. If lost, the dance is no longer flamenco.

(4) *Mixed dancing*. The themes of mixed dances are love, jealousy, passion, difficulties interrupting or denying love, trio complications, and such. The dancers will communicate their love or anger by their *zapateados*, looks, and *pitos*, or by their castanets, if they use them. You will notice that one dancer will tap out a *zapateado*, and the other will answer. If they are «talking» and «answering» frequently and loudly, the chances are they are arguing. In nearly all mixed dances one of the dancers will make the other jealous by chasing after a third dancer, or an imaginary partner. The usual ways of ending the mixed dances are the man dominating the woman and dragging her off stage by the hair, the woman doing the same to the man, the couple exiting in a «happy-ever-after» embrace, or each dancer stomping furiously off of opposite ends of the stage.

To be effective, the dancers have to throw themselves into mixed dancing wholeheartedly. If they are portraying love or hate, they should momentarily love or hate, as it is obvious when one of the dancers is off in a day-dream, or intensely dislikes his partner, or is vainly dancing for himself. Mixed dancing is usually entertaining, interesting, and, during the rare times when both dancers can escape themselves and momentarily live their dance, very moving.

Many people are under the impression that each of the various movements of flamenco has a specific meaning, and that in turn each dance is conveying a particular story. For instance, one misconception is that a dancer raising his arms (towards heaven) symbolizes praying, and that this fits into a particular story that is supposedly being unfolded. The truth is that the techniques and movements in flamenco are not symbolic in themselves, and that in a solo dance no actual story is being told. The dancer utilizes the techniques and movements of his dance to help him to express his inner self, and whatever passions or moods are affecting his inner self at the time he is dancing. For this reason the guitarist and the singer are so necessary for the dancer, as

they set the mood, and incite the inner fire of the dancer so that he must release these passions through his dance. Consequently, the same movement or technique can denote tragedy or gaiety, love or hate, depending on the manner in which it is done, and the mood of the dance and dancer. Dancing is much like abstract painting; two viewers will be moved differently by the same dance, and the same viewer will be moved differently by the same dance seen on separate occasions (depending also on the mood of the viewer).

A story of sorts may be unfolded in a mixed dance, as we have seen, but more than a story, the dancers are interpreting a variety of moods and feelings that will be understood by the public. The story itself will rarely become more complicated than boy meets girl, they fall in love, girl flirts with another boy, original boy jealously beats on second boy and triumphantly carries off the admiring Miss. The story is secondary; primarily important are the emotions on which the story is based.

All who have seen commercial dancing will have marveled at, and perhaps wondered about, the picturesque costumes worn by the *bailaoras*. These are the result of many years of evolution. We can readily see, in photos, paintings, and sketches of the last century, that the flamenco wear of that period was nearly identical to the street wear. Details included a tight-fitting waist and upper body of the dress, skirts to the ankles, full, voluminous sleeves, fringed shawls (*mantones*), large combs worn in the hair (*peinetas*), *mantillas*, full petticoats and, for special occasions, a special dress with a short train (*bata de cola*). The main difference between street and dance wear was that the dance dress had a much more ample skirt, which billowed and rose nicely on turns, and a ruffle at the bottom, which facilitated movement. With time the dance dresses became more and more exaggerated, until arriving at the two styles we know today. 1) The *bata de cola* developed a longer and longer train, until it became a rather senseless art just to be able to move it around esthetically and gracefully. 2) The more common-type dress kept inching up from the ankles, while adding more and more ruffles, until reaching the modern extreme (not in wide practice, thank goodness) of mini. In the process the full sleeves were gradually lost, and plunging necklines swept into the scene. These changes were, of course, introduced so as to give the casual spectator in commercial establishments a bigger thrill. The shows became all legs and cleavage, while the emphasis on good dancing dropped alarmingly. What we might call «girlie flamenco». Happily, there are those few female dancers who have successfully resisted this trend, and who today are leading a return to the less flashy dance fashions of old.

As regards the gypsies, they adopted this Andalusian style of dress, and proceeded to make their inevitable innovations by adding polka dots to the dresses, and by developing a flaring skirt and an accompany-

ing full-sleeved blouse, sometimes tied at the waist. With a tenacity peculiar to the gypsies, they were the last to succumb to the modern «universal» way of dressing, and even now it is possible to encounter gypsies dressed in the traditional manner. This way of dressing is now associated more with gypsy than with Andalusian women, and the dresses are consequently referred to as «*trajes de gitana*».

The ranch men in Andalusia, above all the bull ranch foremen (*mayorales*), have better managed to authentically maintain their traditional *trajes cortos*, boots, and broad-brimmed hats. The regal capes and broad-brimmed hats of the city man nearly disappeared entirely. The capes are now somewhat fashionable among students and artistic groups in the larger cities.

However, in commercial flamenco establishments this style of dress has been preserved intact by the male dancers. Their more formal *trajes cortos* are usually set off by white shirts ruffled on the chest and cuffs, while less formal gypsy wear might include a polka dot shirt tied at the waist, and a polka dot neckerchief. Capes and broad-brimmed hats are also frequently used, and boots, much like those used on the ranch, of varying height.

There are a few highly paid dress makers and tailors who dedicate themselves to this art, and the best of them have become nearly as renowned as the artists they fit. Those in Spain are excellent and relatively low-priced (in comparison with other countries). In Mexico City there are several good, medium-priced craftsmen. In the United States there are also a few such craftsmen, notably in New York, but the quantities of money asked are usually as spectacular as the costumes.

As a fitting finish to this chapter I had the intention of listing some of the better flamenco dancers of today, as I have done with the singers and guitarists (and have done with the dancers in other editions), but find that a list of authentically good dancers is much harder to come by. Nearly all the acclaimed flamenco dancers today dance commercially, which signifies that they are necessarily carriers of the mannerisms, affectations and habits most liked by their unknowing public. This, combined with the deadly night-after-night routine, can only lead to dancers who prostitute and vulgarize themselves until they lose their sometimes great potential.

What are some of the bad habits they acquire? Let us start with the fact that they all use routines, danced identically night after night. No *duende* can survive this. Their boredom is insufferable, which they attempt to relieve with their constant joking with, and often malicious ribbing of, the other components of the group. Then there is the excessive use of castanets at all the wrong moments; the *bailaoras* dressing up like *bailaores*, a la Carmen Amaya, and offering long routines of thoroughly unfeminine footwork; false passions and faces, like bad

theatre; the groping choreography of dance troupes in search of originality; impossibly long and boring dances (the ultimate in this trend, in my experience, was a 27 minute routine of *siguiriyas por martinetes*, about four times the length of a dance that might hold the public's attention and be meaningful); and so forth. Equally disheartening is the spectacle of the public eating it all up, thereby encouraging the artists on to even worse taste.

Do these commercially-orientated dancers let their hair down at *juergas* and dance in an authentic manner? Rarely. The crowds, the applause, the stage, the money, the fame quickly drive all desire for authenticity from them. They actually come to belittle good natural dancing as oversimplified and primitive, forgetting (if they ever knew) that such dancing, in flamenco at least, is the only that arrives to the heart, that a fluid, non-theatrical play of arms and upper torso and a release of *duende* slowly and at close quarters, are the only factors that matter. Factors that are almost never created in a commercial atmosphere.

Thus, from a purely flamenco point of view (not theatrical), a list of good dancers is not relevant. It would be pitifully small.

THE GUITAR

Introduction

In order to talk of the flamenco guitar, certain preliminary explanations of guitar terms and playing techniques are necessary. Included in this list are the terms *toque*, *falsetas*, and *compás*, the right-hand playing techniques *rasgueado* (*rasgueo*), *pulgar*, *picado*, *arpeggio*, and *trémolo*, and the left-hand playing techniques *ligados* and chording.

The term *toque* is usually thought of as «a guitar piece or composition.» Actually it is neither — there are no guitar «pieces» in flamenco, and the word «composition» falls far short of the true meaning of the word. The all-inclusive meaning of the word *Toque* is «all flamenco played on the guitar». The word *toque*, with a small «t», refers to a particular segment of the all-inclusive *Toque*. Examples: (a) the *toque jondo* is a sub-division of the overall *Toque*; (b) the *toque* of the *soleares* (all of which is played within the traditional framework and basic *compás* of the *soleares*) is a particular segment of the all-inclusive *Toque*, and is included within the sub-division of the *toque jondo*. These definitions also apply to the *Cante* (*cante*) and the *Baile* (*baile*).

Falsetas are the melodic variations inserted into a *toque* that depart from the basic techniques of *rasgueados* and strumming.

The most important element of playing good flamenco (other than the *duende*), and the most basic, is the mastery of the *compás*. Without the *compás* the guitarist is playing his own type of music, perhaps flamenco in nature, but not true flamenco. Regardless of the proficiency of his technique, a guitarist will be mentally dismissed from the minds of *aficionados* if he loses the *compás*. Those who have a natural sense of rhythm have no great problem; the *compás* will come with time and experience, working its way into the sub-conscious so that it is perfectly kept without effort or thought. Others, more unfortunate, have to memorize the *compás* of each *toque*, and with great concentration attempt to stay with it. Obviously the performance of these luckless guitarists suffers with their inability to move freely within their *toque*.

As occurs in the *Cante*, the flamenco guitarist may sometimes purposely stray from the *compás* in order to achieve an effect. This practice is less justifiable in the *Toque* as there is no need for such devices. It does not usually enhance the self-expression of the guitarist; to the contrary, it loses the thread of the *toque*, damaging whatever *duende* the

guitarist may be conveying. The great guitarist Sabicas will often deter considerably from the *compás* in his solo interpretations of the *siguiriyas*. He does this for the sake of virtuosity, not in the cause of emotional and artistic improvement.

The most important right-hand flamenco guitar-playing techniques are the *rasgueado* and the *pulgar* (thumb). The *rasgueado* consists of running the fingers over the strings individually, but in a continuous motion, producing a thunderous, rolling effect. The meaning of the term is also generally extended to include the strumming (stroking) of the strings by the fingers as a group, propelled by crisp wrist movements. There are various types of *rasgueados*, too intricate to explain individually, each of which produces a distinct effect. The *rasgueado* is the basic playing technique of flamenco, and one of the most difficult to perfect.

The thumb (*pulgar*) is the fastest finger of the hand, and when developed properly, can achieve astonishing effects. It is used to strike strings in sequence, achieving a series of individually struck notes which can be interweaved with any number of *ligados*. It is often used in combination with the index finger. I have known guitarists who employ only the right-hand techniques of the *pulgar* and *rasgueados*, and who play outstanding *jondo* flamenco.

The other techniques of the right hand, the *picado*, *arpeggio* and *trémolo*, play an extremely important part in modern concert flamenco. The *picado* is the alternate striking of a string by the index and middle fingers, or, less commonly, by the middle and ring fingers, the index and ring fingers, or, rarest of all, the index and little fingers. When developed well the *picado* can be lightening fast. *Arpeggios* consist of the thumb striking a bass string, with two, or three, fingers alternately striking different treble strings. There are various types of two and three finger *arpeggios* which can be classed as forward, reverse, circular, and combinations. The last and least important playing technique is the *trémolo*. There are three, four, and five-sound *trémolos*, all of which entail the striking of a bass string by the thumb, and a particular treble string, usually the first, by two, three, or four fingers, alternately. The three-sound *trémolo* is usually played in this order: thumb, index, and middle fingers; the four-sound: thumb, ring, middle, and index fingers; and the five-sound: thumb, index, ring, middle, and index again. The five-sound *trémolo* is the most commonly used in flamenco, while the four and the three-sound *trémolos* are more widely used in classical playing.

Left hand techniques consist of *ligados* and chording. A *ligado* is the technique of pulling a finger down and off of a string, causing it to sound. This technique can be employed by all of the fingers of the left hand, except the thumb, causing a rapid, slurring effect. When well-developed, entire sections of a *toque* can be played by *ligados* without so much as touching the guitar with the right hand. Of course,

utilizing *ligados* to such an extent is merely showmanship. The *ligado* is an important, basic technique, and should be well-developed by all flamenco guitarists.

«Chording» means the assuming of different chord and single string postures by the left hand, and is one of the four (*rasgueados*, thumb, *ligados*) most important playing techniques of the flamenco guitar.

The Guitarist

The guitarist is the unsung hero of flamenco. With a few notable exceptions, the guitarist is the least paid and the least acclaimed of flamenco's interpreters; an unjust condition, as the guitarist is flamenco's hardest worker. He works much harder to learn his art than the dancer or singer, as he not only has to master his instrument, but as an accompanist he has to thoroughly familiarize himself with all elements of the *Cante* and the *Baile*. The development of the classical style of flamenco guitar playing obligates the guitarist to spend hours every day for uninterrupted years in mastery of present day techniques. As a flamenco concert guitarist of high caliber he has to devote himself to his art as much as a Segovia or a Paderewski, with an additional task; the great flamenco guitarist is not merely an interpreter of compositions, but is himself a spontaneous composer. His material comes from within. If he does not possess an inventive genius and a sense of spontaneity, combined with deeprooted senses of *compás* and the omnipresent *duende*, he is not top flight. On top of this he lives with a constant fear of injuring his hands, arms, or fingers. Merely straining a finger tendon will interrupt and possibly end his career as a concert guitarist.

In the not distant past the flamenco guitar was basically an accompanying instrument. The guitarist that accompanied well was not expected to be a technician; in fact, the concept of modern day techniques was not even dreamed of. The guitarist of the past concentrated on the rhythm and the accompaniment, utilizing almost exclusively the basic right-hand techniques of *rasgueado*, thumb, and simple *picado*. The left hand assumed only the basic chords of the particular *toque*, combined with many *ligados*.

Then a young boy, who began his guitar career as an accompanist during the *café cantante* period of the last century, revolutionized to the core the techniques of the flamenco guitar. This boy, Ramón Montoya, was endowed with a creative genius which is unexcelled in the known history of flamenco. He greatly admired the classical guitar style, and was strongly influenced by the famous composers and classical guitarists

Tarrega and Llobet. He consequently adapted certain techniques of the classical guitar to the flamenco guitar, namely the *trémolo*, the *arpeggio*, an increased emphasis on the *picado*, and a stronger and more difficult left hand (1). He also contributed, during his 60-odd-years as a professional guitarist, a wealth of material, styles and *toques* that have become integrated into flamenco. Every living flamenco guitarist has been strongly influenced, directly or indirectly, by the genius of Ramón Montoya. He died in 1949, the undisputed *maestro* of the flamenco guitar.

Now to pose the inevitable question. Did the integration of classical techniques into flamenco actually improve the art of the flamenco guitar?

If the «art of the flamenco guitar» is construed to mean the complementing of the singing and dancing by the guitar, with the objective of molding all of flamenco into one emotional entity, the answer is that the integration of these classical techniques probably did more harm than good. The decorative *trémolos* actually detract from the *toque jondo*. The *toques* of this group are of down-to-earth, emotional stuff, and are not suited for flowery nothings. The *arpeggios* and *picados*, although more flamenco, should also be used sparingly and with good taste in this category. The danger lies not in the existence of these techniques, but in the fact that few guitarists have the integrity and/or the instinct to use these devices properly. Contrastingly, a good *picado* and *arpeggio* fit extremely well into the makeup of the *toque chico*, adding an element of diversity and excitement previously lacking, and a little *trémolo* in the intermediate forms can enhance their characteristically flowing tranquility.

On the other hand, if we consider the «art of the flamenco guitar» to mean concert flamenco that can stand alone on a concert stage or on a long play record, the classical techniques were a definite necessity. Concert flamenco needs all of the sundry tricks and techniques that have been, and may be, developed, since what it lacks in *duende* and authenticity has to be made up for in virtuosity. It is progressive jazz as opposed to the authentic blues; virtuosity and effects on one side, emotion and depth on the other.

One danger in this virtuoso trend lies in the fact that the present day concert flamenco guitar has not only borrowed classical techniques, but is becoming increasingly classical in nature. A major reason for this is that the virtuoso, in order to develop the classical techniques, will utilize classical guitar exercises and most probably learn several classical compositions, which have a way of creeping into his flamenco. Close scrutiny of various long-play flamenco guitar records will reveal

many passages taken from Spanish and European classical-composers, as well as from the folklore of various countries. The interpretations of these classical flamencos are consequently becoming more and more abstract, the *compás* increasingly blurry. (A similar trend is taking place in jazz, as the progressive school grazes further and further into classical pastures).

This classical tendency may be arrested somewhat by the renewed interest in the pure, traditional flamenco, which will cause a re-realization of the importance of the unadorned *jondo* guitar.

History. The guitar was originally an accompanying instrument. It is of oriental derivation, thought to be a descendent of the *kithara* (Greek for zither), an ancient stringed instrument. It is fairly certain that it was introduced into Europe, by way of Spain, by the famous Arabian singer and musician Ziryab in the IX century A. D. Ziryab was called to Córdoba by the reigning *Califa* (Arabian ruler) to teach the court musicians songs and their accompaniments on a four stringed guitar-type instrument. In time one string, and then another, were added to Ziryab's guitar, and the present day guitar came into being. Through the compositions and virtuosity of the classicists Tarrega and Andrés Segovia, and the flamencos Ramón Montoya, Sabicas, and others, the guitar has only recently merited consideration as an art form.

The Guitar. The guitar plays an extraordinary role in the life of a dedicated guitarist. An outstanding guitar can immeasurably improve a guitarist's playing, his outlook on life and flamenco, and, to say the least, will give him great pleasure. A guitarist has only to open his case and smell the sweet dry-wood odor of an old guitar to feel a certain luxurious enjoyment. As he strokes the deep strings of a quarter-of-a-century old guitar, the sonorous, age-mellowed sound will give a thrill, a *jondo* sensation, a desire to play and to play well.

A superior guitar becomes the guitarist's passion, to be protected at all costs. It becomes a part of him, something that he can part with only with great effort and sorrow. In many cases, such a guitar will even become a status symbol, elevating just another guitarist to the level of a celebrity. There is just such a celebrated guitar in Málaga, owned by a wonderful old man called Pepe el Calderero. As a guitarist he is moving, and an excellent accompanist, but technically (*the* modern basis for judgement) mediocre. Nevertheless, among *aficionados* all over Spain he is the famous owner «*de esa Santos tan magnífica*», «of that *Santos* (name of the guitarmaker) so magnificent». He is continually tempted by fat purchase offers for his *Santos*. When I asked Pepe if he would ever sell, he replied:

(1) Before Montoya, a guitarist called Paco Lucena is credited with certain innovations of classical techniques. These were absorbed and expanded by Montoya.

«¿Hombre, pa qué?» What for? Without my guitar I'd be just another old broken-down guitarist. I would spend the money, and then what? *Ni mi Santos, ni el dinero, ni ná.* No Santos, no money, nothing.» (1).

Accompaniment. Sound accompaniment is of basic importance to the flamenco guitarist, and constitutes an art in itself. The outstanding accompanist has to know all of the *cantes* and *bailes* almost well enough to sing or dance them himself, and he must also be blessed with an instinct which permits him to anticipate the next move of the singer or dancer. He has to be able to follow the caprices of these performers, know when to stop, when to insert *falsetas*, how to blend himself with their moods, how to carry the singer or dancer to his climax... for the good accompanist definitely improves the performance of the other performers.

For instance, the performance of a *cantaor* can be greatly improved if the guitarist is aware of, and observes, the following unwritten rules: if the singer is particularly inspired, the accompanist should play short *falsetas* so as not to break the singer's mood. On the other hand, if the singer seems listless or undecided, the guitarist should launch into a long *falseta*, or series of *falsetas*, in order to give the singer time to regroup. The accompanist has to also take note of the condition of the singer's voice. If it seems weak or unusually hoarse, the low or high notes of the *cante* may be difficult for the singer to execute, in which case the guitarist comes on strong in an attempt to partially drown out the voice. If the voice is strong and healthy, the guitarist should stay well in the background except when playing solo *falsetas*.

Diego del Gastor, an outstanding guitarist to whom you have been introduced in an earlier *juerga*, contributed immeasurably to the excellence of the singers and dancers of that *juerga*, although only the performers and a few others recognized this. When he accompanies he is a joy to watch. He loses all track of his whereabouts and all semblance of self-consciousness as he seemingly becomes one with the singer. He instinctively knows how long the singer will hold a note, when he will suddenly pause, and exactly the type and length of *falseta* to insert to capture, and enhance, the mood. When the singer accomplishes a particularly difficult *tercio* well, Diego beams with pleasure, as if he had sung it himself, and is inspired to more intensified playing.

Many modern flamenco guitarists dislike accompanying, as they feel that it is an unrecognized art. On the surface this seems true, but among informed *aficionados* the outstanding accompanist is the recognized (if hungry) *maestro*.

Peculiarities of Flamenco Guitar Playing. There are two practices that immediately distinguish a flamenco from a classical guitarist; the way of holding the guitar, and the use of the capo (*cejilla*).

The flamenco guitarist rests the guitar, rather awkwardly, on his right thigh. This is a very proud, but impractical, posture, as it necessitates his holding his wrist at a sharp angle to the right in order to assume the classical right-hand position which is necessary if the guitarist wishes to play the modern classical techniques properly. This disadvantage is particularly pronounced in the long-armed guitarist, as it causes undue wrist and arm tension and could possibly cause tendon injury. This way of holding the guitar also makes it very difficult to see the fingerboard, and the beginning guitarist will have ample cause for cursing before he is able to play without looking.

The flamenco way of holding the guitar was perfectly acceptable in the old days, before the classical techniques were introduced to the flamenco guitar. Present day guitarists, unwilling to give up this flamenco tradition (but only too willing to give up others), will grudgingly admit that the mentioned difficulties exist, but they will often claim that they are justifiable because of the improved sound of the guitar when held in the flamenco position. To the contrary, holding the guitar in the flamenco position causes the back of the guitar to rest against, or very near, the chest of the guitarist, which has a tendency to deaden the sound. To arrest this muffling of the sound many flamenco guitarists will rest their guitars well out toward the knee, which causes them to arch over the guitar and leaves considerable distance between the guitarist's chest and the guitar. This corrects the muffling tendency, but in turn causes an even more unnatural position. The flamenco position also causes certain balancing difficulties, as the guitar has to be held solely between the right thigh and the right upper arm, with no support from the left hand, which has to be left completely free to roam the fingerboard. The flamenco guitarist will undergo long months and years of a slipping, sliding guitar and an impeded right arm circulation before this technique is mastered. Of course, the guitarist who has held the guitar in this way for many years eventually considers it a perfectly comfortable position. It is the beginner who suffers.

The classical way of holding the guitar, on the other hand, is both practical and comfortable. The left foot is rested on a foot stand, and the guitar rests snugly between the legs, the elevated left leg against the indented part of the guitar, the right leg supporting the bottom. The guitar is completely secure in this position, and both hands are left free for playing. This also facilitates a view of the fingerboard, natural positions for the arms and hands, and no sound-muffling problem, as the guitar is held away from the body.

Regardless of the impracticality of the flamenco guitar-holding position, it is the first test a guitarist must pass in order to be con-

(1) Since this was written, in 1962, Pepe sold his guitar in a moment of need. The result is just as Pepe predicted; he quickly went through the money, and now has «no Santos, no money, nothing.»

sidered a true flamenco. The flamencos are proud of the very difficulty of this posture; if it is impractical, it cannot be helped — it is flamenco!

The capo (*cejilla*) is used to raise or lower the tuning of the guitar without having to actually re-tune each string. By placing the capo across the neck by the second fret, for instance, the neck is in effect shortened by these two frets, and the tuning of all of the strings is raised correspondingly. This was originally practiced to facilitate the accompaniment of singers, as the guitar has to be repitched for each *cante* that is sung, in compliance with the singer's vocal range. Now it has become widely practiced to use the capo even when playing solos, due to the increased brilliance of sound achieved by raising the pitch. It is thought to sound more «flamenco» when the capo is used, which to a certain extent may be true. But beyond the second or third fret is exaggeration. A rule of thumb could be: the less *jondo* the *toque*, the higher the guitar can be effectively capoed.

Physical Precautions of the Guitarist. The care of the arms, hands, fingers, and even the fingernails is of utmost importance to the flamenco guitarist. The injuring of the tendon which affects the ring and the middle fingers of the right hand is a common, and often incurable, misfortune. It may be injured, while playing the guitar, by holding the right hand in a tense, or bad, position, or by playing too many violent *rasgueados*. Apart from the guitar, this tendon could be damaged by excessive lifting, pulling, or a strong blow. Such an injury will make it impossible to utilize the *trémolo* and most *arpeggios*, as I can disclose from my own experience. Some years ago I injured this particular tendon while playing in a *cuadro flamenco* in a San Francisco night club, due, I believe, to playing excessively strong *rasgueados* while accompanying. I have tried several cures, including the whirlpool and sound waves, to no avail. It has hampered my use of the ring and middle fingers and I have consequently had to give up all *trémolos* and most *arpeggios*. This has caused me little consternation, however, as the «earthy» flamenco can be played without these techniques. The well-known guitarist Perico el del Lunar suffered the same fate, and he continued playing in a magnificent *jondo* style. Nevertheless, this would be disastrous to the concert flamenco guitarist.

Flamenco guitarists with easily breakable fingernails suffer countless minor misfortunes, as the fingernails of the right hand are instrumental in all of the playing techniques. The nails are worn at varying lengths according to the preference of the guitarist, and they are employed in different manners. Some guitarists insist that the string must bounce off of the tip of the finger (or thumb) onto the nail in order to attain the proper sound. Others use the nail alone to strike

the string, which produces a sharper, twangier sound. In either case, if a particular fingernail is broken, the corresponding finger will miss its intended string, or at least nullify the sound, infuriating the guitarist and causing him to scrounge through women's cosmetics departments in search of nail strengtheners. Desperate guitarists try clear Geletin (orally), Revalon's Nail Fix with tissue paper, types of hard glue, applying raw garlic to the nails, vitamins expressly marketed for strengthening finger nails, hand baths, and so forth. Such practices can be most embarrassing, and at times socially unacceptable. Fortunately, this weak nail condition seems to disappear with time in most cases, although there are guitarists who are plagued by this seemingly unimportant inconvenience for life.

The flamenco guitar today.—As is fitting in modern life, the flamenco guitar has become industrialized. Assembly line guitarists and interpretations, fast, nervous, duende-less playing, fierce competition, and, inevitable in the process of industrialization, the annihilation of personality as all flamenco guitarists sound more alike each day.

Few guitarists are able to resist, or even attempt to resist, this destruction of their individuality. Fortunately, however, a few do remain islands apart, and these individualists stand out more each day as industrialization leaves them further and further behind. The resultant wide separation of styles and emotional direction can be readily demonstrated on records by listening to any of the moderns (Sabicas, or Paco de Lucía, on any of their records), and Perico el del Lunar on the Hispavox *Antología del Cante Flamenco*.

First, let us listen to, for instance, Sabicas. We are immediately struck by his phenomenal technique; thundering *rasgueados*, lightening *picados* and thumb work, crystal clear *arpeggios* and *trémolos*, astounding chording effects and *ligados*, a deluge of notes and more notes. We are left breathless, awe-struck. How can he play so perfectly, have such inventive genius to create most of his complex material, weave in and around the *compás* with such natural ease? Sabicas, great virtuoso of the flamenco guitar!

Then we put on one of the Anthology records featuring Perico el del Lunar, until his death in 1964 one of the few masters of the art of accompanying the *Cante*. Perico could accompany anything that was sung, and a few *cantes* that had been forgotten. He knew the *Cante* better than most *cantaors*, and probably better than any other guitarist with the illustrious exception of Manolo de Huelva. The record spins, and Perico plays an introduction, subdued, quiet, preparing the way for the singer. His style is simple and unassuming, effortless, and somehow ingenious. He has the talent of capturing the mood of each *cante*, and of influencing the singer to greater emotional depth. He remains in the background, and yet is unpretentiously in the fore-

ground, inserting always the appropriate *falseta* to enhance the feeling of the *cante*. His *falsetas* are in excellent taste, simple and *jondo*. We are not left in awe, nor are we breathless. But we are left with a feeling that we have heard something important; the combination of a guitar and a singer creating an unforgettable *jondo* flamenco, steeped in *duende*.

Are there many left of the old school? I am afraid not. In today's «mod» world such guitarists are not fashionable, and they scrape by playing in fewer and fewer *juergas* for a diminishing group of sensitive *aficionados* who have somehow also escaped industrialization. The best and most individualistic of these guitarists, to my mind, is Diego del Gastor, a gypsy who describes himself a «good *aficionado*», who has passed his 60-some years in or near Morón de la Frontera creating and playing his own material, always indifferent to the commercial temptations surrounding him. Diego can justly be described as the «essence of the flamenco guitar»; to hear him at his best is to hear the flamenco guitar at its most expressive.

Another guitarist capable of much majesty and emotion in his playing is the legendary Manolo de Huelva, now in his seventies, living in Sevilla nearly completely retired from all guitar activity.

Antonio Sanlúcar, Vargas Araceli and a few others are also well worth listening to. Among those who participate in the commercial flamenco world but are still capable of subtlety and emotion in their playing we can cite two outstanding examples, Melchor de Marchena and Pedro del Valle, son of the late Perico el del Lunar. Melchor, accompanying the *cante* (above all *por seguiriyas*), can play magnificently, and Pedro, when not virtuositizing, knows well the very flamenco, beautiful old-time style of his father.

What can we say of the «industrialized» guitarists of today? Nearly all of them are knowledgeable accompanists of both the song and the dance, as before achieving their goal of recital guitarists, they pass through an extended apprenticeship accompanying commercial flamenco groups. The authentic virtuoso, however, is never content merely accompanying, but ever aspires to the position where he can strictly play solo. Among the virtuosos, Sabicas has long reigned king of them all, a claim strongly disputed today by the 23-year-old marvel, Paco de Lucia. Not lagging far behind them are a bevy of excellent modern-style guitarists, including Alberto Véllez, Andrés Bautista, Benito Palacio, Carlos Ramos, Esteban Sanlúcar, Juan Carmona «Habichuela», Juan Maya «Marote», Juan Serrano, Justo de Badajoz, Luis Maravilla, Manuel Moreno «Morao», Mario Escudero, Niño Ricardo, Paco de Antequera, Paco del Gastor, Pepe Martínez, Víctor Monge «Serranito»... and others, a surprising number of others, who play the modern style of flamenco guitar extremely well, a fact that again demonstrates that the principal factor in this style of playing is neither genius nor

flamenco instinct, but long hours and years of hard work in the form of constant practice. If nothing else, the modern style is democratic, for any reasonably talented guitarist can arrive if he works hard enough at it and has a bit of contact with flamenco.

You have left a few guitarists out, the reader might say. What of Carlos Montoya, for example? A likeable showman who used to play passable flamenco. And Manuel Cano? More classical than flamenco, he lurks about the outer fringes of flamenco doing more harm than good with his campaign to «sophisticate the flamenco guitar». And the famous Manitas de Plata? A farce among flamenco guitarists, alarmingly deficient in his knowledge of flamenco, generally off even in his *compás*, of mediocre technique, but good, if nothing else, for a laugh.

THE JALEO

The *jaleo* is a necessary and intricate component of flamenco. It usually serves as an accompaniment and encouragement for flamenco's other components, but I have also heard *cuadros* perform the *jaleo* very effectively as a solo number.

The *jaleo* is basically made up of hand-clapping and shouts of encouragement, and can also be supplemented by finger-snapping and rhythmical punctuations with the feet (from a sitting position).

The hand-clapping is composed of two techniques: (1) the middle three fingers of the right hand striking the extended palm of the left, producing sharp, penetrating sounds. This technique can be developed to a machine-gun rapidity, and is used mainly in the faster rhythms; (2) the cupped palms of both hands coming together, producing a hollow, more *jondo* sound, which is used mainly in the slower rhythms. Technique (1) can also be supplemented by a clacking movement of the tongue, which, done strongly and well, will sound like another handclap.

Three good *jaleadores* (performers of *jaleo*) can sound like ten. One will carry the rhythm, another the counter-rhythm, and the third will weave in and about the *jaleo* of the other two. If there are more *jaleadores*, they will select one of these three courses, adding an exciting impetus and strength.

Among the shouts of encouragement will be heard *olé* (approval), *así se canta* or *así se baila* (that's the way to sing, or dance), and an infinite number of others, usually spontaneous, often humorous.

The *pitos* are a lesser used *jaleo* technique, not being loud enough to compete with the *palmas* and the shouts.

Uninitiated spectators will often attempt to join in on the *jaleo*, not realizing that it is a science in itself. Sadly enough for the non-performer, none of flamenco's components, including the *jaleo*, can be attempted successfully without extensive training.

RECITING

Singing is by no means the only way of expressing poetry in flamenco. Reciting also plays an important role, and it is the rare *juerga* at which someone does not break forth with a poem by García Lorca or another of the «flamenco» poets. These moments can be surprisingly stirring, especially when well accompanied by the guitar.

COMEDY

There is a branch of flamenco, and group of artists, that has been largely ignored by all writers on the subject, including, to date, myself. Strangely enough, I should add, for these artists are among the most entertaining and spontaneous in flamenco. Who, or what, are they? We have talked about singers, dancers, guitarists, *jaleadores*, and reciters. What can be left?

The artists in question are hard to categorize. They sing a little, but are not considered singers. They dance, recite, and may even play the guitar, but are not specialists in any of these fields. They do all of these things, but their main role is still another: they are flamenco's comedians.

And they are funny, so funny (if you understand Spanish) that, when in good form, they can keep any group in stitches. They fit perfectly into *juergas*, when their humor mixes delightfully with the *bulerías* and other light flamenco of the first sparkling hours.

Some of the better-known of these artists are:

El Gasolina
El Brillantina
El Gringo

El Gran Simona
Emilio «El Moro»
La Coriana

FLAMENCO AND THE NON-SPANIARD

Introduction

The non-Spanish *aficionado* should be warned of one thing — regardless of his proficiency in performing flamenco, or his accumulation of knowledge about flamenco, he will always be thought of, and referred to, as that fellow who performs well, or knows a lot, *considering* he is a foreigner. Rarely will he be accepted on the level of the *andaluz*. This is due to a rooted belief that only the *andaluces* can perform, or even understand, flamenco properly. This belief is so strongly imbedded in the nature of the *andaluz* that even if disproven through discussion or performance, it remains intact. Like the Japanese in judo and the Americans in jazz, the southern Spaniard hates to admit that other races are capable of performing, of even fully grasping, his art.

Hemingway and other non-Spanish bullfight critics have had to contend with the same attitude. On the surface, Hemingway was accepted by Spanish *aficionados* as a true critic. But in event of any serious discussion or argument about the bulls, his viewpoint could always be discounted if only because he was a foreigner. This same reasoning is prevalent in flamenco.

Roughly, the hierarchy of flamenco is as follows:

Andaluces, performers and then *aficionados*, the older the wiser.
Other Spaniards.
Latin Americans.
All others.

This manner of thinking is changing gradually as more and more non-Spaniards become interested in flamenco. In the meantime, expect and accept this attitude and your flamenco days will be a lot happier.

THE CANTE AND THE NON-SPANIARD

The *Cante* is the least likely flamenco form to be mastered by a non-Spaniard. The language alone takes years to dominate to a sufficient degree and is, of course, the principal reason why few non-Spaniards take up the *Cante* seriously.

There are exceptions. A few non-Spaniards have thrown themselves very seriously into the subject, and have emerged with impressive knowledge about the various forms and how they should be sung. One woman, Elaine Dames, competed in the 1959 Córdoba *Concurso de Cante Jondo*. Another, Moreen Carnes (María la Marrurra), recently cut a Spanish LP, accompanied by Melchor de Marchena.

But perhaps the most interesting example of a non-Spanish singer that I know of is the Pakistani Aziz Balouch, a singer of both Pakistani folk songs and flamenco. In his book dealing principally with himself, and secondarily with the evolution and origin of *cante jondo*, Mr. Balouch claims that flamenco is a direct descendant of Indo-Pakistani religious and folk songs. Based on this premise (very likely correct, at least in part), and upon his ability to sing both flamenco and Pakistani folklore, Mr. Balouch sets about to purify the flamenco «way of life» by applying Yoga and operatic training techniques to the flamenco singer. He suggests the following:

(1) Abstention from all alcoholic beverages, especially during and before singing. He suggests that the singer drink weak tea or tepid water.

(2) Special dietary practices. For best results it would be wise to go all out and become a vegetarian.

(3) Limiting sexual activities to a bare minimum, with complete abstention on singing days. He has offered no solution for those who sing every night.

(4) 15 minutes of lung development a day by vigorously inhaling and exhaling fresh air.

(5) Cleaning of the nasal passages daily by sucking water up one nostril and releasing it through the other, and vice versa. Repeat as desired.

It must be recognized that these practices may give the singer a

clear, bell-like tone, and perhaps an operatic resonance. What Mr. Balouch apparently does not realize is that these are the very vocal qualities that the flamenco singer avoids. He also seems unaware that flamenco is not just singing, but a unique philosophy, a way of life. These people are born flamencos, with everything the word implies: quantities of booze, women whenever and wherever possible, long lasting blasts. Their art is vital, but flamenco is their life. If they are blessed with artistic talent, well and good. But they do not see things as other cultures do, and will not behave like other cultures; they won't give up life's pleasures (and the flamenco way of life is definitely a pleasurable one) and their inherent philosophy merely to delicate themselves to an art form.

Perhaps one of my memorable flamenco experiences will state more clearly what I am trying to say. It occurred in the lonely Andalusian countryside, far from civilization. As I tramped up a winding road, I found myself encompassed by a haunting voice drifting down from the surrounding hills. The voice was untrained, cracked with age, and yet carried an impact of intensity and emotion that I have never heard excelled... an old man with his plow, expressing his loneliness through song. This is the essence of flamenco, summed up in a single, simple paragraph.

I shall hazard a recommendation. Unless the beginner is possessed by a fanatical urge to become a *cantaor de flamenco*, and with an exceptional singing talent, he should not venture into this difficult territory as a performer. For, sadly enough, in not a single case have I heard a non-Spaniard that could be taken for a good Spanish flamenco singer sight unseen. Happily, the same cannot be said for the guitar or the dance, far more receptive fields for the non-Spanish *aficionado*.

THE BAILE AND THE NON-SPANIARD

The dance is the easiest and the quickest way for talented non-Spaniards to break into the commercial flamenco world as performers. Even in Spain ballet and night club choruses, and a few star spots, are sprinkled with foreigners.

The theatrical chorus is the least difficult to qualify for, requiring from the dancer, be he male or female, the following attributes; a desire to dance flamenco for art's sake, under rugged conditions and for near-starvation wages; a minimum sense of grace; an eagerness to learn (and a basic knowledge of) flamenco and regional dances, as well as an infinite amount of patience with routine, dull work; and an un-

questioning obedience to the heads of the company. Let us discuss these individually.

Dancing flamenco in a traveling company chorus is no bed of roses. Within Spain it means traveling thousands of kilometers in far from comfortable conditions. It means playing all of the one-horse towns to a public that is there strictly for the kicks. It means going along for the experience, as the salary is only sufficient to maintain; nothing is put away. It means staying in second-rate pensions and hotels, eating cheap food, and sacrificing all privacy. Outside Spain, on European or American tours, conditions and pay are better, although not enough to cause prolonged rejoicing.

In the chorus the dancer must be graceful enough to avoid calling attention to himself by his ungainliness, or by stumbling or tripping too often. He has to be able to synchronize his movements with those of the rest of the chorus and to move well, but not well enough to detract attention from the stars of the show.

He needs a basic knowledge of flamenco consisting of a good *compás* and an idea of the various dance movements. Having these assets, he can quickly be taught everything that he will need as a chorus dancer. Whatever dance arrangements he may know from previous lessons or experience will probably be forgotten, as he will rarely be a soloist. He will be taught the chorus arrangements that will be danced without variance night after night until he can do them asleep. Ballet companies do not change their routines for one or more seasons, and the routines become crashing bores to the dancer with imagination.

The dancer must have an absolute obedience to the heads of the Company, which consists of one thing: to keep in mind at all times that his sole purpose is to support the lead dancers. He is expected to stay gracefully in the background and to do everything in his artistic power to make the whole group look good, for which the lead dancers will gracefully take the bows. It is a thankless job, with little self-gratification, but it does give a dancer not-so-valuable experience.

The next step up from theatrical chorus groups are night club choruses. These are harder to break into. Competition is stiff, as such jobs are softer and pay better. Also, the dancer has to be better qualified, as he may have to do a solo number. As a rule, it is wiser for the foreign dancer to perfect his dance until he can break in as a minor night club attraction, especially in those clubs (the majority) in which the choruses are made up of soloists. The qualified non-Spanish dancer will have the advantage of being able to capitalize on his being non-Spanish, a curiosity-invoking phenomenon in flamenco. He will have the disadvantage of being more strongly criticized if he cannot fulfill the public's expectations.

Far better in the long run for those students of the flamenco dance who are happily disposed of time, talent, and money, is to

live and study in Spain. In this manner rapid progress can be made, and the exceptional student will be able to break into the professional world further up the ladder, perhaps in first-class night clubs, or as a soloist in a theatrical company. Such dancers can also return to their native countries to perform and teach, which is more lucrative, and eliminates most competition. The drawback to this course of action is that in time the dancer loses touch with flamenco, and his dancing suffers.

The most famous non-Spanish flamenco dancers include four Mexicans, Manolo Vargas, Roberto Jiménez, Luisillo and Roberto Iglesias, and one Italian-American, José Greco. These dancers have worked their way to the top of the professional ladder, each presently having his own successful Spanish Ballet company (these companies are not exclusively flamenco, nor are they intended to be. They combine classical, modern, regional, and flamenco dances, with flamenco perhaps being their strongest component.)

It is very improbable that the non-Spanish flamenco singer and guitarist achieve the monetary success of these dancers (artistic, yes); the dancers, Spanish or non-Spanish, have the voodoo sign on the big money, glittering lights, and international fame, although the situation, through the present popularization of the *Cante* and the *Toque*, could possibly alter in the future.

THE TOQUE AND THE NON-SPANIARD

A few years ago, the guitar was the most assured way for a non-Spaniard to make a decent showing as a flamenco. As very few people understood the intricacies of the guitar, and fewer still of the flamenco guitar, the beginner who learned a few chords and a few *falsestas* of two or three *toques* was an expert guitarist, *mú flamenco* to everyone outside of Spain. Flamenco guitar records are rapidly changing this enviable condition, and the beginner today finds that he is expected to compete with the great recorded guitarists, most of whom have been playing since childhood. The new «snob» *aficionados* will corner the quavering beginner with demands to hear Sabicas' *soleares*, Lucia's *bulerías*, Niño Sinvergüenza's *tangos por media granáina*, etc. The beginner may haltingly (aware that he is in the presence of a well-versed *aficionado*) play a version of the *soleares*. If it doesn't happen to be

identical with Sabicas' version, our well-versed snob will tell him, in no uncertain terms, that he is not playing the *soleares* properly.

The above situation is entirely possible because of two popular misconceptions concerning the flamenco guitar; (1) that it is necessary to play like Sabicas to play good flamenco, and (2) that each *toque* is a composition never to be varied, like classical music. Idea (1) has been covered sufficiently in the guitar chapter. Idea (2) could perhaps be rehashed a little. As has been stated, each guitarist is entirely free to create what he wishes within the bounds of the *compás* and good (flamenco) taste. (Carlos Montoya, for example, has gone a little too far with his St. Louis Blues *por bulerías*). If he is a truly creative guitarist, he will never play a particular *toque* the same way twice. Various guitarists encourage the idea of flamenco compositions by publishing versions of *toques*. These pieces of music are strictly individual versions, and are not to be taken as *the* way to play that particular *toque*. Other guitarists will add to the composition impression by playing never-varying versions of a *toque* for years, signifying only that they are extremely limited guitarists without imagination or creative ability.

The non-Spanish flamenco guitar beginner will go through a period, more prolonged outside of Spain, in which he will think only of the guitar. For him, the guitar will be the beginning and the end of flamenco. He will find himself becoming irritated when the singer breaks in on the guitar introduction to begin his *cante*, or when the dancer leads the guitarist away from a beautiful *falseta* in the course of the accompaniment. He would much rather listen to guitar solos than view the entire *cuadro* perform. Gradually he will grow away from this as he begins to understand the other elements of flamenco. He will learn to appreciate the thrill of a well-sung *tercio*, the depth of a truly *jondo* dance, and the vital force contained in the *palmas* and the *jaleo* of a fast *bulerías*. He will remain basically a guitarist, but he will have the quality of being able to appreciate equally all of flamenco's components.

The non-Spaniard can learn flamenco by two methods; taking lessons, the wise and costly method, and taking material from records and tapes, the cheap and unsatisfactory method. For those studying outside of Spain, a combination of both is perhaps the wisest, with by far the strongest emphasis placed on the formal lessons. Those fortunate studying in Spain who have a sociable disposition can learn most satisfactorily by daytime lessons and nighttime *juergas*, spent in looking, listening, participating, and absorbing. This is probably the only way to capture the *duende*. It is also great fun!

Depending on his luck and personality, the non-Spaniard may have difficulties in his studies with many flamenco guitarists who deign to teach him. Regardless of the guitar instructor's economic condition or the sum agreed upon for the lessons, he makes it understood by his attitude that he is doing the student a great favor by

cramming him into a tight schedule. A fairly universal rule seems to be that the student is capable of absorbing two *falsetas* per lesson, plus a little *rasgueado* and rhythm. These two *falsetas* may take the student ten minutes, or a half an hour, to learn, and the rest of the hour is supposed to be taken up by practicing what has been learned. During lessons with unsatisfactory instructors, I used to pick up the two *falsetas* in a few minutes, and then during the rest of the hour be advised from a distance whether or not I was playing them well. During those practice periods the instructor might be absorbed in any number of tasks; cooking, dressing, eating, shaving, talking on the phone, or merely being sociable with friends in another room. It is usually necessary to switch instructors until one is found with a reasonable amount of formality.

Another quite understandable trait of many guitar instructors, especially gypsies, is their reluctance to part with their favorite material. This is especially true of the guitarist who creates his own material, as he often becomes obsessed with the idea of keeping it for himself. (It is infuriating for many creative guitarists to hear every Tom, Dick, and Harry playing their creations, usually badly, causing them to lose all originality and become vulgarly popular). There was the well-known case of the gypsy guitarist who would not teach his material to his own son, nor even play the guitar in his presence. Manolo de Huelva is another advanced example of this. His hatred of being plagiarized is basically what prompted him to renounce all playing commitments other than private *juergas*. He not only declined numerous record-making propositions, but he disliked, and usually refused, to play in front of a guitarist whom he considers musician enough to copy his material. The singular Manolo has become a legendary figure as much for his extraordinary playing as for his eccentricities. He frequently used to lock himself in a hotel room with his wife and a bottle, and play up a storm for their private pleasure. As this idiosyncrasy became known, people used to gather outside of his hotel room hoping to hear him during one of these sessions (which have been described to me as «unbelievable») when he could really let himself go. He also seems untouched by the lust for money or fame. On many occasions he refused to play for private *juergas* that offered him 4000 or 5000 pesetas, unheard of sums for a guitarist in Spain (above all, at that time), only later to accept ten times less to play in a *juerga* that was to his liking. He has also been frequently known, during the course of a *juerga*, to wordlessly pack up his guitar and walk out, refusing all payment, when his audience did not pay the proper respect to his art.

Regardless of the difficulties encountered in taking flamenco guitar lessons, they must be taken. Flamenco is too complicated to be learned solely from records, books, and sheet music. The guitarist's *compás* would most certainly be hopeless, and his *falsetas* inaccurate versions

of the recorded guitarist's. His technique would be bad, and his *duende* and «*aire*» non-existent.

I have listened to many non-Spanish flamenco guitarists in and out of Spain. With few exceptions they have strived overly hard to achieve technical perfection, to the inevitable detriment of their *duende*. They are not satisfied unless they laboriously play, or rather attempt to play, ridiculously complex *falsetas*. They play too fast, and they don't usually «feel» their *falsetas*; they don't accentuate them properly, and they skip from one to another in unvarying monotony. In an effort to achieve a «well-rounded» *toque*, they try to mix in all of their techniques without a thought as to whether they fit into the pattern which they have set, and into the emotional makeup of the *toque*. These faults are certainly not confined to the non-Spaniards, although they are more pronounced in the foreign guitarist due to his lack of experience and knowledge of flamenco. It has to be recognized that it is certainly difficult not to fall into bad habits when the guitarist draws his inspirations from virtuoso records, as do most non-Spanish guitarists, as many virtuoso guitarists are not-so-subtle carriers of these very failings.

It can be asserted that the foreign guitarists who are capable of meaningful playing, *que dicen algo*, are those who have spent an extended time in Spain, mixing with the true flamencos.

HARD TIMES AND PRESENT TRENDS

Back in the years 1850-1900 flamenco hit a peak which has been tabbed its «Golden Age». Since that time it has gone downhill, reaching at one stage the point of disappearance. During the past 15 years flamenco has regrouped, and is presently on a strong upswing. This section is a study of the bad times and present trends.

Before its Golden Age the music and dance of flamenco existed only as an integral part of a way of life. But little by little it gained popularity, and by the middle of the last century sharp businessmen realized that flamenco could be exploited profitably in commercial enterprises. It was then that *cafés cantantes* came into being, and the groundwork for flamenco's Golden Age was laid. *Cafés cantantes* were typical taverns which attracted customers by the novel presentation of *cuadros flamencos* (groups of flamenco performers). Each tavern had its *cuadro*, usually supplemented by guest artists from other *cafés* (1). During their heyday, the last forty years of the past century, these taverns abounded with *aficionados* who were offered a type of flamenco that decreased in purity as the century wore on.

The *cafés cantantes* have been a double-edged blade in the modern history of flamenco. They were the chief propellant of flamenco's Golden Age while, curiously enough, they were at the same time initiating flamenco's swift decline to near-extinction. Contradictory as this seems, it can be easily explained. The *cafés cantantes* were the first commercial enterprises to actually pay the flamencos for their art, resulting in the birth of the commercial flamenco artist. Things went extremely well for three or four decades. Never had there been so many outstanding flamenco performers or so many knowledgeable *aficionados*. Competition between the *cafés*, and the flamenco artists, was fierce. In time the fanfare became so great that many non-*aficionados* began coming in to see what it was all about, most of whom were interested only in the

(1) Some of the more famous *Cafés Cantantes* were: Sevilla —*Café Silverio* (which was owned by the singer Silverio Franconetti, one of the great singers in flamenco history), *El Burrero*, and *La Marina* (which still exists as a bar downstairs, a refuge for wayward young ladies upstairs); Málaga —*Café de Chinitas* (made immortal by García Lorca), and *El Café sin Techo*; Madrid —*El Brillante*; Jerez de la Frontera —*La Primera* (which still exists as a bar).

color of flamenco, not its art. The proprietors of the *cafés*, realizing this, urged their *cuadros* to please these new clients. From that time on, the popularity of flamenco grew as its art declined. It spread to the general public in all parts of Spain, and around the turn of the century it was finally ripe for theatrical production.

If flamenco was a little distorted when it went into the theater, it became badly disfigured there. Pure flamenco does not suit the theater, nor the insensitive masses. Many adaptations had to be made, each diluting further the purity of the flamenco presented. In the meantime, the *cafés cantantes*, the unsuspecting creators of this dilemma, lost their public and ceased to exist. The theatres and night clubs now remained the sole perpetuators of commercial flamenco. Within a period of two generations the public believed theatrical flamenco to be the true flamenco, and by midcentury (1950) pure flamenco had nearly died out, together with many of the pure artists and *aficionados*.

The following excerpt from a poem, dedicated to the untainted singer Aurelio Sellés by the poet José María Pemán, summed (and sums) up the opinion of knowledgeable *aficionados* concerning the state in which flamenco found (and still, to a lesser extent, finds) itself:

*¿A dónde va esa mano de Aurelio hacia adelante?
Va a ahogar veinte gargantas de veinte cantaores
para limpiar las tablas de las escenas
del ruidoso tropel de las mentiras,
¡Y que vuelva a ser pena lo que es pena!*

*Where is Aurelio's hand reaching?
It is reaching out to choke twenty throats of twenty cantaores
in order to purify the platforms
of the noisy jumble of lies;
and then let sorrow again be sorrow!*

But things could only get better. During this period, the double edged blade phenomenon again occurred... the theatre, itself the butcher of huge chunks of flamenco, also acted as the wandering minstrel, spreading the grandeur and color of Spanish folklore, which has resulted in a period of renewed hope for true flamenco. By means of the traveling Spanish ballets, theatrical flamenco has been introduced to vast new audiences outside of Spain.

Many of these foreign viewers were captivated by what they saw, and an influx of new *aficionados* came to Spain in search of flamenco in its proper atmosphere. These people ranged deep into the olive grove and vineyard country of Andalusia, seeking out the legendary non-commercial figures of the flamenco world. They found them in white-washed villages and towns, performing for their own pleasure, com-

pletely forgotten by all but the remaining *aficionados*. In this way these people learned what true flamenco is, and through their impetus and that of a few Spanish *aficionados*, recordings were made in the 1950's of some of the remaining *jondo* artists in the form of anthologies of flamenco. Most of these recorded singers were older men, and they remembered and revived many *cantes* and styles that were obsolete and nearly forgotten. These records appeared in France, the United States, and in other countries long before there was a market for them in Spain. When they finally did appear, they astonished the Spaniards, many of whom heard true flamenco for the first time. These records are not only re-educating the Spanish *aficionados*, but they are renewing the interest of the Spanish *cantaors* in these rare *cantes* as well, with the result that these *cantes* are being heard much more frequently, re-inserting diversity and a broadened scope to a decadent flamenco; a flamenco that was depending, among the general public, on popular renditions of a few *cantes* for its diversity. There is presently a new, strong trend to sing the *cantes* in the formal, traditional, *jondo* way. The popular idols, the Marchenas, Molinas, Valderramas, so long the Kings of flamenco, are losing ground. The names of the great *cantaors* are more and more on the lips of the people. Completely unknown artists within Spain suddenly find themselves international flamenco figures, sought after by the new *aficionados* much to their own amazement.

This renewed interest has caused flamenco to boom in the past ten years. Many promising *aficionados* are turning seriously to flamenco who would have gone into other professions a few years ago. Flamenco festivals, contests, and study-weeks, almost without exception offering the pure, are springing up everywhere. Serious records and anthologies are exploring each obsolete corner of flamenco, books and articles are praising the worthy, condemning the cheap, and groups and centers dedicated to the perpetuation of the authentic are doing what they can.

However, hand in hand with this progress we see, unraveling before our helpless eyes, the repetition of the very *café cantante* phenomenon that led flamenco to its downfall last century. Today they are called *tablaos*, and the possibility is strong that they will prove as harmful to flamenco as did their granddaddies. As was the case with the first *café cantantes*, the first *tablado* to open, La Zambra, in 1948, did so with the sincere intent of making available to the public the pure and traditional in the art of flamenco. The dozens of other *tablaos* that have opened their doors since then, however, have no such idealistic intentions. They are businesses, and are out for only one thing: profits. They are fully prepared, and in a way compelled, if they wish to remain open, to sacrifice everything—authenticity, purity, integrity—to the profit and loss statement. Even La Zambra has had to modify its program a bit

in the interests of self-preservation; now only their small *cuadro* offers anything of value.

History, therefore, is repeating itself in a most startling way, but today we have the advantage of being forewarned, of being able to at least attempt to stem the tide. This, needless to say, is hard going. The lure of the nightly take home pay offered by the *tablaos*, night clubs, and theatrical groups is more than many fine flamenco artists are willing, or can afford, to turn down. And once into the System, they begin changing, adapting, modifying, prostituting. This is inevitable if they wish to remain.

An example of the System at work could be the following hypothetical case of Juan Fulano, a young guitarist from a small Andalusian town. Juan wants to play the guitar for a living. He loves flamenco, and he loves his guitar. Motivated by this and his family's needs, Juan approaches an agent in search of a club or theatrical booking. Upon auditioning, Juan plays a beautifully moving, primitive *siguiriyas*. The auditioner, who may or may not comprehend what he has heard, will have the following reaction:

«Muy bonito, Juan, pero como comprenderás, eso no vende. Very pretty, Juan, but you have to understand that it won't sell. I would advise you to concentrate on your technique. You know, throw in a lot of *arpeggios* and *trémolos* and the other razzle-dazzle, and try to incorporate into your playing *falsetas* based on popular and semi-classical music. You know, give the public something they'll recognize. Also, concentrate on the fast, rhythmical stuff. That's what they eat up. Come back when you've got it worked up.»

This, of course, is the beginning of the end of the pure in Juan. Few artists can prostitute themselves and retain their *duende*. A similar reaction would be experienced by a dancer, who would be advised to (1) utilize numerous fast turns, (2) overwork her hips and bottom and whatever sex appeal she (or he) may have, (3) use much rapid staccato footwork, and (4) make cute gestures and faces. Also, she would be told that to be a modern-day dancer one has to know not only flamenco but regional and some classical dances, and to concentrate on the fast and rhythmical. The singer would have to insert more flourishes, work on attention-calling gestures, and learn how to sing popular songs to flamenco rhythms.

All of this, of course, is contradictory to the very essence of serious flamenco. I have personally viewed a number of artists who have traveled this bitter road. The famous dancer La Chunga is a distressing example. I saw her dance on numerous occasions in Mexico in 1957. She was magnificent. She knew no footwork, and consequently danced barefoot. Her costumes were simple gypsy skirts and blouses. She did not dance by arrangements, but improvised as her moods demanded. Her outstanding assets, and those most difficult to find in a dancer,

were the beauty and grace of her arms and hands, the suppleness of her movements, the authenticity of her facial expressions, her refreshing naïveté, her complete abandon to her *duende*, and, above all, her naturalness. There were pressures on her and her manager at the time, propagated by envious artists, and businessmen mistakenly attempting to increase her commerciality, to teach her dance arrangements, footwork, a more commercial form of flamenco. Her manager successfully avoided these commitments as long as he could, but he eventually succumbed. La Chunga began taking lessons and preparing a more elaborate wardrobe.

Soon she returned to Spain, and with great clamor was propelled to the first figure in the flamenco dancing world. I did not have an opportunity to see her again until 1960, in a night club on the Andalusian coast. It was a depressing experience. Through contact with commercial flamenco she had lost much of her authenticity, her naïveté, and, worst of all, she was no longer natural. Her movements and facial expressions were studied, with an obvious attempt at timing them to achieve the greatest effect. She did tricks with her dress, hair and body, and exploited her sex appeal, mostly in a cheap, superficial manner (causing the opposite of the desired effect). She did an excessive amount of footwork. She was no longer sure of herself, I believe in great part due to her association, as a student, with flamenco's commercial technicians. She needed someone to shake her by the shoulders and tell her to kick off her shoes and mannerisms and dance in the way in which only a few of the gifted are capable. From one of the most moving dancers I have seen, the System may possibly succeed in making her just another night club attraction.

This «system of artist commercialization», as it might be called, is not the only obstacle in the road. There is another serious one, more subtle, almost more menacing because it is more difficult to combat. It stems, oddly enough, from the very gentlemen, nearly all intellectuals, who are striving to resuscitate and perpetuate the pure in flamenco. They write most of the books, organize many of the contests, study weeks and festivals, and edit most of the records and anthologies, usually on a very scholarly level. Now I realize that this is par for the course. It happens all over the world to folk art forms that are outliving, or have outlived, their significance and urgency due to social and educational progress. It follows that the gentlemen in question, and a large segment of the public in general, must necessarily approach these folk arts from an intellectual point of view, because they are not an integral part of the disappearing art and philosophy. They have no choice but to act in the only way they know: to analyze, dissect, catalogue, and place behind glass in museums for all posterity to behold.

This is inevitable, justifiable, even historically and sociologically praiseworthy, but, still, highly regrettable, for such an overdose of

intellectualism is all that is needed to hasten the art to a still earlier grave. True, there is instinctive intellectualism in all arts, no matter how folksy, among the artists themselves. That, and inspiration, is what causes creation (1). But that is a forward-surg-ing, healthy kind of intellectualism, while today's tends to follow one of two inconvenient roads: a static clinging to the past, such as is happening in the *Cante*, or an excessive keeping-up-with-the-times, causing a high degree of sophistication wholly out of keeping with the essence of the art, as is happening with the guitar. The first road has smothered all instinct for creation, resulting in precise duplication of the *cantes* of singers of old—down to the length and placement of the «ay's», the vocal mouthing of a word—that is deadly boring to the *aficionado* with even a touch of imagination. The second road is resulting in an empty mixture of international influences far out of keeping with true flamenco. For flamenco, as anyone knows who has heard or seen it when it is worth hearing or seeing, must be instinctive, animal, spontaneous, anything but intellectual, to be great. I keep having the urge to shout to a singer: «Forget how it was sung years ago. Sing in the way you feel it, the way you must to express your own personality, not the way you've sung it six thousand times just because it was sung that way in the past. Put something of yourself into it or you're just a bloody parrot!» But I hold my peace, for the ones I would shout this to are precisely those who are incapable of escaping habit and intellect. Unfortunately, they are the vast majority, and, even more unfortunately, they feel that they are right in their easier, tradition-bound course because most of the mentioned intellectuals encourage, and even insist, that it be that way. The same holds true for the guitarist, who plays unvarying compositions time after time, year after year, or takes the modern course and tinkles away like a player piano (or both), or the dancer of set routines. Intellectualism of this type is natural and even essential in the student, but a grave defect in the veteran artist.

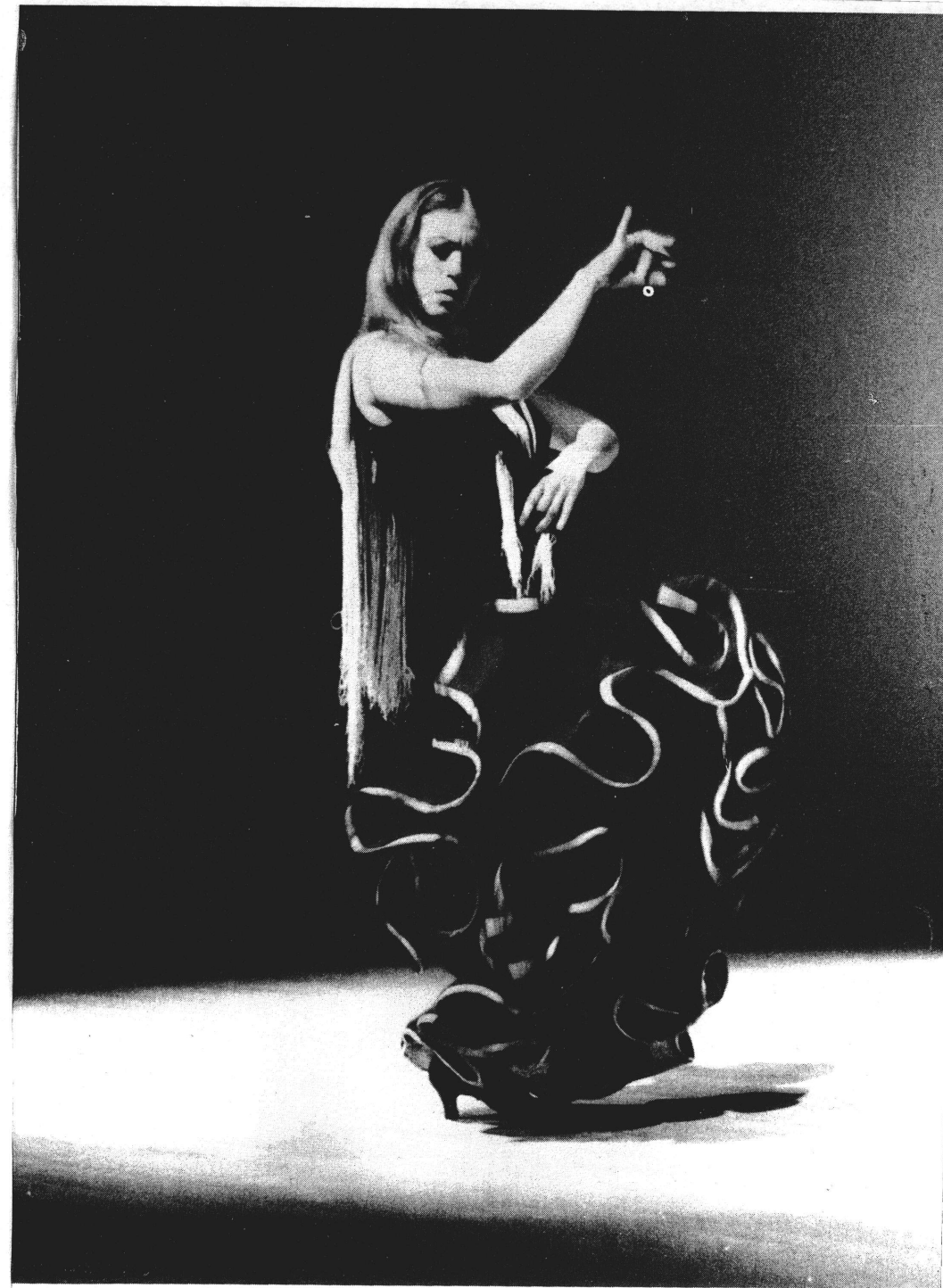
Which brings us to a last paradox in our discussion. As I suggest in various passages in this book, truly great flamenco can only be experienced in the intimacy of the small *juerga*. This was true in the past and it is true today, and is in itself an extremely limiting factor to the number of people who will ever truly understand what makes flamenco

(1) In the days when communications were limited to face-to-face conversation, and transportation to beasts of burden, flamenco contained another readymade fountain of «creation». The very non-existence of radios, phonographs, tape recorders, and easy modes of moving around forced the singer (guitarist, dancer) to approximate the *cantes* (*toques*, *bailes*) of others as much as possible by memory alone, perhaps after hearing or seeing them only two or three times. As memory is fallible, often these versions would be mistaken, and a new style of the *cante* would be born. In the process, the fancy and passion of the new creator would creep into his mistaken version, for better or for worse, sometimes with the effect of improving upon the style he was copying. This explains, of course, the many only slightly different styles of particular *cantes* that exist today. In present times this fountain of «creation» has dried up. If the singer is caught up in this time-honored process he is firmly put down as mistaken, a man that did not research his material properly.

the exceptional art that it can be. Even in Spain most people are just not interested enough to undertake the complications and expense inherent in *juergas* (see «Private Juergas» appendix). In addition, *juergas* are not considered respectable in Spain. Most Spanish men do not consider taking their wives or girls to one (this is due as much to male egoism as convention; they are freer for whatever comes up when unaccompanied), and many men even snicker boyishly if the subject is brought up. The word «*juerga*» invariably invokes scenes of debauchery, drunkenness, and prostitution in their imaginations, which, true enough, goes on occasionally, depending on who is throwing the *juerga*. The vast majority of times, however —we could safely state a percentage well in the nineties— a *juerga* is a most innocent affair, in which a small group of *aficionados* and artists gather together in an attempt to conjure up a few unforgettable moments of gaiety and *duende*.

Let us sum up what we have seen in this chapter. Traditional flamenco is making a strong comeback, but in an intellectual manner not at all in keeping with flamenco tradition. Many new, serious artists are entering the field, most of whom are immediately swept up and tainted by commercialism. The *tablaos*, the *cafés cantantes* of the twentieth century, are holding a prolonged tug-of-war with opposition groups of purists. Private *juergas*, the only artery to the heart of flamenco, are attended by only a small minority.

What conclusion can we draw from this jumble of facts? There is an unfortunate one that comes to me clearly, causing me to predict, without, I am afraid, much risk of mistake, that we have just a few years left, perhaps, with luck, to the end of this century, to savour a living, breathing, significant art of flamenco. After that it will surely continue to exist, but in an academic manner far removed from flesh-and-blood life, a curious and highly-sophisticated reminder of a great folk art of a more primitive age.



Luisa Maravilla emphasizes beautifully the most important aspects of the feminine dance: the arms and hands.