

SOIREE OCTOBER 24/ 09

THE PHOENICIANS IN ANDALUCIA

Around 10,000 B.C. a highly evolved oriental culture came to Andalucia. These were the Phoenicians. At Cadiz they established a major seaport and built a great temple that they dedicated to their god Hercules. Yearly rites were held in the temple and these included music, singing, dancing and child sacrifice.

In addition to their famous purple dye, the Phoenicians also brought with them, beautiful black eyed maidens from India who were to become famous as temple dancers. With the arrival of the Phoenicians the first period of Orientalism began in Andalucia.

ORIENTALISM

Orientalism was one of two peculiarities that shaped the Andalucian culture. It was not the derogatory term that was given to anything and everything that did not conform to European standards in past centuries.

Orientalism had many interpretations. One interpretation linked it to ancient sorcery. Another said it was a mysterious force that was more easily expressed through music and more particularly through a guitar-like stringed instrument.

Yet another interpretation likened it to the distinctive style of dance performed by the temple dancers.

Its basis seems to have been in the repetition of patterns and designs. The purpose of the repetitive structure was to give the mind the opportunity to transcend to higher states of awareness and return to a boundary with which it was familiar.

ORIENTAL

Enrique Granados

In his beautiful ORIENTAL one of the 12 Spanish dances written by Granados, we hear influences of orientalism through the constant reappearance of the opening theme. It is in fact, stated seven times throughout the music.

In the central section we hear the influence of a guitar-like stringed instrument that accompanies a profound and mystical like melody that speaks of the remote past.

THE PHOENICIANS AT MALAGA

In their travels up and down the southern coast of Andalucia, the Phoenicians eventually found Malaga.

At Malaga they established another seaport and built a huge fish factory for the purposes of processing the giant blue fin tuna that were abundant in the surrounding waters.

The factory also produced a fish sauce that was supposed to have tasted pretty awful but the Romans loved it and that was what was important. Happily the Phoenicians did not interfere with either the rite of catching these big fish or the fish sauce and both may still be experienced today in some parts of Andalucia.

Malaga was as well, known for a special dance called the Malaguena. Influences of the Phoenician Fandango were not long in coming to Malaga to be absorbed by the dance of Malaga.

These influences may still be seen in some of the ritualistic dances performed by a few of the Andalucian gypsies who have kept the old traditions alive. However, the dances are a closely guarded secret and unfortunately unless one is a gypsy they cannot be seen.

MALAGUENA

Isaac Albeniz

In the Malaguena by Isaac Albeniz, you will hear another oriental influence. Permeating the music is a short rhythmic pattern that is repeated over and over. Its incessant persistence lends a hypnotic-like quality to the atmosphere of the music and definitely evokes a strong link to ancient ritualistic rites.

Once again the central section alludes to a guitar-like stringed instrument that will accompany a melody tinged with the sadness and melancholy so typical of Spanish music.

THE SECOND PERIOD OF ORIENTALISM

THE ARABS IN ANDALUCIA

In the 7th century the second period of orientalism arrived in Andalusia with the coming of the Arabs. Like the Phoenicians, the Arabs appreciated the beauty and richness of their successful conquest and did not destroy what was already in place. Their influences and contributions were immense and can still be seen everywhere throughout Spain even today.

Over the centuries many kingdoms were established by the various ruling Caliphs.

In 1241 the Caliphate of Granada was established by the Nasrite King, Mohammad the Vth. It was the richest, most opulent Arabian kingdom ever to be established in Andalusia.

At the heart of the kingdom was the great Arabian palace, called the Alhambra. Constructed from shimmering red stone, it was known as the Red Palace.

GRANADA

Let us go now to the Alhambra. It is evening. Somewhere behind heavy curtains a lute is softly playing. Gentle night breezes from the nearby Sierra Nevada mountain range blow through arched windows, cooling the palace down after another day of intense heat. The sound of water can be heard trickling melodiously into courtyard pools.

Outside the Palace, in the Plaza of Wells, the last of the wine merchants are trying to persuade obstinant camels to get up off their knees and pass through the Gate of Wine so that they too, can go home and enjoy the cool evening.

ZAMBRA GRANADINA

Many of the Arabian Caliphs loved the arts, especially the dance. In fact it was the Arabian Caliphs who instituted the soiree that became exceedingly popular in Spain and then found its way to Europe.

It was not unusual for a Caliph to call for a competition late at night. The favorite dance was the Zambra Granadina and the dancer who could perform it the most beautifully and artistically was always rewarded with a heavy purse from the King.

The Arabian Zambra continued to reflect the oriental style of dancing with its beautiful movements inspired by the Phoenician Fandango. One of these movements was called the Arabesque.

The dance movement followed the artistic line of the patterns and designs of Phoenician orientalism. In Arabic art this was described as an unbroken line with intertwining tendrils of vegetation.

In the dance the arms represented the unbroken line and the circular motion of the hands represented the tendrils of vegetation. DEMONSTRATE...

THE THIRD PERIOD OF ORIENTALISM

THE GYPSIES IN ANDALUCIA

In the 1500's a large group of gypsies arrived in Andalucia from India. They brought with them their rhythms and dances and colorful costumes. They adored Andalucia because it reminded them of so many things from their own homeland. As well they found a belief system that was similar in many ways to their own. Their greatest contribution was to take what they found and make it into something that would be of benefit to their way of life and to the Andalucian culture.

For the second half of our program I would like to take you to a Gypsy Juerga.

A juerga is a very special gypsy celebration. It is usually held outside in an isolated area. There is always music, dancing and singing and the preparation of special foods.

The juerga begins with the traditional lighting of a bonfire that is in the center of a circle. The men only sit in the circle around the fire. They wear caps and brightly colored silk kerchiefs, knotted at the neck. When the men are all seated cups of their favorite manzanilla wine are served. Once the wine is served, a handsome gypsy rides into the camp. He is mounted on a spirited white horse. He wears a black cape lined with red silk, the colors of Andalucia. He carries two revolvers. Flinging his cape over his shoulders he begins to recite some of the ancient poetry in the gypsy language.

After the horse and rider leave, one of the men in the circle starts to clap out a rhythm with his hands. Another taps out a different rhythm with the heels of his feet. Yet a third rhythm is heard being beaten out on the rungs of an old chair.

A woman steps inside the circle. She begins her own hand claps. As the rhythms intensify she slowly raises her arms over her head and as the flames of the fire leap up into the

night she begins the sensuous, ritualistic Danza de la Seduccion.

SACROMONTE

Without pause, after the ancient ritual dance of seduction, a beautiful gypsy woman steps into the circle. She is one of the clan's dancers who entertains the gajos outside the camp from time to time.

There are appreciative murmurs from some of the men who already know about her fiery temper and the small dagger she carries on her person.

PLAYERA

After the fiery Sacromonte, cups are refilled with the favorite golden manzanilla wine, conversation is animated.

In the distance a lone figure dressed in black approaches. She is one of the older members of the clan. Her head is covered in a shawl and she carries a tambourine, the mystical symbol for death.

Her shuffling step betrays the heavy burden of pain and sorrow she carries in her heart. She still remembers and mourns the loss of a beloved husband and son torn from the family by the hated Guardia Civilia, never to be seen nor heard from again only because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Tonight she will dance the Ancient Gypsy Lament. Her beautiful arm movements will speak of her deep grief, her anger and her defiance, yet at the same time they will express her resignation and acceptance of that which cannot be changed – Destiny.....

SPANISH DANCE NO. 1
Anton Bilotti

After the old woman leaves the circle, there is silence. Not even the camp dogs bark. Each one reflects upon their own past injustices.

Suddenly the silence is broken by a lone guitar filling the night with its own lament. Its sadness reflects the words of the poet when he writes:

The earth laments because it can never be the sky
The sea complains because it has no limits,
And a good bye is forever!

THE MILLER'S DANCE
Manuel de Falla
(El farruca)

As the last notes of the guitar fade away, a youthful gypsy leaps into the circle.

He will bring the juerga to a close with the farruca.

Like the fandango the farruca was also brought to ancient Cadiz by the Phoenicians. Its mystical beginnings evolved over the centuries and through changes made by the gypsies it became a fiery passionate dance.

The farruca is characterized by the movements and footwork of the matador as he faces the bull in the ring.