

THE MYSTICAL  
MUSIC



OF ANDALUCIA

## THE SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS AND DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF ANCIENT CANTE ANDALUZ

Ancient cante andaluz was a specific product of Andalucia. As such it had specific characteristics and distinguishing features which identified it and set it apart from the rest of Spain. The outstanding characteristic that marked ancient cante andaluz was tragedy. Its fatalistic essence was reflected in the phrase “Ser y estar seria.”<sup>1</sup>

Even though the ancient Andalucian civilization was at a very high level and the land itself a Paradise with splendid palaces as well as a tradition of legends and heroic poems,<sup>2</sup> a sense of deep sadness and hopelessness permeated every aspect of its life and culture. This was partly due to the fierce, barbaric tribes which continually overran Southern Spain and partly due to the fatalistic attitudes that the Ancient Andalucians held, most particularly towards Death.

Cities were not defended since to-morrow, one would surely die, anyway. The results of this kind of fatalistic thinking led to horrible massacres. Plague and famine ran rampant, forcing mothers to eat their own children. The priests forsook the people and the cities. Violence and cruelty were sanctioned by the laws of the invaders who failed to recognize the beauty and value of what they had conquered. Life, as perceived by the Ancient Andalucians was one great conflict, filled with pain, frustration and suffering. It ended only with the finality of Death, tragically and without hope.

Tragedy, the outstanding characteristic of ancient cante andaluz was not only the result of ancient Andalucian fatalism, it was also linked to something called the duende. The duende was a mysterious power that could be felt but could not be seen and was peculiar only to that part of Spain known as Andalucia. The duende could, without warning, take full possession of the Soul and under its spell, draw from the Soul, through the ancient songs and dances, the most profound expression of suffering and death.<sup>3</sup>

In the music, the duende was identified by its “black sounds”.<sup>4</sup> In the dance, it was a powerful force that was sensed through the changes that took place in the dancer’s body and visage, but it was never seen. The duende usually focused on some particular obsession and from that obsession, it provoked a whole tragedy. Although tragedy could be profoundly poetic, most of the time it evoked deep sadness, despair and utter hopelessness in its listeners.

Violence was another specific characteristic of ancient cante andaluz. Violence was expressed through its poetry and stood for the Dark and Tragic Forces that were a part of the mystical belief system held by the Ancient Andalucians

The Ancient Andalucians perceived mysticism as a conflict between positive and negative forces. The negative forces were known as the Dark and Tragic Forces or the Duende. They believed that it was the Soul’s harsh and unalterable Destiny to participate in this conflict. The Soul’s fate was its struggle with the Duende or Dark and Tragic Forces which always ended in violence and ultimately death.

The knife and the bull were the symbols of violence. Both shed blood. The slaying of the bull with a knife was part of the cult of Mithras. The mystical belief attached to this violent act was that the Life Force would again rise once the bull had been killed.

A third characteristic of ancient cante andaluz was solitude. Solitude was the expression of the tragedy and torment the Soul felt when it was not remembered, forgotten, forsaken by all. Solitude represented deep suffering and unspeakable loneliness.

The most significant characteristic of ancient cante andaluz was death. So obsessed with this real life element were the Ancient Andalucians, that death took on and had its own personality. It was closely associated with the moon and for the ancient peoples, the Moon had a tremendous influence over human Destiny. A full moon meant that death was not far behind. It was symbolized through the tambourine whose shape was like that of the full moon. The tambourine was used in all of the religious rituals especially those which involved human and animal sacrifice.

For Ancient Andalucians, the mystery of life and its finality were uppermost in their thoughts.<sup>5</sup> Much of the poetry of ancient cante andaluz and later cante jondo, centered on this subject. As a result death became an obsession with the people. Many mystery cults and strange rituals arose because the formal worship system no longer fulfilled the individual's spiritual needs or consoled his fears about mortality.<sup>6</sup>

The ancient Andalucian guitar, at first shaped from a gourd, was also closely associated with death. The music contained cesuras, pauses, commas and specific accents. Since these elements provided the imagery which heralded the presence of death, they were given very special attention.<sup>7</sup>

### THE FOUR DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF ANCIENT CANTE ANDALUZ

According to the great Andalucian composer, Manuel de Falla, the ancient music of Andalucia, cante andaluz, had four distinguishing features that set it apart from other music in Spain. Firstly, the music was always intimately linked to either a dance or a poem, so much so, that the one could not function without the other. When the Romans came to Spain in 218 B.C. to begin their long conquest of the Peninsula, among its many peculiarities especially in Southern Spain, they found a highly developed civilization which included poetry with its own rules, music and dance.

The poetry expressed intense and profound emotions and these were reflected through the music. Dance had always been an inherent part of the Iberian Peninsula and was used to express every facet of life – to celebrate victories, religious rites, etc. It provided recreation for the ladies and it was used to intimidate one's enemies. Its intimate link to the music was not just through its rhythm, so characteristic of other cultures but also through certain elements directly related and found only in Andalucia, most especially in cante andaluz.<sup>8</sup>

Secondly, the melody of ancient cante andaluz could easily be sung and lay well within the normal range of the voice. It was a peculiarity of ancient cante andaluz that the melody did not exceed the interval of a 6<sup>th</sup>.

While in European music, this interval contained nine semitones, through the use of enharmonism (especially the enharmonic interval), the singer was able to produce substantially more sounds.<sup>9</sup>

An essential element of this fact of ancient cante andaluz was modulation by means of the enharmonic interval. The word "modulation" does not have the same meaning in ancient cante andaluz as it would have in modern European harmony. In modern European harmon, modulation is the simple movement from one tonality to another, without changing the key. Between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, European key structures were composed of a series of tones and semitones whose position was immutable.<sup>10</sup>

However, the primitive Indian systems and those derived from them, did not consider that places occupied by the smallest interval within a melodic series or mode were invariable. In the primitive Indian systems and that of primitive cante andaluz, the production of intervals obeyed a rising or lowering of the voice.

This obedience originated in the expression that was given to the word being sung. It was also the reason why there were so many primitive modes in India. Each mode could be theoretically determined by altering four of its seven sounds.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, each of the four alterable sounds could be divided and subdivided so that the start and finish notes within the fragments of a phrase were not the same.

Modulation was also the usage of the voice as a means of expression which was a far more exacting kind of modulation compared to that as conceived by European theorists. This procedure meant taking the voice through the infinite nuances that existed between two notes. Enharmonic modulation was a consequence of the primitive harmonic genre, whereby the sound could be modified according to its natural needs and functions.<sup>12</sup> The peculiarity of ancient cante andaluz (its range) suited this sound modification perfectly.

Thirdly, some aspect of Primitive Oriental music was always present in ancient cante andaluz. Most importantly was the aspect of enharmonism as discussed in the foregoing feature of ancient cante andaluz. Other aspects of Primitive Oriental music were as follows:

Obsessive repetition of one note  
Complex rhythms based on alternating time signatures (three-eight and  
three-four)  
Shouting  
Handclapping  
Use of appoggiatura  
Vocal portamento<sup>13</sup>

As with all Oriental music, the elements of sadness and remoteness were important elements and were present in ancient cante andaluz.

Fourthly, in ancient cante andaluz, there was always the sound of the guitar. Its influence represented two clearly defined musical values. The first was the rhythmic value. External and immediately perceptible, it was used in a particular cadential phrase known as the falling cadence (lah, sol, fah, mi). This particular phrase was easily assimilated and for centuries continued to be the only one used.

The second musical value was the tonal-harmonic value which was pure and remained unrecognized up until the time of Domenico Scarlatti.<sup>14</sup>

The internal harmonic phenomena of ancient cante andaluz and later, cante jondo, was known as "toque jondo", (touch jondo).<sup>15</sup> The harmonic effects achieved by the ancient guitarists using this technique on their kithras (forerunner to the Spanish guitar), were both marvellous and phenomenal.

In the time of ancient cante andaluz, there were two ways to play the guitar or kithra. The most ancient way was to strum. With strumming, only chords were formed. The chords were considered barbaric but in reality, they were a wondrous revelation of sound and could be closely associated with the cante.<sup>16</sup> The function of the guitar in this instance was harmonic.

The other mode of playing was to pluck. The function of the instrument in this capacity was melodic and its sound was like that of the lute or the bandurria, sweet, soft and melodious.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> M. Rios Ruiz, Introduccion al cante flamenco,  
(Ediciones ISTMO, Madrid), 1972, p. 28

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- <sup>2</sup> J.P. de Oliveira Martins, A History of Iberian Civilization,  
Translated by: F.G. Bell  
(Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., New York), 1969, p. 36
- <sup>3</sup> Edward F. Stanton, The Tragic Myth: Lorca and cante jondo,  
University Press of Kentucky, Kentucky), 1978, p. 4
- <sup>4</sup> Federico Garcia Lorca, Deep Song and Other Prose,  
Translated and Edited by: Christopher Mauer  
(New Directions Publishing Corporation, New York), 1980, p. 43
- <sup>5</sup> Bertha B. Quintana and Lois Gray Floyd, Que Gitano: Gypsies  
of Southern Spain, (Wavelana Press Inc., Illinois), 1972, p. 65
- <sup>6</sup> Leonard A. Curchin, Roman Spain,  
(Routledge, London), 1991, p. 163
- <sup>7</sup> Edward F. Stanton, The Tragic Myth: Lorca and cante jondo,  
(University Press of Kentucky, Kentucky), 1978, p. 43
- <sup>8</sup> Manuel de Falla, On Music and Musicians,  
Translated by: David Urman and J.M. Thomson.  
(Marion Boyars, London), 1979, p. 106
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 104
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 103
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 104
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 104
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 104
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 110
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 110
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 111
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 111

## THE SONG FORMS OF CANTE JONDO ANDALUZ

The main differences between the original songs that made up true cante jondo and its final hieratic form of flamenco were antiquity, structure and spirit.<sup>1</sup> These differences were clearly evident in one of these old and pure Andalucian song forms called the siguriya.

The siguriya has been the only original Andalucian song form to preserve the essence of primitive oriental music found in ancient cante andaluz and was considered to be its most direct descendent. It was unique and its music had a special poetic quality that was not merely a transplant of Oriental music to Spain.<sup>2</sup>

The structure of its melody followed the primitive tonal modes of ancient cante andaluz. It progressed by undulating semitones and like ancient cante andaluz melody, it imitated the “singing of birds and the natural sounds of the forest and water.”<sup>3</sup>

The melodic structure of the siguriya also continued to move within the reduced boundaries (interval of a 6<sup>th</sup>) of ancient cante andaluz. The primitive tonal modes provided a modal wealth for the ancient scales to do this.

The melodic structure of flamenco, on the other hand, tended to move by leaps and followed the patterns of steps and half steps of the Western scale. The reduced boundaries were clumsily expanded and replaced by tonal poverty which consisted of two modes only, the major and minor modes of the European scales.<sup>4</sup>

The structural form of the siguriya continued to adhere to the sober vocal modulation of ancient cante andaluz whereby the natural inflexions of the melody caused the intervals to be divided and subdivided.<sup>5</sup> In flamenco, sober vocal modulation was replaced by artificial ornamentation and as time passed, it became totally decadent.<sup>6</sup>



The greatest structural beauty of true cante jondo , also reflected in the siguiriya, was the rhythmic flexibility of the phrase. In flamenco, the phrase became crudely set to verse and over the centuries a most beautiful aspect of the ancient song of Andalucia was lost.<sup>7</sup>

The spirit of true cante jondo especially that of the siguiriya was so profound and emotional which is why it was never heard outside of Andalucia. Flamenco, once the dignified, hieratic form of true cante jondo was (and still is) performed outside of Spain on a regular basis. Through adulteration and modernization, it has become a ridiculous shadow of what it once was.<sup>8</sup>

Today with the exception of the odd cantaor who still knows the spirit of true cante jondo the ancient song of Andalucia is only a sad, lamentable song of the past.<sup>9</sup> It was partly because of the dreadful deterioration of something so precious from Spain's past, that two gentlemen from Andalucia, Federico Garcia Lorca, poet and Manuel de Falla, musician, decided to revive the Ancient Song of Andalucia.

### *THE EARLY SIGUIRIYA*

The early siguiriya was sung and played. Its opening bars were deeply sad and began with a high pitched scream, signifying the Soul's defiance against its Fate or Destiny. The strophic copla consisted of four lines and was very intense. The purpose of the copla was to introduce the theme of the song.<sup>10</sup>

When the gypsies came to Spain, they added a new character to the siguiriya. It became known as the siguiriya gitana and was danced, played and sung. Eventually the siguiriya gitana became part of the group of songs that were known as cante jondo andaluz. From cante jondo andaluz, flamenco was to evolve.

The gypsy siguiriya was the most gypsy of cante jondo andaluz. Richly varied, it was also extremely difficult to dance because of its character and slow paced compas. The compas was composed of 12 beats with the accents as follows: 8 9 10 11 12 / 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

The siguiriya was danced using only the upper torso.<sup>11</sup>

The significance of the gypsy siguriya was a release of pent-up hate, persecutions, denied liberty, love, tenderness and the relentless stalking of Death. Unleashed, it permitted a rare glimpse of the world as the Soul saw it, with all the hopelessness, despair, tragedy and cruel happenings.<sup>12</sup> The outstanding characteristic of its copla was the third line which was the longest.

I don't want her to know  
She, who was only mine  
That in my profound sighs for her  
My life is wafting away.<sup>13</sup>

### *THE SOLEA*

The solea was another old and pure Andalucian song that became part of cante jondo andaluz. The primitive solea was filled with torment and tragedy and was the most profound of the original cantes.<sup>14</sup>

Gypsy influences brought to the ancient solea a new idea. It became a plaintive song of sorrow, solitude and loneliness. The significance of the song was about one who is no longer remembered by anyone. Of particular significance was the dialogue within the song which reflected the conditions of those gypsies who worked in the wheatfields or olive groves and had lost their freedom.<sup>15</sup>

The short form of the solea, the solea corta, had a strophe that consisted of three or four lines. Each line had eight syllables which were either assonant or consonant and followed the style of 12th century Arabian poetry.<sup>16</sup>

The solea grande was the last to evolve and was the most profound of all the soleas. Sometimes called a soleares the solea grande was sung, danced and played. Like the siguriya, it was difficult to dance because of the slow tempo. The strophes were four lines long and also exceedingly difficult to sing. The soleares were characterized by a solemnity that referred to wisdom, philosophy and death.<sup>17</sup> Here is an example of a short solea.

I pass the hours of the night  
Without sleep  
Because of you.<sup>18</sup>

Here is an example of a soleares.

Sometimes I'd like  
To be crazy and not feel  
For being crazy takes away grief  
Grief that has no end.<sup>19</sup>

In both the solea corta and the solea grande, dancer and singer must perform with great emotion and yet be totally independent of one another. Their rhythm for the guitar is straightforward and allows for *toque* virtuosity.<sup>20</sup>

### *THE TONA*

Another original song form of *cante jondo andaluz* was the *tona*. The *tona* was sung only, it was not danced or played. A *tona* had no *compas* and was sung unaccompanied. It was extremely difficult to sing. *Tonas* usually related to stories, events or things of nature, such as birds.<sup>21</sup>

With the arrival of the gypsies the *tona* began to reflect violence and tragedy.<sup>22</sup>

Ay – do not fight it, gypsy girl  
I have sworn  
To pay you with death.  
They came and told me  
How you have talked badly of me  
And imagine my opinion of you  
That I didn't think you capable of it.<sup>23</sup>

## *EL POLO*

A most pure and ancient song form that became part of cante jondo andaluz was el polo. El polo reflected strongly, the primitive oriental influences of ancient cante andaluz and the Arabian melodic influences of early cante jondo.<sup>24</sup> Its outstanding characteristic was the “aye” with which it began. It was the most difficult of all the jondo dances to perform. Very formal, it was danced in burial garments.<sup>25</sup> The significance of el polo was Equality after Death.

Everyone asks God  
For health and freedom  
I ask for death  
And He will not grant it.<sup>26</sup>

## *THE SAETA*

The last ancient song that became part of the group of songs known as cante jondo andaluz was the saeta. The saeta was a most profound, religious manifestation of the ancient Andalucian pueblo. Produced in the spirit of the pueblo, it was most suitable for cante jondo andaluz.

Although the origin of the saeta has been lost, its significance was about wide open spaces and the heart of one who sought God. Like ancient cante andaluz, it too, was sung unaccompanied.

As a profound religious manifestation of the pueblo, the saeta had metaphysical connotations with respect to the mystical beliefs of the ancient Andalucian people. It was honest, dramatic, elamorous and objective. It was also an oration.

The oration was pathetic and very very sad and was known only to the people of Andalucia. It revealed to Christ and His Mother, through the ritual customs that were at the time practiced, the human condition with all of its pain.

Melodically, the saeta was extremely difficult to sing and the internal rhythm had to be set by the singer. In its most primitive form it was a simple tona with influences reminiscent of the Byzantine liturgy. Whether it was eloquent or pathetic, depended upon the pueblo in which it was sung. For many centuries, the saeta remained dramatic and profound.

Unfortunately, as with all the ancient cantes, the saeta eventually suffered transformation. Today, there are no original saetas that are sung. Those that are sung are so grossly adorned, the pure, aesthetic music of the primitive past is completely deformed and unrecognizable. One original manuscript by Manuel Torre does exist in Spain in la Catedra de Flamencology.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Edward F. Stanton, The Tragic Myth: Lorca and cante jondo, (University Press of Kentucky, Kentucky), 1978, p. 3

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 4

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 3

<sup>4</sup> Manuel de Falla, On Music and Musicians, Translated by David Urman and J.M. Thomson, (Marion Boyars, London), 1979, p.116

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 116

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 116

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 116

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 116

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 116

<sup>10</sup> M. Rios Ruiz, Introduccion al cante flamenco, (Ediciones ISTMO, Madrid), 1972, p. 75

<sup>11</sup> D.E. Pohren, The Art of Flamenco, (Musical New Sources Limited, England), 1984, p. 142

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 142

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 143

<sup>14</sup> Bertha B. Quintana, Lois Gray Floyd, Que Gitano: Gypsies of Southern Spain, (Wavelana Press Inc., Illinois), 1972, p. 53

<sup>15</sup> M. Rios Ruiz, Introduccion al cante flamenco, (Ediciones ISTMO, Madrid), 1972, p. 76

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 76

<sup>17</sup> D.E. Pohren, The Art of Flamenco, (Musical New Sources Limited, England), 1984, p. 145

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 146

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p. 146

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 146

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 154

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 154

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 155

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 111

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 112

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 112

<sup>27</sup> M. Rios Ruiz, Introduccion al cante flamenco, (Ediciones ISTMO, Madrid), 1972, pgs. 67-74

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 3

<sup>4</sup> Manuel de Falla, On Music and Musicians, Translated by David Urman and J.M. Thomson, (Marion Boyars, London), 1979, p.116

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 116

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 116

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 116

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 116

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 116

<sup>10</sup> M. Rios Ruiz, Introduccion al cante flamenco, (Ediciones ISTMO, Madrid), 1972, p. 75

<sup>11</sup> D.E. Pohren, The Art of Flamenco, (Musical New Sources Limited, England), 1984, p. 142

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 142

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 143

<sup>14</sup> Bertha B. Quintana, Lois Gray Floyd, Que Gitano: Gypsies of Southern Spain, (Wavelana Press Inc., Illinois), 1972, p. 53

<sup>15</sup> M. Rios Ruiz, Introduccion al cante flamenco, (Ediciones ISTMO, Madrid), 1972, p. 76

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 76

<sup>17</sup> D.E. Pohren, The Art of Flamenco, (Musical New Sources Limited, England), 1984, p. 145

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 146

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p. 146

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 146

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 154

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 154

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 155

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 111

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 112

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 112

<sup>27</sup> M. Rios Ruiz, Introduccion al cante flamenco, (Ediciones ISTMO, Madrid), 1972, pgs. 67-74

## THE GUITAR

By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the most important accompanying instrument for *cante jondo andaluz* was the guitar. Over a period of time, the guitar became an essential motif of *cante jondo andaluz*. As a motif, it was associated with both the untruthful aspect of love and death.<sup>1</sup>

The guitar expressed the dark spirit of *cante jondo*. The fingers were said to represent five swords. The guitar represented the heart. Vicious strumming of the strings called *rasgado* symbolized the tearing apart of the heart and the wounding of it by the swords.<sup>2</sup> Other outstanding effects were drumming on the sound board and dazzling improvisation.<sup>3</sup>

Of oriental derivation, the guitar was thought to be the descendent of the *kithara*. The *kithara* was first introduced to Spain in the 9<sup>th</sup> century by a famous Arabian musician known as *Ziryab*. *Ziryab* added a 5<sup>th</sup> string to the guitar-like instrument. Later, another string was added and the early guitar became the accompanying instrument for *cante jondo andaluz*.<sup>4</sup>

In its accompaniment role, the sound was its most important feature and was considered to be an art in itself.<sup>5</sup> The guitar was held on the right thigh with the wrist at a very sharp angle to the right. While this position proved to extremely awkward and difficult, it was the proud way of the gypsy and became known as the “flamenco position.” The position was said to influence the sound.

The gypsy guitar also had a capo or *cejilla* which was used to raise or lower the tuning of the guitar without having to re-tune each string. The use of a capo was also thought to have improved the sound and made it much more flamenco.<sup>6</sup> In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, hand clapping was added to guitar accompaniment for flamenco.

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<sup>1</sup> Edward F. Stanton, *The Tragic Myth: Lorca and cante jondo*, (University Press of Kentucky, Kentucky), 1978, p. 33

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 33

<sup>3</sup> Bertha B. Quintana, Lois Gray Floyd, Que Gitano: Gypsies of Southern Spain, (Wavelana Press Inc., Illinois), 1972, p. 58

<sup>4</sup> D.E. Pohren, The Art of Flamenco, (Musical New Sources Limited, England), 1984, p. 74

<sup>5</sup> Ibid,, p. 74

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 76



## MANUEL DE FALLA

Manuel de Falla was born into the home of a wealthy Cadiz family on November 23, 1876. His earliest memories were the songs and stories told to him by his Moorish nanny, la Morilla and his mother playing the works of Chopin and Beethoven on the piano. It was she who taught Falla his first musical notes.<sup>1</sup>

Redeemed from the frivolous life of most young Andalucian gentlemen because he wanted to do something grand in the realm of art, he was allowed to pursue music.<sup>2</sup> Because of his place of birth, he already carried the songs of Andalucia in his blood.<sup>3</sup> He had had a Moorish nanny to sing him to sleep with sweet sounding Arabian melodies and to tell him old Andalucian tales. His imagination took root in fertile Andalucian, Moorish ground. It would later become the inspiration for his music.

At the age of nine, Falla visited Sevilla which completely captivated him. Returning to Cadiz, he recreated the charming lost city of Sevilla and called it Colon. It was in the secret atmosphere of his secluded chamber that he governed his metropolis with his imagination for six years unbeknownst to his parents and professors and also wrote his first operia seria, *El Condo de Villamediana*.<sup>4</sup> In his thoughtful child's mind not even Cadiz had a theatre repertoire as grand as that of his Colon.

As a child, Falla was deeply interested in prose, Spanish history and the old legends that had thrilled him from the first time his nanny had told them to him.<sup>5</sup> These three things and his city of Colon were his greatest joy in life.<sup>6</sup>

Falla's initiation into classical music began at age ten with his attendance and that of his parents at musical evenings held in the home of Salvador Viniegra. While these soirees did not impress him immediately, his musical path in life was awakened during the symphonic concerts at the museum of Cadiz. It was, however, in Sr. Viniegra's musical salon where Falla performed for the first time on the grand piano in front of a select audience. He never forgot the experience.

From age seventeen a conviction both frightening and profound, to study composition, took hold of him.<sup>7</sup> He was afraid of the calling because he did not think he could achieve it, especially in terms of inspiration.<sup>8</sup> Without inspiration it would not be possible to fulfill the calling. He found the courage to follow his path through his religious beliefs.

During the last years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Falla spent short periods of time in Madrid where he studied the piano with a fellow pupil of Albeniz, Jose Trago. He also changed his name from Manuel Falla to Manuel de Falla. The critics praised his many talents. Very difficult pieces were “played effortlessly and with great delicacy.” He was equally praised for his accompanying which was “always discreet.”<sup>9</sup>

#### *MADRID 1900 – 1907*

In 1900 Falla moved to Madrid where he worked on some zarzuela with Amadeo Vives and Joachin Turina. He also wrote several short works for chamber ensemble, continued his piano studies with Trago and gave private piano lessons in order to support himself and the family business which was on the verge of bankruptcy. He did not enjoy writing zarzuela because, for Falla, it was a mere copy of Italian opera which so in vogue at the time.<sup>10</sup> To Falla, zarzuela had no national character. He wrote it only for the money.

In 1902, he began his studies with Felipe Pedrell, one of Spain’s great musicologists. Pedrell was a great inspiration and taught Falla about instrumentation. Falla respected the Maestro for the love and passion he had for his art and the new horizons he saw for Spain’s music in the old manuscripts he had discovered.

In 1903, Falla composed the *Allegro de Concierto*. He entered it in the Piano Competition for Composition which was held at the Madrid Conservatory. Enrique Granados won the competition. In 1904, Falla finished *La vida breve* and entered it in a competition.

In 1905, Falla was awarded the prestigious Ortiz y Cusso Prize for a public competition between Spanish pianists which was also held at the Madrid Conservatory. There were more than thirty participants and they included the Catalan virtuoso, Frank Marshall (who later became the teacher of Alicia de Laroccha), who seemed a sure winner.<sup>11</sup> The program was very

demanding. Candidates were expected to perform works by Bach, Scarlatti, Beethoven, Chopin, Schumann, Saint Saens, Paganini and Liszt. Falla's austere and poetic interpretation of the selected works won him the prize of a grand piano. He did not see himself as a virtuosic pianist but rather as a musician who applied himself assiduously and patiently to the purely musical studies set down by the jury.<sup>12</sup> At this period in Falla's life he lived in abject poverty, taken to sporting a bushy moustache and wearing a bowler hat. He had also fallen in love.

#### *PARIS 1907 – 1914*

Falla arrived in Paris in the summer of 1907 with no work prospects.<sup>13</sup> Yet without Paris, Falla felt he would have been “buried in Madrid, interred and forgotten, leading a gloomy life, living miserably off his few lessons and keeping his prize like his opera, hidden in a drawer.”<sup>14</sup> He was unable to give concerts because the pianos were so terrible but he did have great success playing the overture for his work, *L'Enfant Prodigue*, without an orchestra. He went on a successful tour and a second tour which was somewhat more artistic as well as profitable, was planned for the fall. In Geneva he was able to play on a Pleyel piano at the Pleyel Concert Hall and he adored the climate. He began to acquire a few students and was invited to make his debut as a conductor in Luxembourg. He was more than pleased to have made the decision to leave Madrid.

In Paris, his first big thrill was to meet Paul Dukas. Upon explanation of his reasons for coming to Paris, Dukas offered to listen to his *La vida breve*. Dukas greatly encouraged Falla. He advised the composer not to change his personal style and to work alone. Dukas then introduced Falla to Albeniz who greeted him in his own truly, magnificent fashion.<sup>15</sup>

Artistic protection was also offered by Debussy whom Falla finally met. He too, helped Falla with direction and publishing of his works. Falla loved Debussy's music not so much for the novelty of the style – impressionism – as for the purely musical ideas.<sup>16</sup>

One evening Falla attended a concert at the Aeolian Hall. The featured work was a new quartet so full of dissonance that the gentleman next to Falla commented on its awfulness. The other gentleman said “well, what do you expect. These things are now fashionable and I myself am writing a series of pieces for which I use the same method.”<sup>17</sup> The

gentleman was Isaac Albeniz and the series of pieces to which he referred was his *Iberia*.

On another occasion Falla went to the Albeniz home and was surprised to find Dukas, a permanent guest due to a family misfortune. Albeniz, hardly able to play anymore, sat down at his piano and while his charming daughters served drinks, performed a strange version of *Iberia* which involved his hands, voice and his Cuban cigar, the complicated spirals of smoke matching the beautiful melodies of *Triana*.<sup>18</sup>

In 1908, Falla took part in a concert tour that took him to the north of Spain. He soon returned to Paris after visiting his family in Madrid. In 1909 Albeniz secured some financial aid for Falla so that the composer could work on his *Cuatro piezas española*. They were published at the publishers' request and performed by Ricardo Vines. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of May, of that same year, Isaac Albeniz died.

In 1910 Falla began work on *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*. One day during his rambles, trying to temper his inner troubles through a jaunt, he stopped in front of a Spanish bookshop and his eye fell upon a book called *Granada*. He bought the book with his last few francs and spent the night reading it. Next morning he and his inspiration were ready to write. His Muse was once again in her place. The power of creation began to flow and beautiful, beguiling melodies of the new work began to bewitch his mind. Even though Falla had never been to Granada, he expressed in the work, the Alhambra, the Generalife, its gardens and murmuring fountains filled with the pungent, sensual fragrance of myrtles.<sup>19</sup>

The instrumentation not only marked the characteristics of original Andalusian folk songs but as well, it marked certain effects unique to Primitive Hispanic Arabian instruments. The highly descriptive music expressed more than the echoes of fiestas and dances, it also evoked the mystery and pain of life.

#### *MADRID 1914 – 1920*

In 1914, Falla left Paris for Spain at the outbreak of WWI. A weak figure with two broken front teeth and sans his toupee, Falla arrived back in Madrid. He hardly resembled a man “inside of which a great soul burned.”

He settled into a flat on the Calle Ponzano and attempted to find work again. *La vida breve* was to debut at Madrid's Zarzuela Theatre. However, there were prejudices to overcome concerning the work. It was Andalusian, its themes were based on Andalusian music. This kind of folk music was considered "vulgar, fit only for drunken revels and tourists looking for the picturesque."<sup>21</sup> A special article was written the day before the premiere to advise the audience that Falla had only done what Beethoven had done in his *Pastoral Symphony*. He had extolled and sublimated popular and vulgar subjects. The respectable audience adored the work and Falla's name was on everyone's lips.

While this one work was a great success, it did not solve Falla's financial worries. Between his own problems and those of his family, who were now submerged in ruin, he was prevented day after day from finishing the instrumentation for *Noches*.<sup>22</sup>

The day Falla visited Granada was one of great rapture for him and compensated somewhat for the torments of his existence which at times surrounded him with so much meanness and dullness.<sup>23</sup> What he saw through the window of the Comares Hall in the Alhambra was a hill with prickly pear trees protecting gypsy caves. Their burnished trunks reflected the noonday sun like mirrors.<sup>24</sup> He saw the Generalife with its beautiful fountains, tree upon tree, flowers and shrubs.

For a time Falla lived with good friends in Barcelona and worked on his orchestration. But there was so much noise at the guesthouse where he stayed that he finally told his friend he could not write. He needed a quiet place. His friends offered him their villa in Sitges and assured Falla that the only sound he would hear was the sound of the sea at the foot of the old iron gate.<sup>25</sup> Falla was at the time working on a new piece called *El amor brujo*.

Not long after his return to Madrid, Falla received a request from one of Andalusia's best dancers, Pastora Imperio, to write a song and a dance. She was the most outstanding dancer of authentic, typical, serious Andalusian dance. Her mother particularly interested Falla as she knew the soleares, the siguiriya, the polo and the martinete from which he captured the essence of the music for the song and dance which grew into *El amor brujo*.

The final touches to the orchestration of *El amor brujo* were the excuse for another visit to Granada. Falla was an unmatched master of instrumentation. The question was how to communicate the magic and bewitchment of his melodies to the audience via aural sensation.<sup>26</sup> Ultimately, it was not accomplished through the requirement of impossible virtuosity of an instrument but rather through the complete mastery of the means of how to express what he wanted to communicate...."a faint tremor of anguished hope, a rending cry, within the shout, the tears this woman swallows...."<sup>27</sup>

Falla was so highly accomplished in his art of instrumentation that any sound could be reproduced on the piano. The orchestra was his greatest achievement. It was the living embodiment of his ideas and concepts expressed in his compositions.

#### *GRANADA 1920 – 1929*

In 1920, Falla went again to Granada to find a cheap house to rent as he needed a peaceful retreat. He had to recover from severe financial losses as a result of his publisher's bankruptcy. He ended up in a tavern called Polinario's, famous for its wine, not watered down, paintings and flamenco cante. When his new friends recognized he and his sister, a house was found.

It was in Granada where Falla's quest for the archaic, genuine songs of Andalusia began. While he was in Sevilla during Easter weekend, he searched for a *saeta*. Just beside the Triana Bridge he heard one. A venerable old gypsy woman was on her knees, arms wide open like a cross, singing it. A deaf creature who had come from the alley where she lived, she had pushed her way through the crowd. Her hair was short and stood on end because she had just donated her plaits to the Virgen of Hope. Tattered,

destitute, she was suddenly transfigured into an angel of song, forgetting everything around her except her adoration of Christ and the Virgin as the Cachorro passed by.<sup>28</sup>

In June of 1922, Falla organized the first competition of cante jondo in Granada. Falla was assisted by Zuloaga the painter, Lorca the poet and other good friends.<sup>29</sup>

Falla organized the competition because he wanted to stop the decadence of cante which had fallen into an abysmal state. The truly great singers had been forgotten and all that prevailed were a lot of ridiculous warblings that passed for *fandangos* and *columbianas*.<sup>30</sup> Falla was very severe. He eliminated all the present day folksingers who knew only the rowdy songs of the Sacromonte Caves or neighbourhood taverns. At the festival, there was a seventy-two year old man named Tenazas who had walked all the way from Puente Genil to Granada, smoking his pipe and holding his pipe cleaner. He brought tears to the eyes of all those who heard him sing. Lorca had found an old woman begging in the Albaicin and she knew only that the singing of the *serranas* had to begin with the *liviana* which was thought to have been lost.

The cante jondo festival was a great success even though the competition itself did not achieve much.<sup>31</sup> Jealous competitors made one old pure cantaor drunk before his performance. He was still riotously applauded simply because the renowned critics, artists and writers who had come to the festival, attracted by Falla's prestige, did not know anything about cante jondo.

Tenazas who had won the competition was negotiating with a record company with Falla's help when he was nowhere to be found. One day he decided to leave the expensive lodgings Falla had located for him. When Falla did find him, Tenazas told him that he'd "got himself a woman." Falla laughed when he learned what had happened to his recording star.<sup>32</sup>

Falla had gone to Granada in search of silence and time. He found inner harmony and eternity. During the day he embraced the luxurious growth on his walks deep into the Alhambra Hills and the harsh and delicate colours of amethyst, opal and Sierra Nevada pink. At night he listened to the echoes of Granada, half sung coplas and undulating laments.<sup>33</sup>

Pure essence became the heart of his work. Everything became important with the knowledge that came from a new awareness. Writing a letter, ordering a book, sending a bill – all were consciously lived moments for him, moments in which he served God. His sonorous echo reached from the poor areas of the Albaicin to the distant sufferings of far off China. His art began to immolate his love for all creatures. A soul of high ideals, his conscience gave priority to humankind before all other interests, even artistic.<sup>34</sup> Falla felt that the day his music would be understood, humankind would have heard the call of God. Neither the music nor its message would ever be compromised as can be seen in a letter he wrote to Lorca dated February 9, 1929.

“I do not need to tell you, who knows so well, the differences that separate us regards the theme of your *Oda*. If I were to work on it I would go about the task in a humble attitude, hoping that all humanity could be deified by virtue of the Sacrament....”<sup>35</sup>

#### *GRANADA 1930 – 1939*

Falla’s life remained in the “unpresent” for the next several years.<sup>36</sup> That is to say that in his solitude, he created the illusion that what had existed inside of him during the 12<sup>th</sup> century was the same in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The laurels, roses and cypresses that grew outside his house were there in the 12<sup>th</sup> century as were the whitened walls. He did not subject himself to the world’s vain worries and his music, so full of spirituality, reflected this.

Falla experienced several mystical events. He found himself sitting on the banks of a wide and gentle river in one such event. It turned out to be the Danube. He did not know how long he had been there, only that he had sat on the shores of many rivers but never before on one where the “current of time”<sup>37</sup> carried things away.

Another time he found himself on a mountain peak watching the sun rise. Watching the dawn break, he again, experienced the loss of time.

A third event occurred one night when he was unable to sleep. He got up and looked out the window and saw a star that he had not seen before. It glowed very brightly. In the silence of the night a dog began to bark. The bark was so sad and plaintive, as if the animal were weeping. For Falla, it seemed as if the star shining so mysteriously and with such splendour, could no longer light up the Universe because it no longer existed. Its heavenly



light had been extinguished and it had ceased to shine centuries ago even though it was reaching our Universe in that moment. He sat down and composed one of his most beautiful pieces as a result of that spiritual experience.

The arrest and murder of his dear friend Federico Garcia Lorca filled Falla with bitterness and deeply shook him.<sup>38</sup> He found it difficult to understand the unpunished violence which was taking place in Granada. The San Nicholas Church had been burned to the ground and someone, without any shame, rang the bells. The senselessness of what had happened in Granada was even more tragic since Granada had not supported the political military movement.

On September 28<sup>th</sup>, 1939, Falla left his little house in Granada for Buenos Aires. Very pale, he took leave of his good friends and his cat, Confucious, never to meet again. His last words to his friends were “Until the valley of Josaphat.”<sup>39</sup>

Arriving in Buenos Aires he settled in a villa in the country with his sister, living in extreme financial hardship. Since there was a war in Europe going on, he could not receive author’s writer’s monies for his concerts. He particularly loved the beds of carnations that grew in Buenos Aires and reminded him of his Granada.

In 1941, he fell ill with a fever and stopped work on *Atlantida* that he had begun in 1927. In 1943, he began again to work on *Atlantida*. The work brought him great peace.

*Atlantida* lay between mythology and archaic times of primitive Iberia, between the legendary land of the Gadex of the Romans (Cadiz) and before that of the Iberians and before that of the lost continent of Atlantis. The coat of arms of Cadiz bears the figure of Hercules and the two pillars. The poem stirred his imagination with dark, ancestral dreams and brought his unfaded childhood images to life.<sup>40</sup> The work was finished by his student Ernesto Halffter after Falla’s death.

#### *THE MYSTICISM OF MANUEL DE FALLA*

Falla was, according to Francis Poulenc, a great mystic. He lived his faith in secret and intensely. His character was that of a dignified and reserved man. He either approved or disapproved of a work. Rarely did he

pay attention to technical details yet he was a master of them. Falla was a mystic in a pure, clear state.<sup>41</sup>

In rehearsals he did not get angry, he just got nervous. On the spiritual side he was deeply calm. One day Falla and Poulenc went to a small Venetian church. It was beautifully decorated for some religious holiday. As soon as they entered the church Falla began to pray and Poulenc had the sensing that he no longer existed for Falla. Falla did not even take note of Poulenc leaving such was the “state of his Assumption.”<sup>42</sup>

He lived his days in Granada and Buenos Aires in solitude, and in meditation. His spirituality deepened in Buenos Aires. His intense religious feelings verged on mysticism. Sometimes at night he could be heard singing his prayers and orations.<sup>43</sup>

In Granada, Falla lived humbly in his *carmen*. The word “*carmen*” comes from the Arabic and means “enclosed garden.”<sup>44</sup> In Granada, *carmenes* are hanging gardens on stepped terraces. Within each garden there is a house. While they can be very humble and simple, within them, one finds peace, love and beauty.

It was in such a *carmen* that Falla’s fertile and chaste inspiration was nourished. The seclusion led him to become monk-like. His gaze became clear, limpid, delighted with ecstasy at the works of God. In many ways he can be compared to another Carmelite, St. John of the Cross.

In his music the narcissistic soul and voluptuous body aspired to disembodiment and the incorporeal, without losing any of its humanity – line, rhythm, colour, smell.<sup>45</sup> To define a narcissistic soul, observe the Andalusian man or woman especially when they are out walking. He/she will always move to the reflection of the inner mirror of each one’s aesthetic imagination. Falla saw, through his music, the outside world as a great and marvellous book with all the creatures of the world, beautiful and complete.<sup>46</sup>

On the morning of November 14, 1946, Falla’s sister found him dead and at peace. The congratulations for his upcoming seventieth birthday had to be quickly changed to obituaries. Concerts in his honour became memorial recitals. Falla’s body and fragments of his *Atlantida* were sealed up and returned to Cadiz. He was laid to rest in the crypt of the Granada Cathedral where he found his eternal peace.

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<sup>1</sup> Ministerio de la Cultura,  
Manuel de Falla: His Life and Works  
(Ediciones Opponax, Madrid), 1996, p. 19

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 20

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 20

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 22

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 23

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 23

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 27

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 27

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 30

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 39

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 43

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 43

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 51

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 51

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 52

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 53

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 54

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 54

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p. 71

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- <sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 95  
<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 83  
<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 83  
<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 85  
<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 85  
<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 86  
<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 109  
<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 109  
<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p. 156  
<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p. 159  
<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p. 159  
<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p. 159  
<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p. 164  
<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p. 197  
<sup>34</sup> Ibid, p. 211  
<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p. 212  
<sup>36</sup> Ibid, p. 217  
<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p. 217  
<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p. 220  
<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p. 235  
<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p. 245  
<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p. 264  
<sup>42</sup> Ibid, p. 264  
<sup>43</sup> Ibid, p. 274  
<sup>44</sup> Ibid, p. 277  
<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p. 277  
<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p. 277

MANUEL de FALLA  
And  
THE ANCIENT MUSIC OF ANDALUCIA

Falla's interest in the Ancient Music of Andalucia began with the folk music of the Andalucian pueblos. For the great Andalucian composer, authenticity and the spirit of the work were of prime importance. To be designated as authentic and categorized as having elements of Ancient Andalucian music, a work had to contain the following:

1. the situation or story had to be represented through the dance.
2. the text had to be alluded to, through the music.
3. some historical fact of Andalucia had to be represented in the work.
4. the moment in history or time as to when the work was sung or danced had to be authenticated.

Realism and tradition were also important to Falla in his search for the authentic music of Andalucia. He did not want mere impressionism. For him, this repudiated realism. Falla was able to bring all four of the above-mentioned elements of Ancient Andalucian music as well as realism and tradition together in his ballet suite *El amor brujo* composed in 1915.

The concept of the representation of a situation or story through the dance was very important to Falla. Not only was the intimate link to dance one of the distinguishing features of Ancient Andalucian music, it became a particular condition for Falla in his *El amor brujo* where the story unfolded through both the dance and the composer's harmonic progressions. This imbued the work with stability and a "seeming coherence."

The words "seeming coherence" have given rise to the question of whether or not the use of dance merely created an illusion and ruptured rather than unified the work with respect to its particular style. Upon closer observation it has been seen that Falla's use of dance in *El amor brujo* did not cause a rupture but rather, it permitted the co-existence of two distinct musical styles, the specific elements of Ancient Andalucian Music and the music of the Gypsies.<sup>1</sup>

Allusion to the text through music was also another distinguishing feature of Ancient Andalusian Music. Like the dance, poetry was intimately linked to the ancient music.

Ancient Andalusian poetry was based on spontaneity. It depicted ordinary events in an extraordinary way. Full of violent lyricism, its words held a magical power over its listeners and evoked an imagery that went beyond the sense of the word itself.<sup>2</sup>

In Falla's *El amor brujo* for example, we are informed by the text that the gypsy lover of Candelas is dead. The circumstances of his death are not known. It is known, however, that quarrels between rival gypsy families were most always settled by the knife. For the gypsies, the knife had a death association.

The imagery that surrounds the death of the gypsy lover evokes the idea that there has been a terrible fight with knives and that the lover has been mortally wounded and left to die which was the custom. In this particular kind of imagery, no words are alluded to in the text, yet the whole world of the gypsy is reflected – a world of sophisticated primitivism and elemental in all its concerns.

Falla brings authenticity and realism to his work by alluding to the unspoken imagery of the text through certain passages of music which express the tragic events that have taken place and which have ultimately led to the bloodshed and death of the gypsy lover.<sup>3</sup>

In order to impart even more realism to his gypsy ballet, Falla has represented an important historical fact – the coming of the Gypsies to Granada. In the 15th century about four hundred gypsies arrived in beautiful Granada, which was at the time, the last remaining Arabic stronghold.<sup>4</sup> To the gypsies, Granada was an ideal city. It had an air of mysticism. Its philosophical fatalism was most compatible with their own traditions.<sup>5</sup> Proud, arrogant and aloof, they chose to live on the outskirts of Granada in caves. Among other things, they were highly skilled in the occult arts and divination.<sup>6</sup>

Falla set *El amor brujo* in Granada. The gypsies were his key characters. The action for the ballet was to take place in a cave. During the

*Ritual Fire Dance* there is a strong reference to the occult when a spell is cast by the Gypsy woman against the Spectre.

Lastly, the work is authenticated by Falla's use of three very old Andalusian melodies. In his use of these melodies, he has considered the elements of rhythm, modality and certain melodic intervals that have determined the undulating line and the cadences of Ancient Andalusian Music. His tempos have influenced the precise placement of the accent which is extremely important to give the music authenticity. He has chosen modality over tonality because for Falla, tonality was far too decisive. The composer has also given careful consideration to the use of dynamics and the voices of the singers.

Confirmation of the presence of other elements with respect to Ancient Andalusian Music which further attested to the authenticity, realism and tradition of Falla's ballet include:

- (a) the harmonization of essential notes of the mode, particularly, I, IV and V
- (b) static harmony
- (c) allusion to oriental modes
- (d) guitar effects in the harmony and accompaniment
- (e) rasgado effects pertaining to the guitar
- (f) the natural resonances that are joined to the principal notes of the chord.

Like so many of the European composers, Falla did not permit his own ideas to dominate his technical language. He depended on his inspiration, the "duende". In allowing his creative inspiration to guide him, Falla was able to compose a work that was so very Spanish yet at the same time it was universal. *El amor brujo* speaks to the soul of everyone.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Luis Campodonico, Falla.

Traduccion de Frances, Avila  
(Avila, Espana), 1959

<sup>2</sup> Federico Sopena, Manuel de Falla y Su Musica Andaluza.  
(Ediciones Rialp, S.A., Madrid, Espana), 1976, p. 8

Federico Garcia Lorca, Romancero gitano.  
(Manchester University Press, New York), 1988, p. 17

<sup>3</sup> Federico Garcia Lorca, Romancero gitano.  
(Manchester University Press, New York), 1988, p. 17

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 17

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 17

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 14

<sup>7</sup> Federico Sopena, Manuel de Falla y Su Musica Andaluza.  
(Ediciones Rialp, S.A., Madrid, Espana), 1976, p. 106



## THE MOTIFS OF MANUEL DE FALLA

Many of the elements of ancient cante andaluz were to serve as motifs in the works of maestro Manuel de Falla. These motifs, although difficult to prove by European standards have clearly defined the differences between the Ancient Music of Andalucia and impure, modern flamenco.<sup>1</sup>

### *DUENDE*

One of the elements of ancient cante andaluz which became a motif in Falla's works was the duende. Duende was one of the most important concepts of the Ancient Andalucian belief system. A mysterious power that could be felt but never seen, it existed in everything and was everywhere according to the ancient peoples of Andalucia.<sup>2</sup> Nothing in life took place or happened without the duende. It fully possessed the Soul and drew from the Soul that most profound expression of suffering and death known throughout Andalucia as "*The Tragic Myth*."<sup>3</sup>

The outstanding characteristics of the duende were darkness and negativity. Associated with death and the unconscious mind, it sprang from the depths of the earth. The duende could never be summoned at will but when it was present, its force was fearful and compelling.<sup>4</sup> It was then the people of Andalucian would say "*Viva Dios!*" Dark and shuddering it demanded that each person climb the Tower of Perfection but only if he or she struggled with the duende.

In painting, the duende was represented through dark colours. In poetry, it was perceived as tragedy or death. In music it was expressed through the element of dissonance and black sounds. A clue to its presence, especially in Falla's music was that a particular passage was only written once. The passage itself was, in turn, totally dependent on how it was interpreted at a precise moment. The interpretation was not possible to repeat since it was in that "precise moment" that the interpreter had found something new or unprecedented because of the presence of the duende. Like a miracle, the duende brought freshness to the old and familiar and made it seem as if the old and mundane had suddenly been newly created.<sup>5</sup>

## *PENA NEGRA*

Andalucian pena negra was the expression of the dramatic struggle that took place over a period of centuries between the Andalucian Soul and the two civilizations, the Roman and the Phoenician, that had imposed themselves on Andalucia. It did not refer to melancholy or nostalgia.<sup>6</sup>

Pena negra was deeply rooted in the duende and expressed the Andalucian sense of suffering. It evoked the anguish of the heart and a deep sadness.<sup>7</sup> It was the terrible scream of the Soul as it remembered “dead generations.”<sup>8</sup> A poignant elegy for lost centuries, it was the Soul’s pathetic evocation to other moons and other winds. It was the precious stone of the sob, pried open and revealed. The voice became the river, upon which the tears of the Soul fell.<sup>9</sup>

Through all the anguish, one could still smile. Pena negra did not blind, it did not weep out of self pity. One knew the longing and deep love of pena negra even though Death was just behind the door.<sup>10</sup>

### *Romance de la Pena Negra*

*Cordoba.*

*Lejana y sola.*

*Jaca negra, luna grande  
Y aceitunas en mi alforja.  
Aunque sepa los caminos  
Yo nunca llegare a Cordoba.*

*Por el llano, por el viento  
Jaca negra, luna roja.  
La muerte me esta mirando  
Desde los torres de Cordoba.*

*Ay! Que camino tan largo!  
Ay! Mi jaca valerosa!  
Ay! Que la muerte me espera,  
Antes de llegar a Cordoba!*

*Cordoba  
Lejana y sola.<sup>11</sup>*

Cordoba.  
Far off and lonely.

Black horse, big moon  
And olives in my saddle bag.  
Even though I know the road  
I'll never get to Cordoba.

Across the plain and through the wind,  
Black horse, red moon.  
Death is watching me  
From the towers of Cordoba.

Ay! How long the road!  
Ay! My valiant horse!  
Ay! Death awaits me  
Before I get to Cordoba!

Cordoba.  
Far off and lonely.<sup>12</sup>  
Federico Garcia Lorca

Pena negra, rooted in duende, strongly reflected the element of fatalism found in ancient cante andaluz.<sup>13</sup> It became an important motif for Falla because of its integrity. He expressed it through very sharp dissonance that was intended to interpret pain, anguish and frustration. The threnodic melody, like a lament for the dead evoked the deep sadness and hopeless despair that the Ancient Andalucians believed was their unalterable Destiny.

### *THE GUITAR*

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Another element of ancient *cante andaluz* which became an essential motif in Falla's music was mysticism. Mysticism embodied fear, violent actions and tragedy. It set up conflict and struggle not only between positive and negative forces but also between the Past and the Present, Man and the Cosmos, Heaven and Earth.<sup>19</sup>

The Ancient Andalucians believed that it was only through conflict and struggle that reality could be achieved as well as the understanding that one must participate in all aspects of life because that was the Fate of human destiny to do so. Destiny inevitably ended in Death and could not be altered.<sup>20</sup>

The mythical land of Andalusia provided Falla with the perfect city in which to set his great work, *El amor brujo* – Granada. Once verdant and fertile, the plains became dry and parched. The winds that blew across those plains now herald tragedy. The streets of the city utter the tragic cries and

pena negra of past centuries. The clear pools of water now stagnant attest to the might of the great Arabian palace, the Alhambra and the once beautiful gardens, the Generalife. All that began in love has now ended in sorrow.

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<sup>1</sup> Edward F. Stanton, The Tragic Myth: Lorca and cante jondo, (University Press of Kentucky, Kentucky), 1978, p. 15

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 10

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 10

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 11

<sup>5</sup> Federico Garcia Lorca, Deep Song and Other Prose,  
Translated and Edited by: Christopher Mauer  
(New Directions Publishing Corporation, New York), 1980, p. 46

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 105

<sup>7</sup> Edward F. Stanton, The Tragic Myth: Lorca and cante jondo,  
(University Press of Kentucky, Kentucky), 1978, p. 33

<sup>8</sup> Federica Garcia Lorca, Deep Song and Other Prose,  
Translated and Edited by: Christopher Mauer  
(New Directions Publishing Corporation, New York), 1980, p. 25

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 26

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 112

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 112

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 113

<sup>13</sup> Edward F. Stanton, The Tragic Myth: Lorca and cante jondo,  
(University Press of Kentucky, Kentucky), 1978, p. 33  
D.E. Pohren, The Art of Flamenco,  
(Musical New Sources Limited, England), 1984, p. 31

<sup>15</sup> Edward F. Stanton, The Tragic Myth: Lorca and cante jondo,  
(University Press of Kentucky, Kentucky), 1978, p. 37

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 39

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 43

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 43

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p. 82

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 82

## THE MOTIFS OF MANUEL DE FALLA

Many of the elements of ancient cante andaluz were to serve as motifs in the works of maestro Manuel de Falla. These motifs, although difficult to prove by European standards have clearly defined the differences between the Ancient Music of Andalucia and impure, modern flamenco.<sup>1</sup>

### *DUENDE*

One of the elements of ancient cante andaluz which became a motif in Falla's works was the duende. Duende was one of the most important concepts of the Ancient Andalucian belief system. A mysterious power that could be felt but never seen, it existed in everything and was everywhere according to the ancient peoples of Andalucia.<sup>2</sup> Nothing in life took place or happened without the duende. It fully possessed the Soul and drew from the Soul that most profound expression of suffering and death known throughout Andalucia as "*The Tragic Myth.*"<sup>3</sup>

The outstanding characteristics of the duende were darkness and negativity. Associated with death and the unconscious mind, it sprang from the depths of the earth. The duende could never be summoned at will but when it was present, its force was fearful and compelling.<sup>4</sup> It was then the people of Andalucian would say "*Viva Dios!*" Dark and shuddering it demanded that each person climb the Tower of Perfection but only if he or she struggled with the duende.

In painting, the duende was represented through dark colours. In poetry, it was perceived as tragedy or death. In music it was expressed through the element of dissonance and black sounds. A clue to its presence, especially in Falla's music was that a particular passage was only written once. The passage itself was, in turn, totally dependent on how it was interpreted at a precise moment. The interpretation was not possible to repeat since it was in that "precise moment" that the interpreter had found something new or unprecedented because of the presence of the duende. Like a miracle, the duende brought freshness to the old and familiar and made it seem as if the old and mundane had suddenly been newly created.<sup>5</sup>

## *PENA NEGRA*

Andalucian pena negra was the expression of the dramatic struggle that took place over a period of centuries between the Andalucian Soul and the two civilizations, the Roman and the Phoenician, that had imposed themselves on Andalucia. It did not refer to melancholy or nostalgia.<sup>6</sup>

Pena negra was deeply rooted in the duende and expressed the Andalucian sense of suffering. It evoked the anguish of the heart and a deep sadness.<sup>7</sup> It was the terrible scream of the Soul as it remembered “dead generations.”<sup>8</sup> A poignant elegy for lost centuries, it was the Soul’s pathetic evocation to other moons and other winds. It was the precious stone of the sob, pried open and revealed. The voice became the river, upon which the tears of the Soul fell.<sup>9</sup>

Through all the anguish, one could still smile. Pena negra did not blind, it did not weep out of self pity. One knew the longing and deep love of pena negra even though Death was just behind the door.<sup>10</sup>

### *Romance de la Pena Negra*

*Cordoba.  
Lejana y sola.*

*Jaca negra, luna grande  
Y aceitunas en mi alforja.  
Aunque sepa los caminos  
Yo nunca llegare a Cordoba.*

*Por el llano, por el viento  
Jaca negra, luna roja.  
La muerte me esta mirando  
Desde los torres de Cordoba.*

*Ay! Que camino tan largo!  
Ay! Mi jaca valerosa!  
Ay! Que la muerte me espera,  
Antes de llegar a Cordoba!*

*Cordoba  
Lejana y sola.<sup>11</sup>*

Cordoba.  
Far off and lonely.

Black horse, big moon  
And olives in my saddle bag.  
Even though I know the road  
I'll never get to Cordoba.

Across the plain and through the wind,  
Black horse, red moon.  
Death is watching me  
From the towers of Cordoba.

Ay! How long the road!  
Ay! My valiant horse!  
Ay! Death awaits me  
Before I get to Cordoba!

Cordoba.  
Far off and lonely.<sup>12</sup>  
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