



Performed by Jesus Torres or Paco Cruz

## La Rueca ð Seguiriyas

Performed and choreographed by Soledad Barrio

### Fin de Fiesta

The Company

Original music composed by Jesus Torres and Paco Cruz

#### **A Brief History of Flamenco**

The precarious conditions of the Andalusian singer of the past made it inevitable that he/she should dwell on the more tragic aspects of existence. Even though conditions are now incomparably better, the feelings inherent in the *cante* are universal and timeless, and represent a link between past and present.

Andalusia, the region of southern Spain that is flamenco's home, has a strong musical tradition documented from ancient times, and flamenco certainly takes its place in that heritage. Throughout the centuries, Andalusia absorbed peoples of different cultures and backgrounds—including Romans, Jews, and Moors. As far as flamenco is concerned, the most significant arrival was in the 15th century, when tribes of nomadic Gypsies settled in southern Spain. Their arrival coincided with Ferdinand and Isabella's conquest of Granada, the last bastion of the Moors, and the subsequent expulsion of Jews and Arabs from Spain.

Historian Felix Grande, writing about life in the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries, states: "The Jews were massacred, the Gypsies humiliated and persecuted, the Arabs exterminated, the Moriscos (converted Arabs) expelled, and the Andalusians generally exploited." If we do not relate the music to brutality, repression, hunger, fear, menace, inferiority, resistance, and secrecy, then we shall not find the reality of *cante flamenco*—it is a storm of exasperation and grief. It was against this background that flamenco evolved.

While earlier records suggest that flamenco was at one time unaccompanied, it is hard for us today to imagine flamenco without a guitar. In effect, the guitar forms an integral part of the song; singer and guitarist are one creating the *cante*. The different types of *cante* provide the basis for all flamenco guitar playing. Most of the *cante* has an underlying rhythmic structure, which must be strictly adhered to—the *compás*. One of flamenco's chief characteristics is the complex syncopation against the *compás*, with the *cante* being sung almost entirely off the beat and the guitarist maintaining the rhythm, adding further to the syncopation. In some forms—like the *cante libre* ("free song")—the *compás* is less apparent, but the singer may break into an established rhythm that the guitarist then has to follow. Indeed, the singer is at liberty to improvise, whether the *toque* (guitar playing) is free or in *compás*, and the guitarist may not know beforehand what is expected of him.

There is no evidence that the guitar was initially used to accompany the *cante*, and even today some of the most dramatic forms of *cante* are performed unaccompanied. However, it was certainly in regular use by the end of the 19th century (the guitar has an exceptionally long history in Spain, an early version probably being brought by the Romans). The lute was extremely popular in the rest of Europe during the Renaissance, but was rejected in Spain as a foreign intrusion, since it was of Arab origin. Furthermore, the *vihuela* (the guitar's predecessor) was more suited to the accompaniment of ballads by strumming, since the lute requires notes to be picked more delicately. It was also cheaper to produce and more robust.

In the 19th century, there were two types of singing in Andalusia—the *cante gitano* of the Gypsies and the *cante andaluz*. Silverio Franconetti, an

Andaluz of Italian origin and an exceptional singer of Gypsy styles, was the first to bring these two styles together. This integration of both forms resulted in the *cante flamenco* as it has come to us—the end product being without question greater than the sum of its parts.

The wail of the *cante jondo* (‘‘deep song’’) resembles the mournful chant of the exiled Sephardic Jews. Its poetry displays the existentialist angst and philosophical questioning common in Arabic poetry. The dance, which evolved slowly, fully blossoming in the 1840s, suggests the repetitive key symbol prevalent in Islam, the trance-inducing rhythms of Africa, and the stubborn search of Jewish music.

Flamenco developed rapidly, gaining in artistic stature as well as popularity. Establishments appeared throughout Andalusia and beyond, dedicated wholly to the performance of flamenco. They came to be known as *cafes cantantes*—coffee theaters—where refreshment could be enjoyed while watching the performance. Although some of them survived until the middle of the 20th century, their heyday was past by the 1920s. Generally, they were like cabaret theaters, with as many as four shows a day.

Dance has always been associated with flamenco. It is difficult to imagine this music without movement. While sophisticated flamenco dance companies have been touring the world for more than 50 years, it is the raw and unchoreographed dances of Andalusian Gypsies that have maintained the art form in its most creative essence.

## **FLAMENCO DANCE FORMS**

### **Alegrias**

A lively dance from C diz. The origin is in the *jotas* of C diz—traditional folk music of Aragon, brought to Andalusia by soldiers during the War of Independence in the early 19th century. The main characteristics of this style are the richness of its guitar accompaniment, the intricacy of the dancing, the demands of its difficult rhythms, and its lively sound.

### **Bulerias**

This developed like *soleares*, from a simple style. However, unlike *soleares*, it has a fast and lively rhythm—indeed, it is the fastest in all flamenco—and it provides enormous scope for improvisation on the part of the dancers, singers, and guitarists. It is wild, frenzied, and lively, but nevertheless contains the germ of sorrow that is almost always present in flamenco.

### **Cantinas**

A distant cousin of the *alegrias*, but the tonalities are very different and the lyrics are much bouncier and compact.

### **Seguiriyas**

Another name for *seguiriyas* used to be *playeras*—from *pla-idera*, meaning ‘‘hired mourner.’’ The fact that the words often allude to death suggests that its origin may have been in the primitive wails for the dead. Indeed, the guitar accompaniment evokes the sound of bells tolling.

### **Soleares**

One of the basic *cantes*. One can say that the *soleares* is the perfect form of *cante flamenco*, where beauty and depth of feeling are in harmony. Its rhythm (12 beats to the bar) has its origin in a simple dance called *jaleo*, consisting of three beats to the bar, with the emphasis on the third.

### **Taranto**

Song and dance from the province of Almeria. The flamenco dance possesses two extremes: the profundity of a *seguiriya*, a *solea*, or a *taranto*, and the

wild, uncontained gaiety of a *bulerias*.

#### Tientos-Tangos

From the villages along the Atlantic seaboard, near Cádiz. The name comes from the old dances of that region, which produced three different flamenco styles—*tientos*, *tangos*, and *tanguillo*. In the *tientos*, the singing used to be a simple statement, uncomplicated in style. Perhaps owing to the special interpretation of certain singers, it became more and more serious and developed into a very profound style. The rhythm that the guitar provides is founded on a basic 4/4 pattern, although it is continuously enriched by subtle accentuations on different beats or offbeats. In contrast to *tientos*, *tangos* is sparkling and sensual.

Born of passion and desire, Noche Flamenca was founded in Madrid in 1993 by artistic director Martin Santangelo and his wife Soledad Barrio. Through years of persistence, hard work, and love, Noche Flamenca has developed into one of Spain's most successful flamenco companies. Since its beginning, Noche Flamenca's goal has been to maintain the essence, purity, and integrity of one of the world's most complex and mysterious art forms. The company relies on the high standards of its artists as well as their profound understanding of flamenco. All aspects of flamenco—dance, song and music—are interrelated and given equal weight in Noche Flamenca, creating a true communal spirit within the company, which is the very heart and soul of flamenco.

The company regularly performs to sell-out crowds throughout the United States. In the first part of 2002 the group toured Australia and New Zealand for six weeks, performing to great acclaim in every major city. The ensemble will return to Australia in August of 2004. The company's New York seasons, whether at the Public Theater, the Connelly Theater, Joe's Pub, or the New Victory Theater, are always hugely popular, and in the fall of 2003, Noche Flamenca will take up residence for five weeks at the newly restored Lucille Lortel Theater. The group has performed at the Hollywood Bowl, the Ravinia Festival, Wolf Trap Festival, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, and this summer will make debuts at the Florida International Festival, An Appalachian Summer Festival, and with the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra. The company will also travel to Buenos Aires for its South American debut.

Some of Spain's most renowned artists have worked, and continue to work, with the company, including Soledad Barrio, Belen Maya, Alejandro Granados, Antonio Vizarraga, Rafael "Falo" Jimenez, and David Serva.

Noche Flamenca's vitality, energy, and passion have won accolades around the world, with rave reviews and standing ovations in Egypt, the United States, Canada, Portugal, and Spain. Because the company's core group of artists has devoted years to its goal, Noche Flamenca has continually delved deeper and deeper in an effort to perform flamenco in its purest and most sublime form.

**Martin Santangelo** (*artistic director*) is a resident of Madrid. He studied with Ciro, Paco Romero, El Guito, Manolete, and Alejandro Granados. He has performed throughout Spain and the United States, appearing with Maria Benitez's Teatro Flamenco, the Lincoln Center Festival of the Arts, and Paco Romero's Ballet Español. He also appeared in Julie Taymor's *Juan Darien* at Lincoln Center. Santangelo choreographed a production of *Romeo and Juliette* at the Denver Theater Center and codirected and choreographed *Bodas de Sangre* with Larry Kornfield at SUNY Purchase. Last year, he was nominated for CalArts's Alpert Award in the Arts.

**Soledad Barrio** (*dancer*) was born in Madrid and trained in flamenco and classical dance. She has appeared as soloist with the Ballet Español de

Paco Romero, Manuela Vargas, Blanca del Rey, Luisillo El Guito, Manolete, Cristobal Reyes, and El Toleo, She has performed throughout Europe, Japan, and North and South America. Barrio recently received a ÒBessieÓ award for Outstanding Creative Achievement. She is a founding member of Noche Flamenca and is married to artistic director Martin Santangelo. They have two daughters, Gabriela and Stella.

**Isabel Bayon** (*dancer*) was born in Seville and began her dance training at age five with Matilde Cotral. In the mid-1970s, she debuted in a production in honor of Antonio Ruiz Soler. Bayon has appeared as a featured soloist and finalist in several productions at the Bienal de Arte Flamenco in Seville. She has performed as a special guest with such renowned companies as Compa-a Andaluza, Compa-a Joaquin Grilo, and Compa-ia de Fernando Romero. Bayon has also choreographed for Ballet Nacional de Espa-a and Compa-a Andaluza de Danza. In the twelfth Bienal de Arte Flamenco in Seville, she presented her own company, Isabel Bayon Compa-a Flamenca, in a production entitled *Del Alma*. This is her third season dancing with Noche Flamenca.

**Antonio Rodriguez ÒEl ChupeteÓ** (*dancer*) was born in 1974 in Osuna and began dancing at an early age in the flamenco festivals, fairs, and pe-as of Andalusia. His dance training was not obtained in school but alongside the professional singers and dancers that served as his guides. He debuted professionally in El Cordobes de Barcelona, considered one of the finest flamenco *tablaos* of Spain. He has performed with the National Ballet of Spain and has shared the stage with Carmen Ledesma at the National Opera of Tokyo. Rodriguez has also choreographed for Yoko Komatsubara. He has toured extensively as a featured soloist in Italy, Germany, Holland, Brazil, and the United States, and continues to dance in *tablaos* in Seville and Granada. This is his debut season with Noche Flamenca.

**Jesus Torres** (*guitar*) was born in Barakaldo, Spain. After years of training in flamenco guitar, he moved to Madrid in 1989 and began performing with a host of renowned dancers, including Manolete, Paco Fernandez, Sara Lezana, Raul, and Elvira Andres. In 1991, he joined the flamenco company of Maria Rosa and performed throughout Spain and Japan. In 1993, he appeared at the International Festival of Dance in Madrid with Belen Maya. A year later, he joined the Compa-ia Andaluza e Danza, directed by Mario Maya, and participated in the Bienal de Flamenco Festival. Torres was also involved in writing the musical scores with Antonio Gades for productions of *Carmen* and *Fuenteovejuna*. This is Torres sixth season with Noche Flamenca.

**Paco Cruz** (*guitar*), born in Jan, has received several prestigious awards, including the National Prize for Flamenco Guitar. He has accompanied renowned singers including Indio Gitano, Enrique Morente, and Guadiana, among others. In dance, he has accompanied Antonio Canales, Eva la Hierbabuena, Compa-a de Jos Antonio, and Joaquin Grilo. Cruz has also collaborated as a producer and arranger with the African singer Bidinte Santa. Aside from performing, he continues to teach flamenco guitar. This is Cruzs first season with Noche Flamenca.

**Antonio Vizarraga** (*singer*), born in Seville, is a member of one of Spains most distinguished flamenco families. He has sung for some of the finest dancers in his homeland, including El Farruco, Alejandro Granados, Mario Maya, Belen Fernandez, El Torombo, Manuela Carrasco, and Belen Maya. This is Vizarragas seventh season with Noche Flamenca.

**Manuel Gago** (*singer*), born in Cdiz to a family of flamenco singers, began singing at the age of five. By 14, he was singing in flamenco festivals with such well-known singers as Juan Villar,

Charo Lobato, and Rancapino. Later, he began singing for dancers including Guito, Manolete, Javier Baron, and Cristobal Reyes. Gago has traveled the world, singing in Europe, Asia, South America, and the United States. This is his third season with Noche Flamenca.

**Mark London** (*lighting design*) is happy to continue his longstanding collaboration with Noche Flamenca and thanks them for the opportunity to come back to his first love, lighting modern dance. Some of London's other lighting credits include work for ZviDance, Stars of the Bolshoi and Kirov Ballet, and the Chinese Opera of Taipei. Back in New York, he has designed for Muna Tseng, Colloquium Dance, 40Up, and ISO Dance, as well as the Joseph Papp Public Theater, and the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM).

**Adam Gabel** (*production manager*) most recently held the position of lighting designer at Joe's Pub in New York City, where he worked with performers such as Eartha Kitt, Ravi Coltrane, and Audra MacDonald, among others. But after first experiencing flamenco in 1997 on a production of *Blood Wedding*, choreographed by Martin Santangelo, Gabel is glad to finally be able to call himself a member of Noche Flamenca.

**Eziquel Zima** (*sound engineer*) is a graduate of the Berklee College of Music in Boston. Zima has been living in New York since 1992, where he is actively involved in the local music scene, working as producer/engineer out of his own recording studio in Brooklyn and as a freelance guitarist with several New York artists.

**Pat Adams** (*company manager*) is production stage manager for the critically acclaimed Wilma Theater in Philadelphia, where she has been at the helm for the past seven seasons. She credits them with her introduction to the world of flamenco. Touring with Noche Flamenca is one of the highlights of her career. It is an honor and privilege to work with such wonderful people (seeing the world is just a bonus). Adams has also worked at the Tony Award-winning Crossroads Theater in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

#### **General Worldwide Management**

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