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Nimbus Records

# PACO PEÑA

Flamenco Guitar



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## Flamenco Guitar

### DISC ONE

- |    |  |      |
|----|--|------|
| 1  | <b>Salobre</b> ( <i>Malagueñas</i> )         | 5.11 |
| 2  | <b>Los Veleros</b> ( <i>Alegrías</i> )       | 3.54 |
| 3  | <b>Medina Azahara</b> ( <i>Granáinas</i> )   | 4.21 |
| 4  | <b>Cancion</b> ( <i>Peteneras</i> )          | 2.25 |
| 5  | <b>Acera del Río</b> ( <i>Soleares</i> )     | 3.24 |
| 6  | <b>Riomar</b> ( <i>Fandangos de Huelva</i> ) | 4.09 |
| 7  | <b>Mantilla y peina</b> ( <i>Guajiras</i> )  | 4.34 |
| 8  | <b>Puerto Aguila</b> ( <i>Tientos</i> )      | 4.45 |
| 9  | <b>Pedregales</b> ( <i>Serranas</i> )        | 6.34 |
| 10 | <b>Solquema</b> ( <i>Bulerías</i> )*         | 5.08 |
| 11 | <b>Claroscuro</b> ( <i>Tangos</i> )*         | 5.24 |
| 12 | <b>Las Ferialas</b> ( <i>Sevillanas</i> )*   | 3.24 |

\* with Tito Losada

**Total playing time** 53.13

### DISC TWO

#### RAMÓN MONTOYA (1880-1949)

- |   |                                   |      |
|---|-----------------------------------|------|
| 1 | <b>La Rosa</b> ( <i>Alegría</i> ) | 4.34 |
| 2 | <b>Rondeña</b>                    | 4.53 |
| 3 | <b>Solá</b>                       | 4.28 |
| 4 | <b>Minera</b>                     | 4.58 |
| 5 | <b>Granáina</b>                   | 4.27 |
| 6 | <b>Tango mayor y menor</b>        | 4.35 |

#### NIÑO RICARDO (1904-1972)

- |    |                   |      |
|----|-------------------|------|
| 7  | <b>Alegrías</b>   | 3.54 |
| 8  | <b>Seguiriyas</b> | 6.04 |
| 9  | <b>Fandangos</b>  | 3.09 |
| 10 | <b>Farrucas</b>   | 3.05 |
| 11 | <b>Tarantas</b>   | 5.17 |
| 12 | <b>Zambra</b>     | 3.15 |
| 13 | <b>Bulerías</b>   | 2.26 |

**Total playing time** 55.05

Digital Recordings. Recorded at Wyastone Leys.

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## DISC ONE

For those who are new to flamenco music the main problem lies in identifying the confusing variety of styles. Flamencologists classify the forms in a number of ways: gypsy/non-gypsy (*gitano/payo*), free/rhythmical (*libre/a compás*), serious / lightweight (*jondo/chico*), or by family (whichever you choose, you usually get some loose ends). But there is another useful distinction, and that is tonality. In addition to the usual major and minor keys, we encounter frequent use of the Phrygian mode (the Gregorian mode based on E), whose plaintive melancholy sound is one of Flamenco's most striking characteristics. Flamenco styles can be grouped into six families: four basic ones, plus two more of music that has been absorbed from outside sources and 'flamencified' over the years. The list below shows the families of the pieces on this album. As you see all six are covered.

1. Soleares: *Soleares, Alegrías, Bulerías*
2. Seguiriyas: *Serranas*
3. Tientos: *Tientos, Tangos*
4. Fandangos: *Fandangos de Huelva, Malagueñas, Granadinas*
5. Folk influenced: *Sevillanas, Peteneras*
6. Latin American influenced: *Guajiras*

For those interested I have indicated the mode of each piece.

**1 Salobre (Malagueñas)**

Malagueña (Phrygian) is a Fandango form from Malaga. It is rhythmically free, but there is also an *a compás* form called Verdiales. It is traditional to finish the former with the latter, as Paco does here. (When one style is used to close another in this way, it is called *a macho*).

**2 Los Veleros (Alegrías)**

Alegrías (Major) are derived from the Aragonese Jota, and are particularly associated with the port of Cadiz. (There is also a form in a minor key, the Alegrías de Cordoba). Cantiñas, Caracoles, Romeras, Mirabras and Rosas are all kinds of Alegrías. The name means happiness.

**3 Medina Azahara (*Granainas*)**

Granaina (Phrygian) is the Fandango form from Granada. An easy way for the newcomer to distinguish it from any other type of Fandango is the characteristic ornament and slide (from F# to B) on the bass string, which occurs six times in Paco's composition.

**4 Cancion (*Peteneras*)**

Peteneras (Phrygian) are especially associated with La Nina de los Peines, considered the greatest female flamenco singer of this century. A colourful legend attributes their origin to a nineteenth-century prostitute called La Petenera. A verse of the song narrates how she was so popular that when she died, the street was not big enough to contain all the mourners. The composition played here by Paco (in a different key from the usual E Phrygian) is based on a tune popularised by Federico García Lorca, called *Cafe de Chinitas*.

**5 Acera del Rio (*Soleares*)**

Soleares (Phrygian) are considered the oldest and most important flamenco form. You can hear the character of the Phrygian mode very clearly by comparing this track with the Alegrías, for they have the identical rhythmic structure (twelve beats, with accents on 2-6-8-10-12), and Paco plays them in the same 'key' (i.e. with the same tonic note); but the difference in the modes makes them sound utterly unlike. The name comes from *soledad*, which means loneliness.

**6 Riomar (*Fandangos de Huelva*)**

Fandangos de Huelva (Phrygian) are a danceable Flamenco form. The switch to a major key for the verse is characteristic of all Fandango styles

**7 Mantilla y peina (*Guajiras*)**

Guajiras (Major) are one of the Flamenco forms influenced by the Latin-American rhythm (known as hemiola) of alternate bars of 3/4 and 6/8 time (perhaps best known from the song *America* in *West Side Story*).

**8 Puerto Aguila (*Tientos*)**

Tangos are similar to Tientos, except that they are faster and gayer, with less intricate rhythms.

**9 Pedregales (Serranas)**

Serranas (Phrygian) are like Seguiriyas, except in a different key, and rather slower. The latter, the lyrics of which generally deal with death and pain, are considered Flamenco's most profound form, and its masters (such as the legendary Manuel Torre) are the most respected. Serranas generally express less violent emotions, such as yearning. The name means 'from the Sierra', but it used also to be a slang word for a gypsy girl.

**10 Solquema (Bulerías)**

Bulerías (Phrygian), one of Flamenco's most popular and exciting forms, are a fast, syncopated form of soleares, and were (tradition says) developed by the nineteenth-century singer Loco Mateo (Mad Matthew). Bulerías are also played in major and minor (or even mixed keys).

**11 Claroscuro (Tangos)**

Tangos (Phrygian). The different key and a change of pace and mood are what distinguish these Tangos from those used to *macho* the Tientos.

**12 Las Ferialas (Sevillanas)**

Sevillanas (Various) are a dance for couples, which even the youngest Andalusian children can perform. They are traditionally played in groups of four or seven, each of which stops dead, sometimes eliciting premature applause from uninitiated audiences. Although the name means 'from Seville', Sevillanas are derived from the Castilian Seguidilla.

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**DISC TWO**

Flamenco guitar follows two different traditions. In the old tradition the guitar and the Andalusian singer are closely linked in creating the *cante jondo* or flamenco song. The other tradition is a departure from the earlier one and is exemplified by the modern virtuoso style which forms the basis of all solo concert playing.

**Ramón Montoya Salazar** was born in Madrid on 2nd November 1880. He was the finest accompanist of his day and also the first great master in the development of the modern virtuoso style. It is perhaps surprising that such a great master of flamenco



music should have originated in Madrid, when this music is indigenous to Andalusia in the south of Spain. Montoya, however, was a gipsy and travelled with his family trading in cattle at market fairs throughout the country, meeting Andalusian gipsies and thus discovering the art of flamenco.

He began in the *cafés cantantes* of Madrid, playing with all the major artists of the time: La Macarrona, La Malaguenita, Antonio de Bilbao, Manuel Torre, etc. and Antonio Chacón, the legendary singer who was, in Montoya's own words: "The greatest thing Spain has produced in the realm of *cante jondo*." "For me and for many others," Montoya claimed, "Chacón was 'the master' (*el amo*) of all the *cantes flamencos*."

Chacón introduced Montoya to Seville at a *fiesta* during the April Fair, where the cream of the greatest artists were performing. Chacón proudly announced: "First you will all sing and later I will perform to the accompaniment of Montoya and I guarantee that I will make everyone cry." "And so it was," says Montoya, "in the end everyone wept... I was his guitarist for fifteen years. Once in Seville, the Andalusians refused to accept that I was a *madrileño* and Chacón respectfully implored me: "Please say that you were born in Seville."

When Montoya arrived on the artistic scene at the turn of the century he must have found an atmosphere of imminent change. True musicians among guitarists were beginning to want more than simply to accompany singers, however beautiful and demanding that art may be. They were attempting to bring the guitar into a position of greater prominence. From this atmosphere Montoya forged, through his musical genius, a new art form. He took traditional themes, and by means of an incredibly fertile imagination, created a wealth of new and ever more astonishing ideas.

Montoya died in 1949 but the movement he had started remained very much alive. I saw Montoya only once. My father took me to a show in the football stadium in Cordoba when I was five or six years old. He must have had an impressive aura, for although my interest in the guitar had at that time not yet been awakened, I still have a vivid recollection of him on the stage.

Growing up in Andalusia in the 1950's, I was eager to learn everything. Undercurrents and musical ideas circulated among the *aficionados* of flamenco, just as popular tunes of the day would be sung and whistled by people 'in other cultures'. The flamenco 'hero' of those days was Niño Ricardo. He was the idol we all sought to emulate.

He was a virtuoso of the guitar and yet the most inspired innovator of his time. Flamenco guitar was seen as synonymous with Niño Ricardo. Years later, with the advantage of greater maturity I came across Montoya's recordings. It was a revelation to realize how much material I had learned through the years was in fact Ramon's own creation.

In his youth, Ricardo also learned from Montoya. You can hear this influence in his playing but he too has great individuality.

**Manuel Serrapi Sánchez, 'Niño Ricardo'**, was born in Seville on 1st June 1904 and died there in 1972. He learnt to play at first from his father Ricardo Serrapi... "I don't know how I came to do that," he said. "One day I asked my father to show me a few chords, with the idea of accompanying my friends in our little *fiestas*... Until I began to get interested, listening at first to the records of a guitarist called Luis Molina."

In his youth Ricardo worked with his father making and selling charcoal; later he became a joiner. Then one day he was asked to stand in for Javier Molina, the regular guitarist at the Cafe Novedades in Seville. He made a good impression and when Molina returned the boy was employed as a second guitarist. Before long, the most noted flamenco singers of the day wanted him for their tours: Escacena, La Nina de los Peines, Tomas Pavón... but his father would not let him go. Eventually, Pastora Pavón (Nina de los Peines), the greatest woman flamenco singer of all time, took him away when he was only seventeen, and 'El niño de Ricardo' (Ricardo's boy) finally embarked on the career which was to link his name with the finest exponents of flamenco of his generation: Pastora, La Argentinita, Mercedes Cejon, Pepe Pinto, Niño de Palma, El Gloria, Rebollo, Manuel Torre etc...

Both Montoya and Ricardo enjoyed widespread recognition during their own lifetimes. They were both masters of the known flamenco forms and recorded with all of the greatest singers. Montoya's first solo appearances were in Paris where; in about 1936, he made his most important solo recordings. Ricardo also made countless recordings as an accompanist and as a soloist both in Spain and abroad. The recordings of Montoya and Ricardo display two truly great, yet essentially different artists. Montoya is the lyrical musician, the born artist who chose flamenco guitar as the vehicle for his genius. He would have excelled in any art form. His playing reveals his fascination for the techniques and sonorities of the classical guitar, and by his own development in the art of flamenco, he advanced the frontiers of that art for all *aficionados*.

On the other hand Ricardo, it seems to me, could never have been anything but a flamenco guitarist, for flamenco was his life-blood. His concern was to penetrate to its fundamental truth, to expose the wounds of its history. He is profoundly moved by the message which flamenco offers and is determined that his listeners be moved also.

Following Montoya's imaginative departure, Ricardo, whilst not ignoring his influence, restored some basic elements from the roots of the music. The vivacity of his rhythms infused flamenco with renewed vitality, which undoubtedly inspired later generations of guitarists and resulted in the exhilarating, split-second timing of flamenco rhythms today.

The flamenco guitar has evolved greatly since its beginnings as the partner of the Andalusian singer. I say without hesitation that its spectacular development rests almost entirely upon the two pillars of Montoya and Ricardo. May this recording be a humble tribute to their memory and to their enormous contribution to the art of flamenco guitar.

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