



(LYRCD 7399)

GYPSY PASSIONS: THE FLAMENCO GUITAR

RODRIGO, FLAMENCO GUITARIST

Tracks: (details about songs are given below)

1. Danza Mora (Traditional) - 2:30
2. Soleares (Traditional) - 4:10
3. Tarantas (Traditional) - 3:37
4. Para Remedios, Noches en Ronda (Rodrigo) - 3:32
5. Grananas (Traditional) - 3:55
6. Garrotin (Traditional) - 1:48
7. Fandangos de Huelva (Traditional) - 4:12
8. Bulerias Por Solea (Traditional) - 2:17
9. Seguidillas (Traditional) - 3:49
10. Buleras (Traditional) - 2:48
11. Tangos de Ronda (Traditional) - 3:54
12. Alameda Gitana (Rodrigo) - 3:24

ABOUT FLAMENCO

An old Gypsy once told me that flamenco and bullfighting were the spice of Spain. I certainly agree with this because both accurately express the Spanish character, which has been popularized throughout the world. Flamenco, of course, brings to life the alegría (happiness), spontaneity, fiery temperament, and poetic awareness of human love and suffering that the Spanish people innately experience with pride.

Flamenco music is the music of Andalucia – the southern region of Spain. It must be also noted that even though flamenco has led as many influences as the Iberian Peninsula itself, its modes, feelings, and tonalities are very Arabic and oriental due to seven centuries of rule by the Moors. The birthplace of this art form are found in the provinces of Daciz, Sevilla, Granada, Malaga, Cordoba, Huelva, Almeria, Jaen and Murcia. It is an old music, which has developed slowly with an “art for art’s sake” attitude and reached a pinnacle of popularity in Spain around the turn of the century. Since then, along with consistent improvement, change and intense creativity, flamenco has become what it is today: A combination of dancing, singing, guitaristry, finger snappy, hand clapping and castanets. All this is accomplished within complex rhythms, melodies, feelings and nuances which are not only traditional and improvised, but ever changing due to the music’s vitality.

ABOUT RODRIGO

Flamenco guitarist Rodrigo is a concert and recording artist of high critical acclaim. Through dynamic artistic expression, he has originated his own style, sound, compositions and techniques. His development of “picado” with the thumb and high speed “legatos” (picking the strings with the left hand), are subjects of admiration by aficionados, professional guitarists, and students of Flamenco. It is also important to him to use and expand the musical range of his art by stressing the fast, slow, soft and loud. Rhythmic and melodic abstractions with are futuristic and avant-garde can be heard frequently in his playing.

Due to his popularity in Andalucia, Rodrigo has been billed with the greatest Spanish contemporaries in Festivales de Cante Grande (annual song festivals) and has performed with many renowned flamenco dancers. In conjunction with be a concert artist, his teaching abilities are also widely sought after in Spain and in America.

Rodrigo has performed extensively her in America at universities and major concert halls, both as a soloist and with his own companies and ensembles. His European and American debuts were at Wigmore Hall in London, and Carnegie Recital Hall in New York City. Written by Alejandrina Garcia

THE PROGRAM

1. DANZA MORA - The Moorish influence in Spanish and Flamenco music can be expressed in its more melodic forms with the Danz Mora. This piece was inspired by the Zambra – a Gypsy ritualistic dance that is a specialty in the caves located at Sacromonte – the famous barrio in Granada.

2. SOLEARES – is one of the oldest and purest forms of Flamenco art. Its song, dance and guitar themes are virtually always traditional and very difficult to interpret properly. In this performance, Rodrigo remembers the many late nights at the juergas (Gypsy gatherings) when laments of loneliness, lost loves, and a diversity of disappointments could be heard.

3. TARANTAS – Always a favorite of every true Flamenco guitarist, the Tarantas of “Cantes de Levante” are melancholic chants of the miners of eastern Andalusia. They have dark tonal colors with interweaving oriental sounds. The secret of this work is in the left hand techniques, which are in the Gypsy style.

4. PARA REMEDIOS, NOCHES EN RONDA – A combination of the Arabic Rumba and the classical Spanish guitar make this popular original composition by Rodrigo a must in his concerts. It is dedicated to his beautiful Spanish Gypsy wife, Remedios Flores, who is also a well known Flamenco singer and performer. She is from Ronda in the province of Malaga. The mountain range of Serrania of Ronda, famous for its rugged beauty, is where the bandoleros of old took refuge.

5. GRANAINAS – There is no dance form of this most enchanting of Flamenco songs. Past guitarists such as Ramon Montoya and Nino Ricardo, along with such creative singers of old like Manuel Villejo could produce incredible moments of musical beauty when interpreting this cante of Granada. This solo brings to life romantic memories of the famous Alhambra Castle from which the Moors once ruled.

6. GARROTIN – Flamenco music covers all ranges of human emotion. The Garrotin (literally meaning walking stick) is less profound and passionate in character than the more jondo styles. The Gypsies of Barcelona developed this dance, and the song renditions are from Puente Genil in Cordoba. Rodrigo dedicates his very subtle arrangement to the immortal Carmen Amaya – one of the greatest dancers of all time.

7. FANDANGOS DE HUELVA – Almost any theme can be dealt with when artists and aficionados gather to sing Fandangos. It is one of the most popular rhythms in Andalusia, and is played in 3/8 time. It is light sounding but has a driving rhythm. When men come back from hunting, sometimes they stay up all night drinking sherry and singing about their day in the country. Fandangos de Huelva is also a very exciting group dance similar to the Sevillanas from Sevilla.

8. BULERIAS POR SOLEA – This composition was developed over many years by Gypsies, probably as a transition from the slower Soleares, into the fastest of all Flamenco - the Bulerias. As a result, a half way point was reached and a new form of Bulerias por Solea was achieved. A twelve beat measure with accents on the 3-6-8-10-12 make this song complex and years of experience are needed to master all of its components and variations.

9. SEGUIDILLAS – If a Gypsy really wants to pour his heart out, the Seguidillas (also spelled Siguirivas) is the song. This is the most profound and most respected of all Flamenco. A leading exponent today of this cante jondo or “deep song” is Manuel Agujetas of Jerez who is considered a master of this type of Flamenco.

10. BULERIAS – This is the most exemplary of the festive Gypsy Flamenco. It is the fastest and technically most difficult to execute on the guitar. Fire and musical Gypsy drive are the ingredients of this solo. Here we have improvisation from beginning to the surprise ending!

11. TANGOS DE RONDA – With the sixth string of the guitar tuned down to D, and the third string tuned down to G flat, the mysterious tones of the chords in the Tango create a hypnotic music very different from the other pieces on this recording.

12. ALAMEDA GITANA – Rodrigo feels that this original song is a mixture of his moods, ideas and soul searching in Flamenco. The Arabic influence in his music can be fully felt in this performance. The title literally means “Gypsy Promenade.”

CREDITS

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