Paco de Lucía, *guitar*

Thursday and Friday, March 4–5, 8 pm, 2004
Zellerbach Hall

featuring
Israel Suarez Escobar, *percussion*
Alain Perez Rodriguez, *bass*
Enrique Heredia Carbonell, *cantore*
Herminia Borjas Gabarri, *vocals*
Victoria Santiago Borja, *vocals*

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

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

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

In 1959, de Lucía was awarded a special prize in the Jerez flamenco competition. Starting at age 14, he toured with the flamenco troupe of fabled dancer José Greco for three seasons. While on tour with Greco’s dance company in the United States, de Lucía met the great Sabicas, a guitarist whose name had become synonymous with flamenco in America. “I was a child when I met him,” recalls de Lucía. “He heard me play and basically said that for me to think I was just fooling around, and as it turns out I’m a ‘master.’ Some thought I was just fooling around, and as it turns out, my tombolero makes up much of today’s flamenco.”

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

Crew
Jose Cervera Cordoba, sound engineer
Keith Yetton, lighting designer
Jaime Jesus Arreglado Rodrigo, technician
Lourdes Gonzalez, tour manager

Booking
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