

# Paco de Lucía, guitar

Saturday and Sunday, January 24–25, 2004  
Zellerbach Hall

featuring

Israel Suarez Escobar, percussion

Alain Perez Rodriguez, bass

Enrique Heredia Carbonell, cantore

Herminia Borjas Gabarri, vocals

Victoria Santiago Borja, vocals

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Paco de Lucía is one of the greatest living guitarists in the world and a hero of modern flamenco. He is credited with creating a “fusion” style flamenco influenced by jazz—stretching and embellishing flamenco’s strict structure but remaining faithful to the soul of its Gypsy, Muslim, and Jewish roots. By adapting the past to the present, he has awakened a new generation to the power and appeal of flamenco.

De Lucía started his career rather traditionally. He was born Francisco Sanchez Gomez in Algeciras, a city in the province of Cadiz, on the southernmost tip of Spain, on December 21, 1947. His stage name is a tribute to his mother. His father, Antonio Sanchez, a day laborer, played guitar at night as a way to supplement his income. His father, his elder brother Ramon de Algeciras, and flamenco master Nino Ricardo were de Lucía’s main influences. De Lucía’s first performance was on Radio Algeciras in 1958, when he was only 11 years old.

The training ground for a flamenco guitarist, de Lucía once said, “is the music around you, made by people you see, the people you make music with. You learn it from your family, from your friends, in la juerga (the party) drinking. And then you work on technique. Guitarists do not need to study. And, as it is with any music, the great ones will spend some time working with the young players who show special talent. You must understand that a Gypsy’s life is a life of anarchy. That is the reason why the way of flamenco music is a way without discipline, as you know it. We don’t try to organize things with our minds; we don’t go to school to find out. We just live. Music is everywhere in our lives.”

In 1959, de Lucía was awarded a special prize in the Jerez flamenco competition. Starting at age 14, he toured with the flamenco troupe of fabled dancer José Greco for three seasons. While on tour with Greco’s dance company in the United States, de Lucía met the great Sabicas, a guitarist whose name had become synonymous with flamenco in America. “I was a child when I met him,” recalls de Lucía. “He heard me play and basically said that for me to have a career I had to move away from imitation. I think he was annoyed with me because, in those days, there were two great schools of flamenco guitar: Nino Ricardo, who was the leader of my generation in Spain, and Sabicas, who was in the United States. So I came to him playing in Nino Ricardo’s style and I believe Sabicas got mad that I didn’t play his music. But it was useful—it shocked me. It became a great impetus to go for my own style, my own thing.”

De Lucía would follow Sabicas' advice. He recorded his first album, *Los Chiquitos de Algeciras*, with his brother Pepe, in 1961, at the age of 14. But by 1967, with the release of *La Fabulosa Guitarra de Paco de Lucía*, the guitarist began to distance himself from the influence of masters such as Ricardo and Mario Escudero. With the release of *Fantasia Flamenca*, two years later, he had defined his own style. His superb technique was showcased in well-designed pieces that departed from the flamenco tradition of theme and variations. In 1970, de Lucía made his debut at Carnegie Hall.

In 1968, he met Camaron de la Isla, one of the premier flamenco singers. The encounter grew into a personal and professional relationship that has been chronicled on more than 10 records. Their album *Potro de Rabia y Miel* (1991) was one of the last recordings by Camaron, who died in 1992. De Lucía's new style became more evident in *El Duende Flamenco* (1972); *Fuente Y Caudal* (1973), which included the hit "Entre Dos Aguas"; and *Almoraima* (1976). These were followed by *Paco de Lucía Interpreta a Manuel de Falla* (1980), a tribute to the classical composer who was an admirer of flamenco music, and in 1981, *Solo Quiero Caminar*.

His high-profile collaborations include work with guitarist Larry Coryell; pianist Chick Corea, who joined Paco's sextet for *Zyryab* (1990); John McLaughlin; and Ali DiMeola. The results of these collaborations have been documented in celebrated recordings with *The Guitar Trio: Castro Marin* (1979), *Passion Grace and Fire* (1982), and *Friday Night in San Francisco* (1981). In 1996, de Lucía, McLaughlin, and DiMeola reunited for *The Guitar Trio* on Verve (as well as a sold-out tour). Paco de Lucía has also recorded soundtracks for films such as Carlos Saura's *Carmen*, Borau's *La Sabina*, and the ballet *Los Tarantos*, presented at Madrid's prestigious Teatro de la Zarzuela in 1986. He was featured in Bryan Adams' 1995 hit single and video "Have You Ever Really Loved a Woman," from the film *Don Juan DeMarco*. But periodically, de Lucía returns to pure flamenco with a vengeance, as in the spectacular *Siroco* (1987).

"Within the tradition, the flamenco orthodoxy, I was not taken seriously at first," he says. "At some point I was thought of as sacrilegious and now it turns out I'm a 'master.' Some thought I was just fooling around, and as it turns out, my tomfoolery makes up much of today's flamenco."

He shrugs off the complaints of such purists or the concerns of those who fear he might lose his roots or, worse, betray the essence of flamenco. "I have never lost my roots in my music, because I would lose myself," he once said. "What I have tried to do is have one hand holding onto tradition and the other scratching and also digging in other places trying to find new things I can bring into flamenco." Some of his innovations have since transcended his own work to become the new standard in flamenco music, such as the use of the cajon, a wooden box, which was introduced by de Lucía in the early 1980s.

#### Crew

Jose Cervera Cordoba, sound engineer

Keith Yetton, lighting designer

Jaime Jesus Armengol Rodrigo, technician

Lourdes Gonzales, tour manager

#### Booking

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