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2014

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
RIVERSIDE

Flamenco Capital: Tradition, Revolution and Renewal in Seville, Spain

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Music

by

Joshua Michael Brown

August 2014

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Jonathan Ritter, Chairperson  
Dr. Walter Aaron Clark  
Dr. Deborah A. Wong

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2014

The Dissertation of Joshua Michael Brown is approved:

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Committee Chairperson

University of California, Riverside  
2014

## **Acknowledgements**

There are so many people and organizations that helped make this dissertation possible. First, I would like to thank the members of my dissertation committee: Walter Clark, Deborah Wong and Jonathan Ritter. Throughout my time at UC Riverside, each of these professors provided me with encouragement, support, feedback and guidance that have helped me grow as a scholar, teacher, musician, community member and human being. Dr. Clark has taught me so much about music, history and Spain. His leadership and teaching styles have had a serious impact on my approaches to pedagogy, presentation and professionalism. Deborah Wong has consistently challenged me to become a better scholar and to think more deeply and critically about my work. I am grateful for her advice and teachings, and that she demanded excellence from me at every turn. Finally, Jonathan Ritter has been such a great advisor and mentor. His patience, kindness, humor and wisdom are all boundless. I admire Jonathan for so many reasons, and pattern myself after him in a number of ways. I consider myself very lucky for being able to work with these three remarkable individuals and scholars. Moreover, I look to them as models of distinction in the spheres of scholarship, musicianship and pedagogy.

I want to thank all of the organizations that have funded my research throughout the years: the UC Office of the President for the Dissertation Year Fellowship in 2014-15, the UC Riverside Center for Ideas and Society for a Humanities Graduate Student Research Grant in 2012-13, the Fulbright Institute of International Education in Spain (also known as Fulbright España) for a research grant in 2011-12, as well as the College

of the Humanities and Social Sciences at UCR for several travel grants. These institutions believed in my ideas and allowed for this research to develop and materialize.

I would also like to thank the Gluck Program for the Arts, which helped to fund me through five years of graduate study and research. The Gluck Program enabled me to connect with the local community in Riverside through outreach in schools and other venues. Christine Leapman and Shane Shukis are caring people that do a wonderful job of coordinating absolutely everything. Karen Wilson's impact on me has been profound. Her style, grace, wisdom and love permeate everything that she does and touch all of those around her. Karen helped me grow as a performer, scholar and public speaker.

I was extremely fortunate to be able to join a supportive community of graduate students in the music department at UCR. My colleagues and friends have been with me through all the ups and downs of grad school. It has been great working alongside Supeena Adler, Hannah Balcomb, William Beuche, Daniel Castro Pantoja, Tori Dalzell, Aaron Fruchtman, Loribeth Gregory and Jeff Beck, Martin Jaroszewicz, Erica Jones, Nana Kaneko, Neal Matherne, Matthew Neil, No.e Parker and Anas, Paula Propst, Popi Primadewi, Tony Rasmussen, Eileen Regullano, Jake Rekedal, Teresa Sanchez, Erica Siegel, Aaron Singer, Miles Shrewsbury, Russ Skelchy, Desmond Stevens, Robert Wahl, and Liz Wood. I especially want to thank Alexandra Anaya Green, Ron Conner, Alyson Payne, Gary Barnett, Kate Alexander and Taylor Greene for their love and support during this grueling process.

There are a number of graduate students from outside UCR's music department that also deserve mention here. I am indebted to Sarah Grant, Renzo Aroni, Jessie

Vallejo and Nolan Warden for their support, friendship and counsel. I continue to learn a great deal from Sarah, whose passions for knowledge and adventure are truly inspiring.

I am grateful for the teachings of UCR professors René T.A. Lysloff, Paul Ryer and Sally Ness. Professor Lysloff has supported my scholarly development from day one and continues to show me new ways of thinking about my research. Former UCR professor Renee Coloumbe was an incredible mentor who introduced me to the wide world of critical theory with unparalleled vivacity and vision.

As an undergraduate at UC Santa Barbara, Professor Scott Marcus introduced me to North Indian Classical music and the field of ethnomusicology. Scott is one of the most talented and caring people that I have ever known. Without his love and encouragement, I would never have made it this far. In addition, professors Timothy Cooley, Anthony McCann, Jay Carlander and David Lawyer inspired me to continue searching for questions and answers both inside and outside of books. I will always treasure my time with the late Professor Lawyer, who was a beacon of genius and fire that lifted me up in the classroom.

Seville feels like home because of all the wonderful friendships that I have forged there over the years. I do not even want to fathom where I would be or what I would have done without all of the following people. Alberto Aguilar and Cristina Rodríguez invited me into their home again and treated me like family. They also made the mistake of allowing me to participate in a serious game of *fútbol* with them. José Luis Cabezas Serrano and Reyes Velasco were technically my landlords, but they took care of me and I look up to them as my Andalusian parents. Together with their son, Luis Cabezas

Velasco, José Luis and Reyes took me in and made me feel at home. They were also quite supportive of my research and introduced me to a number of important artists, albums and ideas. I learned so much from my dear friends Jesús Sousa, Jesús Gotor, as well as Luis Ángel Hernández Nieto and Linda. I continue to treasure their friendships and marvel at the love that they showed me during my research year.

Although he was not there for most of my stay, I constantly felt Alberto Andrés Martínez Sánchez's presence in Seville. Alberto inspired me to pursue research in Andalusia and helped generate some of the foundational ideas for this dissertation. Moreover, Alberto is one of my biggest supporters and has provided invaluable assistance with grant applications, translations and much more. I am forever indebted to him and honored to call him one of my best friends.

Alicia Acuña is an amazing *cantaora* and teacher. She allowed me to sit in on *cante* classes even though my accompaniment skills were subpar. Alicia's strength can only be matched by her talent, generosity and love. Her parents, Aurelia and Blas, were helpful and always willing to recount stories to me regarding the history of their *peña* and Seville at large. José Antonio Jiménez Berenguer, the final president of Peña Pies Plomo, consistently went out of his way to assist me and make me feel welcome. I learned a great deal about the local flamenco community in Seville from Pepe.

Several other individuals in Spain were helpful in the course of my research including Curro Aix, Juan Vergillos, Estela Zatanía, Alicia González, Manuel Macías, Raúl Rodríguez, Manuel Flores, Juan del Gastor, José Padilla, Francisco Águilar Gamero and Jesús Cosano. Curro is a brilliant scholar and friend who inspires me with his



activism and always makes me laugh. Estela was always willing to answer my questions and her first-hand knowledge of flamenco performance, culture and history is extraordinary. Juan Vergillos continues to teach me about Spain and flamenco, and his generosity was overwhelming.

In the United States, I was lucky to be able to consult with Brook Zern, Pablo Shalmy, Steve Kahn, Tao Ruspoli, Evan Harrar and Mica Graña. Tao's films *Flamenco: A Personal Journey* (2005) and *Manuel* (2013) were revealing and helped me learn what flamenco means to people in Andalusia. Although highly suspect of academics in general, Steve Kahn and Brook Zern shared their experiences in and feelings about flamenco with me quite freely. I am grateful to them for their encouragement, candor and friendship throughout this project.

I also want to give thanks to my wonderful friends and mentors. Jerry Kay's generosity and love is unbelievable and I am so thankful for his friendship. Beau Flasher, Jason Pinsker, Tadj Correia and Courtney Gordon are great friends that have kept me sane through grad school. Mentors that nurtured my intellectual world outside of the university include George Winard, Margarita Talavera, Michael Melton, Ed Pearl and my grandfather, Samuel Brown. Margarita brought me to Spain for the first time and helped spark my love for and interest in her native country. David Ferguson, Ali Akbar Khansahib and Edward Jaxon are my musical mentors, three individuals that taught me how to listen and be one with sound.

Finally, I must thank all of the members of my family (including the McCormicks) for their endless support and love. My mother, Mary Ett Brown, has

always encouraged me in my musical and educational pursuits. She consistently pushed me to be the best that I could be, and that is one of the main reasons that I have been successful. My father, Jonathan Brown, fostered my love for music and fretted instruments. He also taught me the value of hard work, practice and patience. My partner, Hallie McCormick, has been my rock for close to four years now. More than anyone else, she has been there on the brightest days and during the darkest hours. The journey to complete this dissertation has taken its toll on both of us, and she deserves all the credit in the world for both putting up with and believing in me. Hallie's love has sustained me and allowed this project to come to fruition.

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of:  
Paco de Lucía (Francisco Sánchez Gómez, 1946-2014),  
Niño Miguel (Miguel Vega de la Cruz, 1952-2013)  
and Moraíto Chico (Manuel Moreno Junquera, 1956-2011)

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Flamenco Capital: Tradition, Revolution and Renewal in Seville, Spain

by

Joshua Michael Brown

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Music  
University of California, Riverside, August 2014  
Dr. Jonathan Ritter, Chairperson

In this dissertation, I explore how flamenco performance models intimacy and solidarity in Andalusian communities based in Seville and Morón de la Frontera. The adaptability of flamenco performance underscores the inherent decision-making that goes into determining which physically, socially and affectively constructed environments are appropriate, if not ideal, for making music. Since expression within flamenco is largely based upon collective experience and reciprocal execution, the performance space constitutes a defining element of both social and sonic aesthetics. Drawing from ethnographic fieldwork, I look at how artists and communities are responding to pressing subjects that involve cultural patrimony and protection as well as political corruption and interference.

The first two chapters chronicle the maintenance and development of a flamenco guitar tradition in Morón that proliferated into the hands of international students beginning in the 1960s. I analyze how the introduction of recording and sound

reproduction technologies in Morón served to create new types of mobility that separate sounds from their original bodies and spaces of production and, in so doing, alter and blur the boundaries between public and private in communities of flamenco performers and listeners. Next, I focus on the work of twenty-first century flamenco group Son de la Frontera, who organized the music of Diego del Gastor into lush and varied arrangements. By tracing this music back through particular genealogies of listening, I reveal how the Morón style has become entangled in larger processes of countercultural and transnational encounters that converge and become audible through the work of Son de la Frontera.

In the final two chapters, I discuss how the recent encroachment of institutional capital and decree upon artists and venues has threatened, rather than supported, the local flamenco community in Seville. I demonstrate how members of this community are responding to these attacks through radical forms of performance protest. Highlighting the dangerous and deceptive elements of intangible cultural heritage, I interrogate the ways in which flamenco artists and community members continue to negotiate distinctions between public and private performance in an era of globalized media circulation, neoliberal economic regimes and complex localized structures of kinship and power.

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## Introduction

### *Situating Flamenco Performance*

Space is political and ideological. It is a product literally populated with ideologies. There is an ideology of space. Why? Because space...is a social product.

– Henri Lefebvre (2009 [1970]: 171)

*El lugar más flamenco no se ve, se oye. Suena a verde y a fuego, es un quejío que se desgrana al mediodía, como la calima. El flamenco es una forma de llorar, es un sentío, y su espacio es interior. No habita el mundo. Habita el alma.*

The space that is most *flamenco*<sup>1</sup> is not seen, but heard. It sounds like green<sup>2</sup> and fire; it is a cry that is released at midday like a mist. Flamenco is a form of crying, it is a feeling, and its space is inside. It does not inhabit the world. It inhabits the soul.

– Manao<sup>3</sup> (2011)

The fieldwork for this dissertation officially began during a pilot research trip to Seville in the summer of 2010. While I attended flamenco performances at a variety of venues, one particular concert on the south end of the city’s central promenade, known as the Alameda de Hércules, stands out in my memory. It was a free outdoor event designed to prepare audiences for the start of Seville’s Bienal de Flamenco, one of the largest and most popular flamenco festivals in the world.

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<sup>1</sup> I italicize this use of the word “flamenco” because it is used as a Spanish-language adjective. In this dissertation, there are several cases in which this word is used to signify people who play and enjoy this music (known singularly as “a *flamenco*” or plural as several “*flamencos*”). In these instances, the word will also be italicized. However, in the majority of cases, the word “flamenco” is used to refer to the musical genre, and will therefore remain unitalicized.

<sup>2</sup> This descriptor likely derives from the color of the Andalusian flag, which features two stripes of green with a white stripe in the middle. It may also refer to Andalusia’s land and natural environs.

<sup>3</sup> “Manao” is the username of an individual who provided the text above in response to an online survey that asked users to “define the place that is the most *flamenco*” (“*Define el lugar más flamenco*”). The results can be found here: <http://lacomunidad.elpais.com/por-bloguerias/2011/8/2/tu-lugar-mas-flamenco>

A long list of artists was scheduled to perform, so each individual or group was limited to two or three pieces. First, I was struck by how almost every guitarist played *falsestas*, or melodic fragments, that were composed by other well-known artists, including Niño Miguel and Paco de Lucía. Rather than being viewed as inauthentic or unimaginative, however, these practices operate as forms of enacting tribute. Through these sounds, the performers located themselves in relation to other artists, families and places of origin. The knowledgeable listeners in the crowd that were able to identify these sections often replied with shouts of *jaleo*<sup>4</sup> to indicate that they understood and endorsed the connections that were being drawn through performance.

In addition, at the end of each group performance, the artists stood up and conspicuously moved the microphones out of their way in order to perform in a more relaxed fashion. It became clear to me that this so-called *fin de fiesta*, or “*fiesta ending*,” was a form of simultaneously modeling, enacting and imagining intimate and informal settings for flamenco performance. After looking into this phenomenon further, I learned that flamenco concerts, whether staged in local bars that hold forty people or theatres that hold four hundred, typically conclude with a *bulerías por fiesta* in which performers abandon the microphones, stand up, and move to the front of the stage. Such finales act as a symbolic return to casual, and what are often considered utopic, flamenco gatherings that include private *fiestas*. But why are smaller, informal performance contexts idealized in flamenco circles? How are these settings related to ethnic and class identities? Moreover, how did specific performance spaces and contexts become

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<sup>4</sup> In the glossary, I define *jaleo* as “loud shouts of encouragement that are an essential part of flamenco performance, especially in *fiestas* and small gatherings.”

synonymous with the qualities of social relationships? And how is this valorization of and fetishization for the private sphere articulated outside of musical performance within local flamenco communities?

In this dissertation, I examine how flamenco performance models intimacy and solidarity in Andalusian communities, as well as how sound and video recording technologies blur the boundaries between public and private performance. I argue that the qualities of social relations produced and enhanced in musical performance are as important, if not more important, than the sounds that they generate. Although many of the nuances of flamenco performance, as well as ethnic and geographic identity, are unique to the peoples of Andalusia and Spain, the issues that they contend with, including the legacies of dictatorship, slavery,<sup>5</sup> patriarchy and poverty, regrettably speak to a much broader audience. At the same time, I look at how artists and communities are responding to other pressing subjects that involve cultural patrimony and protection as well as political and fiscal corruption and interference. Lastly, I interrogate the ways in which flamenco artists and community members continue to negotiate distinctions between public and private performance in an era of globalized media circulation, neoliberal economic regimes, and complex localized structures of kinship and power.

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<sup>5</sup> In this instance, I am referring to the mass exploitation of Andalusia's landless peasants by the nobility. The systematic oppression faced by rural workers for most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Andalusia is eerily similar to the system of sharecropping enacted in the southern United States following the American Civil War.

### *Flamenco Conditions and Contexts*

Flamenco is an umbrella term that refers to numerous song and dance forms that coalesced in the mid-nineteenth century and remained a product of the Andalusian underclasses until roughly the 1970s. Although audiences have included members of the upper classes since the late nineteenth century, flamenco was most closely associated with marginalized spaces and groups: brothels, Gypsies,<sup>6</sup> prostitutes, alcoholics. During the reign of dictator Francisco Franco (1936-1975), signs in bars often proclaimed, “*Se prohíbe el cante,*” or “Flamenco singing is prohibited here,” as a measure to keep out undesirables. Today, these signs stand as a testament to the outright rejection of flamenco in the public sphere as well as an insistent denial of its value.



**Figure I.1 A sign prohibiting singing in Seville’s oldest bar, El Rinconcillo (Photo by and courtesy of Steve Kahn)**

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<sup>6</sup> In this instance, I use the term “Gypsies” because it is commonly deployed as an exotic symbol of Spain and flamenco. I explain my subsequent avoidance of this term in the following

While flamenco artists appeared in concert halls outside Spain by 1951, it was not until Paco de Lucía's performance at Madrid's Royal Theatre in 1975 that flamenco was allowed to enter formal and prestigious concert spaces within the country. On this occasion, de Lucía's performance was a solo guitar recital tailored to fit the stage. Thus, flamenco has developed dually as a hermetic art form and a fairly lucrative public spectacle. Tensions between public and private, spontaneous and choreographed, commercial and non-commercial, as well as Gitano<sup>7</sup> and non-Gitano, formations invigorate debates regarding authenticity, quality and tradition in flamenco communities.



**Figure I.2 Album cover from Paco de Lucía's *En Vivo desde el Teatro Real***

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<sup>7</sup> Throughout this dissertation I refer to Andalusian Gypsies as Gitanos. I chose to make this distinction for several reasons. First, the word "Gypsy" is a loaded term that refers to all of the peoples in Europe (and elsewhere) who descended over six centuries ago from Rajasthan, a province in northwestern India. The word "Gitano" is a Spanish-language term, which specifies that the Gypsies mentioned here live in Spain. Moreover, this is a term of self-identification for Gypsies in Andalusia and Spain. Finally, I capitalize the word "Gitano" because the population that it denotes has long been excluded from nationalist discourses and representations within Spain. As a result, this population identifies much more strongly with ethnic, as opposed to national, affiliations.



Flamenco itself is a highly mobile expressive form in which the body is the only requisite instrument. In addition to singing, performers maintain and improvise upon various interlocking rhythms by rapping knuckles, snapping fingers, stomping feet, clapping hands and slapping thighs, heels and chests. While instruments including the guitar and the *cajón*, or box drum, have become integral to the repertory, they are by no means indispensable.

The adaptability of flamenco performance underscores the inherent decision-making, whether conscious or unconscious, that goes into determining which physically, socially and affectively constructed environments are appropriate, if not ideal, for making music. Since expression within flamenco is largely based upon collective experience and reciprocal execution, the performance space constitutes a defining element of both social and sonic aesthetics. This music continues to be defined by a sense of familiarity with faces, places, verses and rhythms. For instance, many performers adopt the name of their city or neighborhood as their artistic surname. Others inherit names from members of their family, as in the case of Niño Ricardo (Manuel Serrapí), or monikers referencing their favorite foods.<sup>8</sup> In this way, flamenco is an intimate art that relies upon performative reciprocity, or what Lidia Rueda Gutiérrez, one of my informants, refers to as “camaraderie of complicity.” I use this expression as a way of describing how

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<sup>8</sup> Serrapí earned the nickname “Niño Ricardo” because he was the son of Ricardo, or “*el niño de Ricardo*.” Similarly, Francisco Sánchez Gómez chose the stage name “Paco de Lucía” to distinguish himself from all of the other Pacos and to honor his mother, Lucía. Agustín Castellón Campos became known as “Sabicas” because of his childhood fondness for little string beans, called “*habicas*.” As a child, he was referred to as “*el niño de esas habicas*” (or “the kid who liked the little beans”), which was eventually shortened to just “Sabicas.” Spanish-speakers from outside of Spain often find it strangely amusing that extraordinary flamenco artists go by nicknames like “Tomatito” (“The Little Tomato”) and “Camarón” (“Shrimp”). For more information on nicknames in flamenco, see López Rodríguez (1997).

flamenco music is not performed so much as it is experienced collectively and executed reciprocally in Andalusia. For these reasons, flamenco is often enacted in private parties and semi-public spaces.

In the past thirty years, however, flamenco has become extremely popular among non-Spaniards and, therefore, increasingly profitable for Spanish artists and businesses. As a result, local and regional governments in Andalusia have devoted increasing amounts of money and publicity to marketing this music at home and abroad. Indeed, many flamenco artists have moved conspicuously out of private spaces and into the public eye.

While numerous communities in Andalusia retain connections to the style and culture of *flamenco casero*, or homemade flamenco, increased levels of professionalization and institutionalization in recent decades have inevitably removed this art from many of the region's barrios and taverns. For many Gitanos in Andalusia, flamenco is viewed as an inheritance and, therefore, the rupture between flamenco music and community life is not only perceived as bothersome, but as an abomination.

On the other hand many of flamenco's best-known artists, including, most notably, Paco de Lucía, have worked tirelessly to achieve respect for flamenco in elite and cosmopolitan musical centers around the world. The distinguished flamenco guitarist and composer Juan Manuel Cañizares, for example, responded thusly when asked about the professionalization of his instrument:

Flamenco is a cultured music and it should be seen as such. It can't continue to be associated with nightlife, taverns and partying. It should be taken seriously, professionally. (interview by esflamenco.com, 2007)

Since Cañizares is primarily interested in elevating the status and expanding the vocabulary of the flamenco guitar, he sees the *fiesta* as a hindrance to further musical development.

In recent years, guitarists like Dennis Koster and Grisha Goryachev<sup>9</sup> have interpreted flamenco guitar pieces in a classical concert style. These performers play through-composed works by Paco de Lucía, Manolo Sanlúcar, Ramón Montoya and Sabicas, thereby bringing attention to the compositional brilliance of Spain's great flamenco guitar players. By playing flamenco guitar pieces note-for-note Koster and Goryachev not only identify de Lucía, Sanlúcar and others as composers, but also contradict this musical culture's strong emphases on improvisation, originality and the cultivation of distinct musical voices.<sup>10</sup>

As Brook Zern's quote at the opening of the following chapter suggests, ritual and theatrical, or concert, flamenco are often worlds apart. Moreover, this divide is driven by and highly representative of generational and racial differences in Andalusia and across Spain. Part of the reason that these divisions persist so powerfully is that all sides claim to represent *flamenco de verdad*, or "true flamenco." Andalusian artists and aficionados

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<sup>9</sup> Goryachev is a virtuosic classical and flamenco guitarist from Russia who was granted United States citizenship with the help of Paco de Lucía. Goryachev has released several albums in tribute to masters of the flamenco guitar that include Sabicas and Manolo Sanlúcar.

<sup>10</sup> While flamenco guitarists in Andalusia often learn entire compositions by celebrated artists like Niño Ricardo and Paco de Lucía, they rarely perform these pieces on stage or in recordings. Rather, they will limit public performances of other artists' work to a small number of *falsetas*. Naturally, there are a number of exceptions, including Paco de Lucía's early performances of Mario Escudero's composition in *bulerías*, entitled "Ímpetu." Esteban de Sanlúcar's "Panaderos Flamencos" is another example of a standard piece within the flamenco guitar repertoire. The creative and compositional genius of guitarists like Paco de Lucía, Mario Escudero, Victor Monge "Serranito," Sabicas, Ramón Montoya and Niño Ricardo, among others, has provided recent generations of guitarists with a vast set of works to study and learn from.

often refer to flamenco as “*algo nuestro*,” meaning “something of ours.” With so many distinctive visions about what flamenco is and should be, as well as who accurately interprets and embodies the musical cultures that fall under this label, these issues of ownership and representation are entirely inevitable. It is my contention that notions of, including feelings and values connected to, local sites, settings and performance spaces in Andalusia imbue artists and community members with a sense of self and purpose that thoroughly informs flamenco performance and listening practices. Performance spaces and the social relations that they both generate and represent are brought into being through sound. In addition, the individuals that have inhabited these spaces in unique and meaningful ways, most often through sonic and corporeal performance, leave their mark on locality and song in a cumulative fashion. For all of these reasons, I utilize ethnomusicologist Lila Ellen Gray’s concept of “cumulative listening” to draw out the ways in which flamenco artists utilize sedimented performance practices and shared sonic resources, including *falsetas and palos* (2013: 156).

Flamenco is based on a group of basic song forms known as *palos*, or *cantes*, that provide harmonic, melodic, rhythmic and poetic structures for artists to follow. Such structures in flamenco give rise to endless exchanges in which temporalities converge and traditional modes of expression are accentuated and maintained. The standard repertoire is comprised of about a dozen familiar *cantes* that include *bulerías*, *soleares*, *alegrías* and *fandangos*. *Palos* are distinguished by their places of origin and leading interpreters. For example, *malagueñas* come from the city of Málaga while *granaínas* are derived from the city of Granada. Likewise, a singer may announce that she is going to perform a

*soleá* from Alcalá, which would suggest that she would set the lyrics to a *soleá* melody from the Andalusian pueblo of Alcalá de Guadaíra. In this way, flamenco engages in continuous dialogues with peoples, places and practices from both past and present. Performing traditional material situates flamenco artists among their forebears and also serves as a clearly defined form of representing and recreating the past in the present.

### ***Spanish and Andalusian Histories***

Flamenco is generally believed to have coalesced in the middle of the nineteenth century. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this musical culture traveled from predominantly private spaces, including isolated homes and parties, to *cafés cantantes* (or singing cafés) attended by wealthy *señoritos* (male landowners and members of the upper class). There, it was showcased as a form of colorful and erotic entertainment. Although this period brought flamenco into the popular sphere, it is commonly referred to as a period in which the music “lost its way.”

In order to preserve what they considered to be both regional and national heritage, the Spanish poet Federico García Lorca and composer Manuel de Falla organized the very first *Concurso de Cante Jondo* (*Cante Jondo* Competition) in 1922. *Cante jondo* was considered to be the oldest and most serious form of flamenco singing and is often performed without instrumental accompaniment. Falla had concrete ideas about how *cante jondo* should (and should not) be performed. He asserted, “One should remember that an essential quality of pure Andalusian *cante* is to avoid any imitation of a concert or theatrical style and one must bear in mind that a competitor is not a singer but

a *cantaor*” (Armero 1999: 161). This quotation is indicative of the enduring desire of Andalusian aficionados to protect flamenco from what they see as corruptive elements and environments.

In the mid-twentieth century, flamenco aficionados began opening *peñas*, or social clubs, to recreate the atmosphere of privacy that had previously characterized flamenco spaces. In his dissertation, “Gendered Authenticity: The Invention of Flamenco Tradition in Seville,” anthropologist Timothy Malefyt investigates the difference between flamenco culture’s public and private spaces. Many aficionados conveyed to him that “true” or “pure” flamenco was experienced only in private and personal venues, such as homes and *peñas*. Malefyt writes, “Private stands for solidarity and equality, while public stands for hierarchy and inequality” (1997: 81). The distinction between private and public in flamenco is interchangeable with several other binaries that include: traditional and commercial, pure and impure, as well as Gitano and *payo*, or non-Gypsy. While these dualities undeniably represent simplified models of meanings and values in Andalusian flamenco culture, such dichotomies are still at the heart of many discourses regarding quality and ownership within flamenco communities. Such divides represent a long and tangled history of the exoticization and politicization of flamenco.

For nearly two hundred years, non-Spaniards have identified flamenco and its precursors<sup>11</sup> as *the* definitive symbols of Spanishness. During the Napoleonic era, the exotic image of the “dancing *gitana*” (dancing gypsy) was established, which represented Andalusia and, by extension, the entire Spanish nation (Charnon-Deutsch 2002: 31).

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<sup>11</sup> These include Gitano songs and dances from the early nineteenth century.

Likewise, Granada, the last bastion of Moorish Spain, entered the French consciousness as a symbol of a Spain neither “European in origin” nor “Christian in religion” (Parakilas 1998: 145). Spanish culture experienced Orientalism on two fronts: as a European Catholic culture that subjugated a fundamental part of its historical identity (during the age of reconquest and the Inquisition) and saw the Gypsies as the cultural and political other, and as a “mirror of oriental culture constructed by other Europeans” (Colmeiro 2002: 129). Operas and novellas, including Prosper Mérimée’s infamous *Carmen*, capitalized on Spain’s perceived Orientalness and, as a result, Gitanos in Andalusia became internationally recognized as a foreign and mysterious other. All of these elements and referents of exotic imagery served to create a unified representation of Spanish identity that continues to have serious effects on the ways that cultural values are assigned to flamenco in Spain. Today, these images remain fixed in the global, as well as Spain’s national, imaginary. For example, a poll from the European Union in 1997 revealed that twenty percent of the people surveyed regarded Spain as an “oriental nation” (Pulido 1997).

The abovementioned use of the term “orient” refers to the place of one of Europe’s “deepest and most recurring images of the Other”: the Middle East (Said 1978: 1). Muslims from northern Africa<sup>12</sup> controlled parts of the Iberian Peninsula for over seven hundred years, and this fact remains firmly embedded in the European imagination today. In *Orientalism*, Edward Said explains how European selfhood and nationhood were developed vis-à-vis constructions of otherness located in neighboring lands,

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<sup>12</sup> Also known as Moors during the conquest of the Iberian Peninsula.

including Egypt and Turkey. In Europe, these areas were cast as objects of colonial desire and popular fascination. The historically rooted presence of Gypsies and Moors in Spain, and chiefly Andalusia, has come to define the identities and representations attributed to these regions by the rest of the Western world. What sets Spain apart from other exotic subjects, however, is that it belongs to the West and, at one time, was the world's leading colonial power.



**Figure I.3 Regional Map of Spain (©2012 Europemaps.info)**

Exoticist renderings of flamenco inadvertently deny its complexity and depth by characterizing it in unsophisticated, and often demeaning, terms. At the same time,



however, such depictions have served to popularize the form outside of Andalusia, thus providing artists with foundational images from which to articulate meaning. The dissemination of flamenco imagery also creates a significant tourist demand for “authentic” musical and dance performance. As a result, flamenco artists are provided with the opportunity to demarcate cross-cultural relations and define their culture performatively, albeit with certain conceptual limitations.

Andalusia has long been one of the poorest regions in Spain. Up until the late twentieth century, it was devoid of any industry and its economy was based almost entirely on rural farming. According to Francisco Entrena and Jesús Gómez-Mateos, Andalusia’s “present structural position originates mainly in the nineteenth century” (2000: 95). At that time, *latifundistas*, or owners of vast properties, took control of enormous stretches of Andalusian territory that had previously been owned by the Catholic Church.



**Figure I.4 Regional Map of Andalusia**

Many of these land-holdings have remained in the hands of the nobility until the present day. During the twentieth century, the *latifundistas* lived in Madrid while their lands went unused in the arid south. As late as 1994, 25.8 percent of Andalusia’s population was below the poverty threshold, while Spain’s national average for this category was at 19.4 percent (Entrena 2000: 101). The legacy of *latifundismo* in Andalusia prevented it from developing any type of economic infrastructure. These conditions contributed to the development of strong bonds of local and regional solidarity among Andalusians.

Following the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), underdevelopment in the Andalusian economy became even more acute. In order to bring the nation out of severe economic

depression during the 1950s and 60s, Spain's dictator, Francisco Franco (1892-1975), resorted to the promotion of international tourism. Even though Franco was a devout Catholic and proponent of Castilian<sup>13</sup> culture, he resorted to employing the long-established imagery of the orientalized Gitano to portray Spain as a cultural entity unified in its devotion to flamenco music.

By the middle of the twentieth century, Franco was working to create a national Spanish identity by presenting a brand of flamenco that was devoid of regional, namely Andalusian, associations. He excluded all forms of localized expression to facilitate the promotion of flamenco to the level of a unifying image and ideology. Thus, flamenco was utilized as an objectified form of national and international propaganda.

Not surprisingly, blacklists, threats of violence and, therefore, self-censorship prevented artists from explicitly communicating sentiments that were antagonistic to authorities during the Franco dictatorship. At this time, flamenco artists were often assumed to be communist sympathizers until they could prove otherwise. It was in this environment, plagued by intense fear and economic hardship, that not only was anti-authoritarian flamenco neutralized politically in the public sphere, but also it became increasingly important to be able to distinguish the character of and divisions between public and private spaces and gatherings in order to survive.

The association between flamenco and politics within the public sphere looms large in Andalusia's collective memory. Several generations of Spaniards still associate flamenco with Franco since his reign ended in 1975 and, as a result, many reject this art

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<sup>13</sup> This adjective refers to the nation's central region of Castile.

form in favor of rock and other popular styles. Furthermore, the country's swift transition to democracy in the early 1980s sparked drastic economic and cultural changes that made flamenco appear old-fashioned and, thus, obsolete.

### *Literature Review*

Although there is a significant amount of ethnographic literature dealing with life in Andalusia, including the works of Isidoro Moreno, David Gilmore, Jerome Mintz and J.A. Pitt-Rivers, there are very few ethnographies that deal with flamenco performance. Moreover, a vast majority of work that discusses flamenco is based on oral histories and historiographies. In the case of the former, authors often report what flamenco artists say, but rarely present a critical analysis of these accounts. This is not to discount the significance of oral histories, which have been fundamental in the study of flamenco music and culture, but rather to point out how many writers use these texts to lionize particular artists, ethnic groups and musical forms. I believe that this is largely the result of efforts by authors to afford marginalized figures and communities the ability to speak for themselves outside of musical performance.

Next, a number of scholars have approached flamenco historiographically, including Gerhard Steingress, José Manuel Gamboa and José Luis Ortiz Nuevo. Unlike many scholars in this field, my goal is not to trace flamenco from the nineteenth century to the present, but rather to outline the ways in which specific communities of artists and listeners construct, harness and identify with the sounds and movements of flamenco song and dance. To this end, the work of Loren Chuse, Peter Manuel, Timothy Malefyt,

Donn Pohren and William Washabaugh have been crucial in developing a nuanced understanding of flamenco.

Donn Pohren's flamenco trilogy, which includes *The Art of Flamenco* (1962), *Lives and Legends of Flamenco* (1964) and *A Way of Life* (1980), introduced North Americans to flamenco's myriad of forms, figures and landscapes when it was still an esoteric art form. Pohren's scholarship remains valuable today because it was based upon years of intense study and experience with flamenco culture and music. No English-language flamenco study has had the influence, or paid the attention to artistic detail, that Pohren's books did, either before or since. Each of his books is packed with strong opinions regarding flamenco's traditions, authenticity and transmission.

Pohren's ideology is steeped in an explicit rejection of commodification, and he consistently argued that true flamenco expression was only played at non-commercial venues, including house parties that are known as *juergas*. Although he was very knowledgeable about flamenco's history, Donn Pohren seemed oblivious to the fact that, over time, traditions are forced to change out of necessity. Traditions are created and re-created through an ongoing dialogue between "upholders of the past" and the spokespeople for both the present and future (Eyerman and Jamison 1998: 41). Pohren's conception of flamenco, however, did not allow for sufficient evolution or transformation. Rather, he preferred to work to preserve flamenco as he experienced it in and around the pueblo of Morón de la Frontera during the 1950s and 60s.

In the years since Pohren's writings, English-language academic literature pertaining to flamenco music has been very sparse. For example, there have only been

three articles on flamenco published in the entire catalog of the *Journal of the Society for Ethnomusicology*. Ethnomusicologist Peter Manuel has written two of these articles. In 1989, he discussed the connections between flamenco and the long-term oppression and marginalization of peoples, and especially Gitanos, in Andalusia. He contextualizes flamenco's various meanings in light of its exoticization and appropriation by Franco and others.

More recently (2010), Manuel wrote about the singularity of flamenco song forms and how they have spurred discussions about ownership and copyright in relation to popular music. As noted, flamenco is based on a group of basic song forms known as *palos*, or *cantes*, that provide harmonic, melodic, rhythmic and poetic structures for artists to follow. Manuel's article, entitled "Composition, Authorship, and Ownership in Flamenco Past and Present," calls for a larger discussion about flamenco's transition from a "traditional compositional form to a modern one" (Manuel 2010: 130). While Manuel's research is based on close readings of literature on flamenco, Spain and Gitanos, however, his work lacks the explanatory power that comes with ethnographic engagement.

In 1997, anthropologist William Washabaugh wrote the only other article on flamenco that was published in the *Ethnomusicology* journal. The material in this essay also featured prominently at the end of his book *Flamenco: Passion, Politics and Popular Culture* (1996). Washabaugh's work explores the contested nature of flamenco in both scholarly and performative worlds. He made a major contribution by arguing that the

bodies of flamenco artists function as sites of resistance and political expression.<sup>14</sup>

Although he proposes that flamenco performance should be studied through embodiment, his work is devoid of ethnography and based entirely on literary and cinematic sources.

In contrast, ethnomusicologist Loren Chuse's work draws deeply on ethnographic research to discuss flamenco in relation to historically situated gender identities. She interviewed a number of contemporary female artists and also visited archives in order to piece together narratives about female singers and guitarists from the turn of the twentieth century. Her book, entitled *Las Cantaoras: Music, Gender, and Identity in Flamenco Song*, is very useful because it is based on ethnographic research that contextualizes the subject matter in historical, cultural and scholarly terms.

Timothy Malefyt's dissertation proved critical in the development of my theoretical orientation because his work reveals the importance of space in flamenco performance. In his study, Malefyt explains how spaces are gendered in Andalusian society, with men occupying the unpredictable public realm and women inhabiting the secure private realm. His dissertation is one of the few texts on flamenco that is based upon long-term ethnographic fieldwork.

Finally, as an oral tradition that spans over two hundred years and incorporates sonic and corporeal features from a number of different ethnic groups in Andalusia, many of flamenco's origins cannot be concretely determined. The absence of a definitive history in flamenco leaves a discursive space that is open to unrestricted debate, speculation and doubt. Origin claims in flamenco are highly fraught with identity politics

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<sup>14</sup> I discuss these ideas at length in the final chapter of this dissertation.

and center on the Gitano character of particular practices and *cantes*. In *Mundo y Formas del Cante Flamenco* (or “The World and Forms of Flamenco Song”), authors Ricardo Molina and Antonio Mairena distinguish between Gitano and Andalusian song forms. These authors sought to credit who they viewed as the rightful authors and owners of flamenco, namely Gitanos. The Gitano population in Andalusia was long denied recognition for their role in the creation, as opposed to the preservation, of flamenco music. Molina and Mairena argued that flamenco belongs to Gitanos, and in the last twenty years there has been a scholarly backlash against this claim. Nevertheless, many Gitanos and non-Gitanos maintain that Gitano artists and communities possess special innate qualities that are conducive to more emotional and overpowering styles of flamenco performance and expression.

### ***Fieldwork and Methodology***

I lived and conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Seville from September 2011 until August of 2012. In the course of my research, I consulted local archives, attended dozens of concerts and classes, participated in the first International Flamenco Congress, and conducted interviews with a wide array of flamenco artists, aficionados, promoters and institutional administrators based in Seville, Jerez and Morón.

The majority of the performances that I attended happened at Seville’s two *peñas*: Peña Pies Plomo and Peña Torres Macarena. A *peña* is a social club where local community members gather to study, perform and experience flamenco music. These venues provided me with access to many important members of Seville’s flamenco



community that included teachers and performers, as well as promoters and journalists. In addition, I became a member of Pies Plomo and participated in group lessons as a vocal accompanist on the guitar. As I grew more familiar with the people and practices at Pies Plomo, I was able to contribute much more as a volunteer and musician. For example, clapping out the *compás*, or rhythm, while other people sang or played guitar was an important way of integrating myself into this community.

Throughout the course of my fieldwork, I took guitar, *cante*, dance and *compás* lessons from a wide range of teachers. This enabled me to access a variety of different ideologies and approaches to flamenco performance that crossed ethnic, generational, and geographic boundaries.

I also attended institutional functions, including the first International Flamenco Congress and a conference on flamenco research. At the former event, I met a number of scholars and *aficionados* that helped me appreciate how local flamenco communities relate to tourism and flamenco's inscription onto UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. I quickly learned, for example, how official statements and government-sponsored publications contrasted significantly with the grim realities of artists and *aficionados* in Andalusia.

Throughout my time in Andalusia, the local population seemed to be living in a constant state of despair due to the severe economic downturn that began in the fall of 2008. Most of my friends and neighbors were out of work, several of whom relocated to find employment in places as far away as Germany and Ecuador. Faith in Spain's democratic systems and processes, which were established in the wake of Franco's death,

was waning to a point of no return. In the second half of this dissertation, I chronicle how *flamencos* in Seville respond to these conditions through direct action, including performance.

Finally, I visited both Morón and Berkeley, California, in order to interview and spend time with followers of the *toque*, or guitar style, created by Diego del Gastor. In the summer of 2012, I stayed in Morón to attend the Gazpacho Festival of flamenco and meet with several of Gastor's descendants. Upon my return to the United States, I interviewed several key U.S. members of Morón's international flamenco community in California, including Steve Kahn, Brook Zern and Evan Harrar.

### ***Case Studies***

In the first two chapters, I examine a unique flamenco guitar tradition in a town outside Seville known as Morón de la Frontera. Donn Pohren's literature inspired many Americans to visit this locale in order to experience flamenco with the artists that he profiled, including Fernandillo de Morón and Diego del Gastor. A small number of American expatriates have dedicated their lives to documenting and mastering the style of flamenco guitar performance that originates in Morón. Chris and Maureen Carnes, who became great friends of Diego del Gastor, recorded hundreds of hours of performances in *fiestas* and individual lessons onto reel-to-reel tapes. Drawing from R. Murray Schafer's concept of schizophonia, and anthropologist Steven Feld's elucidation of this idea in 1996, I look at how the separation of sounds from their initial contexts impacted local practices and power relations in Morón.

The American connection to Morón was launched prior to Pohren's arrival, however, with the establishment of a United States Air Base there in 1953. After the end of the Second World War, Franco gradually opened up Spain to foreign interests in order to establish cordial relations with the West and generate additional revenues. In doing so, he hoped to maintain a semblance of economic and political stability domestically (Crumbaugh 2009: 4). As an avowed anti-communist regime, Franco's government used the developing Cold War as an opportunity to gain diplomatic endorsement and financial support from the United States.<sup>15</sup>

In chapter two, I discuss how Diego's *toque* is interpreted and maintained today by younger generations of musicians, including many of del Gastor's great-nephews. I focus on the work of a flamenco group known as Son de la Frontera, who organized Diego's *falsetas* into lush arrangements with the addition of a Cuban *tres*. I utilize Steven Feld's notion of acoustemology, from his recent volume *Jazz Cosmopolitanism in Accra* (2012), in order to illustrate how the enactment of disparate intimacies through sound is capable of threatening existing bonds between communities of flamenco performers and listeners. By drawing on influences from Cuba and Latin America, Son de la Frontera deviates from what is widely considered to be a "pure" style of flamenco. Moreover, the group's *tres* player, Raúl Rodríguez, brought a rock sensibility to the

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<sup>15</sup> In 1953, both nations signed the Pact of Madrid, which allowed the United States to establish a military presence within Spain's borders in exchange for substantial economic assistance. According to Eric Solstena and Sandra W. Meditz's study on Spain, the United States supplied Franco's government with \$1.5 billion over the first ten years of this pact (1988). As a result of these developments Franco was accepted and supported by the international community, which allowed him to maintain control at home. At the same time, however, it opened Spain up to foreign influences, including tourists and American military service members, which would slowly undermine Franco's authority and eventually allow for a bloodless transition from his dictatorship to a full-fledged democracy.

group that was connected to Seville's Underground scene in the late 1960s and 1970s. This subculture was precipitated by the arrival of American soldiers, hallucinogenic drugs and rock records to Morón.

In chapters three and four, I return to Seville to discuss how communities of artists and *aficionados* are responding to institutional, including governmental, claims to the ownership and protection of flamenco. As I mentioned previously, the fight over who owns, or has the right to perform, flamenco is always up for debate. In November of 2010, UNESCO declared flamenco to be Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This pronouncement was based upon the idea that flamenco is in danger of extinction, and therefore requires institutional protection. I contend, however, that this title is more closely related to and reflective of commercial interests than the needs of local artists and communities.

In 2004, for example, flamenco tourists generated 543.96 million euros, which amounted to 3.8 percent of Andalusia's annual tourist revenue (Consejería de Turismo, 2004).<sup>16</sup> An estimated 626,000 people visited Andalusia in 2004 with the primary motivation of experiencing flamenco firsthand. Spain remains one of the leaders in international tourism, ranking fourth in international tourist arrivals and second in earnings for 2012 (UNWTO 2013). Naturally, these realities have led to an increasing

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<sup>16</sup> Andalusia generates billions of euros each year in tourist revenues from visitors that are attracted by the region's beaches, climate and culture. Moreover, Spain is the most popular destination country for the European Union's Erasmus student exchange program (European Commission, 2013). Seville is also consistently one of Erasmus' leading destinations and, as a result, the city is marked each year by the presence of international college students from September through June.

amount of productions in which Andalusian artists perform for international audiences and visitors.

The structural arrangements made for tourists inevitably alter local conceptions of traditional cultural formations. Many flamenco promoters, including the presidents of several *peñas*, have explained to me the importance of featuring dancers in order to attract tourists. In Seville's tourist office, nearly all of the flamenco advertisements feature silhouettes or photographs of female flamenco dancers with long, flowing dresses. Likewise, the sole flamenco museum in the city focuses exclusively on dance.<sup>17</sup> While dance is the most widely recognized and publicized aspect of flamenco, singing is considered to be its absolute heart and soul. Thus, flyers designed for *aficionados* almost always feature images of the contorted faces of *cantaores* in performance.

The UNESCO declaration has generated a great deal of publicity and led to many grandiose institutional functions, including the First International Flamenco Congress in November of 2011. This conference was divided into three panels: "flamenco as patrimony", "flamenco as cultural industry", and "flamenco and the mass media". In an ironic turn, a UNESCO representative threatened to revoke flamenco's inscription at this congress due to the Spanish government's failure to fulfill the organization's mandatory

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<sup>17</sup> The Museo de Baile Flamenco (Flamenco Dance Museum) in Seville perpetuates many forms of ethnic and chronological otherness in flamenco. In the first room of their exhibit on flamenco dance, for example, visitors are met with sounds of the Hindustani sitar and images of ancient mosaics. In his presentations, the museum's director, Kurt Grottsch, asserts that flamenco goes back thousands of years to the presence of the Phoenicians in Spain. Although ancient cultures in Iberia likely had a bearing on the civilizations and cultures that followed them, the notion that flamenco, as we know it today, dates back to these societies is far-fetched. As I mentioned previously, the scholarly consensus is that flamenco coalesced in the early to mid nineteenth century. Furthermore, after receiving millions of euros in subsidies from the local government and the European Union, the directors of this museum attempted to sell the institution in order to turn a profit for themselves. Not surprisingly, Seville's city hall blocked their efforts and made it clear that the museum belongs to the city government that funded its creation and development. This is just another reason why local residents have lost all faith in public institutions.

financial commitments. Although the petition for UNESCO recognition was widely supported by flamenco artists and organizations in 2009, this was partly a response to UNESCO's original rejection of flamenco's candidacy in 2006. Moreover, opposition to the proposal was considered tantamount to denying flamenco's significance as a valid art form on the world stage.

Today, many artists and *aficionados* are disillusioned with the declaration because they feel that it expands and consolidates the flamenco industry, including the wealth and fame of major artists and companies, at the expense of diverse performance and pedagogical opportunities. José Padilla, the current president of Peña Torres Macarena, asserted that the UNESCO declaration was merely a self-congratulatory measure “by and for politicians.” While UNESCO's stated aims included the “safeguarding and dissemination” of flamenco, award-winning journalist and author Estela Zatanía maintains, “The current policy of ‘flamenco industry’ does not consider the value of anything that does not generate revenue or stimulate tourism” (Zatanía 2012).

In chapter three, I look at how flamenco *peñas* are geared towards a wide variety of performance styles and contexts. These venues, which are non-commercial entities, provide aspiring artists with a means to hone their talents and learn from their elders. I focus on the life of *peñas* Torres Macarena and Pies Plomo in order to explore how shades of public and private performance and social life combine in a number of remarkable ways. In spite of the UNESCO declaration and the Andalusian government's pledge to protect flamenco, *peñas* are currently fighting for the right to stage performances and merely survive. The economic crises have pushed these institutions to

the brink of existence, thereby converting many *aficionados* and performers into anti-authoritarian activists.

In the final chapter of this dissertation, I chronicle the work of an artistic collective that protests the corruption of Spain's banking system and government through flamenco performance. The group, known as Flo6x8, stages and video records performances of *cante* and *baile* in banks across Seville in order to draw attention to the culprits responsible for Spain's economic collapse. Flo6x8 posts videos of these actions on YouTube, where they have garnered millions of views from Internet users around the world. I discuss how Flo's work intersects with online video and flash mob cultures as well as the ways in which they violate longstanding patriarchal norms regarding space in Andalusia. Flo6x8 draws from the enduring symbols and associations of flamenco performance, while simultaneously highlighting its political utility and challenging notions of where and when it should happen.

Together, these studies point to the ways in which flamenco is promoted, performed and deployed to achieve a variety of different ends. Furthermore, they illustrate how performance practices are contested on a number of institutional, commercial and ideological fronts.

## Chapter One

### *Flamencos de la Frontera: Morón and the International “University of Flamenco”*

*¡El flamenco tiene que haberla [espontaneidad]! ¡Porque allí vive la pureza!*

Flamenco has to have [spontaneity]! Because that is where the purity lives!

– Juan del Gastor (interview, 5/31/12)

Every day, in virtually every country in the world, audiences are enraptured by brilliant professional flamenco *routines* burnished by years of meticulous rehearsal. Meanwhile, back at the ranch in the south of Spain, an odd agglomeration of 10 or 15 foreigners from Sweden, Japan, Italy and America wait patiently for the chance to see and hear flamenco of an entirely different sort. The ranch is Finca Espartero, just outside of the town of Morón de la Frontera on the road from Seville to Ronda, and through some fluke these foreigners have come to care about flamenco as a *cultural* creation rather than a *theatrical* one, a *ritual* instead of a *spectacle*.

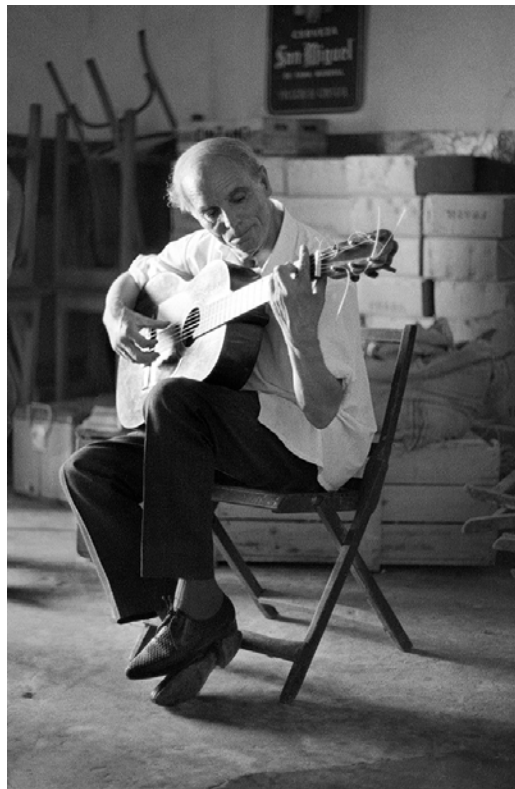
– Brook Zern (1972, emphasis added)

Forty miles outside of the Andalusian capital of Seville, there lies a small pueblo called Morón de la Frontera that is known to outsiders for three reasons: a United States Air Force base that was established there in 1953, the mining of high-quality *cal*, or limestone, and a rich lineage of local flamenco artists that spans back over one and a half centuries. Both of the latter elements are potent symbols of local and regional identity.

Morón de la Frontera has long been an important site in the history of flamenco because it has been home to many foundational figures in the history of the *cante* from the nineteenth century, including La Andonda, Tomás Vargas Juárez “El Nitri” and Silverio Franconetti Aguilar (1829-1889). Today, however, Morón is best known for its *toque*, or style of guitar playing.



In what follows, I examine a unique flamenco tradition from Morón that flourished in the mid-twentieth century and remains vibrant today. The architect of this tradition, known as “*el estilo de Morón*,” or the Morón style, was Diego del Gastor (1908-1973), a humble Gitano guitarist known as much for his distinct sound as for his unwillingness to perform or record for people outside of his social circles. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Diego often refused to enter into potentially exploitative relationships with upper-class patrons of flamenco, known colloquially (and often derogatively) as *señoritos*. While this stance deprived Diego and his kin of much-needed income, it also set an ideological precedent that remains one of the benchmarks of Morón flamenco.



**Figure 1.1 Diego del Gastor playing in Morón de la Frontera, ca. 1967  
(Photo courtesy of Steve Kahn, © David George)**

In the 1960s, U.S. Americans began to travel to Morón to study flamenco with Diego del Gastor. This owed, in large part, to the diffusion of English-language flamenco texts written by U.S. American expatriate, Donn Pohren (1929-2007). In this chapter, I consider how an exhaustive set of amateur audio recordings made by several of Diego's closest American students and friends has functioned variously as study material, community currency and, according to famed flamenco producer and archivist, Ricardo Pachón (b. 1937), a "paradigm of flamenco perfection" (Pachón 2011). In the essay "Pygmy POP," Steven Feld argues, "acts of schizophonic exchange simultaneously create powerful bonds and produce equally powerful divisions" (Feld 1996: 1). My aim here is to demonstrate how the "Morón *Fiesta* Tapes," as they have been labeled due to the overwhelming number of recordings from *fiestas*, not only generate new relationships and conflicts but also reveal tensions and dynamics already existing within the social sphere. I analyze how the introduction of recording and sound reproduction technologies in Morón served to create new types of mobility that separate sounds from their original bodies and spaces of production and, in so doing, alter and blur the boundaries between public and private in communities of flamenco performers and listeners. The myriad effects spawned by these recordings have led me to the following questions: What can the recordings' various circulative routes tell us about the musical community in question? How do they invert power relations between community members? And how have they both deepened and altered the mystique of Diego and his music? Drawing from ethnographic fieldwork conducted among members of this international flamenco

community, I will explore how these recordings invigorate, inform and instruct aficionados and disciples of the Morón style today.

In addition, I utilize this case study to approach and address the ways that flamenco is tied to specific ideas about race, place, class and social life that are pervasive throughout Andalusia. Such notions provide the ideological underpinnings for constructions of *pureza*, or purity, in flamenco performance. Moreover, these concepts are always formulated in relation to the past – particularly the belief that flamenco is diminishing in purity as time passes. Friends and acquaintances in Seville and Morón often told me that “*los mejores cantaores están muertos*” (“the best flamenco singers are dead”). This idealization of the past in flamenco communities stems from several positions and circumstances.

First, bonds between community members were unquestionably stronger during the Franco dictatorship because it was an extended period (1939-1975) that was defined by intense suffering. Widespread poverty in Andalusia actually made it possible for many of the greatest artists of the age to routinely convene for impromptu *fiestas* and local gatherings. Since flamenco artists were desperate for work, they had a great deal of free time and would perform whenever called upon. Moreover, experiences of agony and hardship are often seen as prerequisites for, and the crucial driving forces behind, powerful and inspired flamenco performances. Finally, the extensive and international professionalization of flamenco artists did not develop until years later.

Adherents to the Morón style are notorious for rigorous ideological and performative commitment to informal flamenco gatherings known as *fiestas* or “*juergas*.”

Diego's nephew Juan del Gastor (b. 1947) asserts, "[Spontaneity] is where the purity comes from! In flamenco, you have to take a risk!" Juan believes that the "risks" of improvisation typical of fiestas and informal gatherings are absolutely essential to flamenco performance. He explains:

If you're going to dance as a performer and you always do the same thing, the same thing, the same thing...When you go to work and dance, it's cold! There is no feeling! You are not risking anything! You don't risk anything because you have everything planned out. (interview, 5/31/12)

Improvisation, inspiration, and sincerity are intimately linked in flamenco expression.

The *desire* to sing, play or dance, then, is considered to be of utmost importance. Manuel Flores,<sup>1</sup> a well-known singer and dancer from Morón, elaborates:

Flamenco is as unique and as spontaneous as people want it to be. If people don't have the urge to sing, then there is no flamenco. If people do have the urge to sing, there is flamenco. The best of flamenco is when you really feel that which you are hearing. This is the reality of flamenco. (interview, 8/4/12)

Flores associates quality flamenco with group unity and individual desire. Natural impulses to sing and participate in collective music-making are expected to be stronger and purer, or "*mas puro*," in situations where social bonds are deeper.

Throughout this chapter, I will reveal how the intensely local and intimate character of Morón flamenco has been alternately challenged and altered by technological advances (especially sound reproduction technologies) and societal changes, as well as adopted and championed by a host of foreign aficionados and guitarists. The now longstanding international quality of this flamenco tradition presents cultural actors with a multitude of opportunities as well as limitations that reveal a number of different

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<sup>1</sup> Flores was part of the flamenco group Son de la Frontera, whose work I discuss in chapter two.

pressures, desires, prejudices, ideologies and sources of power. Furthermore, I will consider how the U.S. American contingent in particular has shaped the ways in which Morón is represented and remembered, both in Spain and abroad. Finally, it is my hope that this study will point to new modes of thinking about how locality and intimacy are established, modeled and evoked through sound.

### ***An International Flamenco Fiesta***

On a warm summer evening in 2012, I walked past a number of bars and small shops along Seville's bumpy cobblestone streets in order to attend a *fiesta flamenca*, or informal flamenco gathering, at Juan del Gastor's residence on Calle Pedro Miguel. Juan is an incredibly talented singer, dancer and guitar player who belongs to a well-known Gitano family of flamenco artists from Morón de la Frontera. Often when I enter the front door at Juan's apartment house for a guitar lesson, he greets me with a giant hug and a warm handshake. Tonight was no different, only there were many other students also arriving for a group lesson.

Since arriving in the fall of 2011, I attended several of these *fiestas*, which Juan's wife, Luci, worked to organize in their home. For a small "entrance fee," each student could partake in the musical and gastronomic proceedings. On this night, a total of nine students showed up and, after exchanging pleasantries, we promptly followed Juan out to his small studio. This workspace is replete with the standard features of a flamenco dance studio, including hardwood flooring and wall mirrors that allow students to immediately observe and make adjustments to their postures and movements. Juan's

studio is also decorated with photographs of friends and family, including shots of domestic gatherings as well as both formal and informal flamenco performances. Eight of the nine students (including myself) were *extranjeros*, or foreigners, from countries that included Japan, Canada, Germany and Holland.



**Figure 1.2 Juan del Gastor plays for a *fiesta* lesson on July 27, 2012**

Juan accompanied all of us on guitar, directing us to sing a lively *bulerías* with him after he introduced us to the *letras*, or lyrics, and their respective melodies. Since all of the students possessed varying levels of Spanish-language comprehension and experience, each of us pronounced the words a bit differently.<sup>2</sup> Some of the other students had difficulties pronouncing and understanding the *letras*, but all of us did our

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<sup>2</sup> The Andalusian dialect is even considered to be difficult to understand among Spaniards from outside of the region.

best to replicate Juan's phrasing and accents. Together, we sang in unison, jotting down the words as he recited them over and over.

<i>Estos son cosas del arte<sup>3</sup></i>	<i>These are things of art</i>
<i>Uds. lo vais a ver</i>	<i>You are all going to see</i>
<i>Tiro mi pañuelo al suelo</i>	<i>I throw my handkerchief on the ground</i>
<i>Y lo vuelvo a recoger</i>	<i>And then I pick it up</i>
<i>Y ya no lo tiro más</i>	<i>And I won't drop it anymore</i>
<i>Yo me voy con mi pañuelo</i>	<i>I follow my handkerchief</i>
<i>Donde me quiera llevar</i>	<i>Wherever it may take me</i>

These lyrics call attention to the ways that routinely improvised strategies of survival can be considered an art form. Flamenco artists have long been forced to scrape together a living and today that means taking their art across the globe to large metropolitan centers that include New York City, Paris, Mexico City and Tokyo.

Although certain passages in flamenco song call for group singing, *cantaores* usually take turns singing individually. In this case, each individual student was given the opportunity to dance inside of the group circle while all of the other participants sang and provided *jaleo*, or loud shouts of encouragement. In addition, Juan provided the dancer with a white handkerchief so that they could mimic the actions as they were described in the lyrics.

After going over five more sets of *letras*, Juan led us out to the patio between his apartment and the studio. Everyone chatted over platters of chorizo and *tortilla española*, or potato omelet, as well as several *litronas*, or one-liter bottles of beer. After making small talk with the other students, I listened intently to an interesting discussion developing between Juan del Gastor and the acclaimed flamenco journalist and author,

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<sup>3</sup> This *letra* comes from Fernandillo de Morón.

Juan Vergillos. Juan del Gastor was recounting many stories about his life as a flamenco artist during the dictatorship of Francisco Franco. Juan recalled how a man that had hired him for a gig avoided paying by perpetually saying that he would see him later. It has been well documented that *señoritos* often did their best to avoid paying artists for their labors.<sup>4</sup> Since this often occurred in small towns where people knew each other either by face or by name, withholding payment was often an explicit enactment of dominance over powerless and penniless artists. Juan del Gastor also told a story in which he was detained because of a policeman that operated under the assumption that he was a leftist. Juan declared, “I play the guitar and that is it. I have no opinion regarding right, left, up or down.” Since he was a flamenco artist, the police assumed that Juan was a communist. This assumption dates back to the era of Spain’s Second Republic when many flamenco performers aligned with leftist causes and ideologies. Such accounts illustrate the extent to which powerful individuals and institutions singled out flamenco artists for exploitation and harassment.

In one of the subsequent *letras* that Juan del Gastor taught us at this *fiesta* lesson, he sang,

<i>Soy gitano y no lo niego</i>	<i>I am Gitano and I don't deny it</i>
<i>Me falta a mi la alegría</i>	<i>I don't have any happiness</i>
<i>Me sobran a mí los dinero</i>	<i>But I have plenty of money</i>
<i>Que grande es la pena mía</i>	<i>My pain is so great</i>

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<sup>4</sup> For an example of the relationship between flamenco artists and *señoritos*, see Ortiz Nuevo 2012. In a version translated by John Moore, Ortiz Nuevo writes, “The custom of giving a *regalo* or ‘present’ was the way *señoritos* paid the artists. Nothing was agreed on beforehand, hence the artists had to try to do whatever they could to ensure a good ‘present’ at the end of the *fiesta*” (Ortiz Nuevo 2012: 2).



The first line of this *letra* demonstrates how Gitanos were denigrated and, therefore, expected to feel shame for their ethnic affiliation and heritage. When I asked Juan why he taught this *letra* to a group of non-Gitanos, he remarked, “The *cante*<sup>5</sup> is free [and open to popular interpretation].” In addition, Juan mentioned that he was the author of this particular *letra*, and so he could teach it to anyone of his choosing.

Several months before this fiesta, I spoke with Juan about *Gitanidad*, or Gypsiness, in flamenco and Andalusian society in general. He explained,

Look, when flamenco was flamenco, I’m talking about the flamenco of before...So, when I was a kid, nobody liked or appreciated Gitanos – neither Gitanos nor the art of flamenco – [these things] were disparaged. [People said] ‘Ooooh Gitano! How frightening, how scary! Oooh, I’m not Gitano.’ But flamenco changed and then a train known as flamenco arrived and brought money and everybody joined. And the entire world wants to be connected with Gitanos. (interview, 5/31/12)

Since both flamenco and Gitanos have long been associated with poverty, marginalization, crime and immorality, the wholesale acceptance and promotion of flamenco music, and by extension *Gitanidad*, seems highly suspect to artists and aficionados from Juan’s generation. Furthermore, when Juan mentions “the flamenco of before,” he is referring to a time and place in which flamenco performance was closely linked with quotidian life and communal solidarity. This style of performance is almost always associated with Gitanos and occurs most often in everyday lived environments. These spaces are converted into areas designed for prolonged periods of what ethnomusicologist Thomas Turino refers to as “participatory” music-making (2008).

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<sup>5</sup> In this instance, Juan is referring to both sung melodies and lyrics in flamenco.

Finally, Juan del Gastor is always weary of students recording his lessons and performances. On this evening, many of the students brought small audio recorders and so he begrudgingly allowed us to tape the proceedings. Juan's resistance to class recordings is undoubtedly linked to his upbringing in this oral tradition. Needless to say, Juan did not have to utilize any electronic devices to absorb the music and atmosphere that surrounded him in his native Morón. At the same time, he is very protective of his family tradition, the Morón *toque*, and fears that people will perform this music without acknowledging its authors and origins. After showing me a passage on the guitar in our private lessons together Juan occasionally reminded me, "*Si tocas esto pa alguien, tienes que decir de donde viene*" ("If you play this for anyone, you have to tell them where it comes from"). Juan often makes reference to his "*gente*," meaning people, and "*casa*," or home, to identify his family's *toque* and where it originates. These referents further illustrate the intimate nature of flamenco styles, traditions and practices.

Unfortunately, Juan's fears regarding sound reproduction have been confirmed in a number of different ways. Several weeks after the class described above, for example, I attended another *fiesta* lesson where Juan explained to me his opposition to class recordings. While he was touring Japan in 1999, Juan spotted a recording of one of his classes for sale in a record shop. The uncontrollable nature of sound recordings, including their reproduction and circulation, is what upsets Juan del Gastor. As a Gitano and life-long flamenco artist in Andalusia, Juan has a history of being marginalized and exploited. His greatest powers are derived from corporeal and musical performance that communicate who he is and where he comes from. Bootlegs and other amateur sound

recordings strip him of the ability to exert control over his family's tradition, including how it is transmitted and received. It is precisely the separation of corporeal performance from tradition and transmission that sound recordings create which contradicts the ethos of the Morón *toque* and alienates its primary practitioners.<sup>6</sup>

### ***Morón and the Flamenco Guitar***

*Morón sin su guitarra no sería Morón.*

Morón without its guitar would not be Morón.

– Manolo Coronado (González-Caballos Martínez 2003: 169)

While there have been guitarists in the del Gastor clan as far back as the nineteenth century, no single artist in this remarkable family has been more celebrated or influential than Diego Amaya Flores, known to the world as Diego del Gastor. After moving with his family to Morón from El Gastor in 1922, Diego began studying the flamenco guitar with local residents as well as established artists that included Pepe Naranjo and Pepe Mesa.

Over time, Diego developed a distinct and recognizable style of flamenco guitar playing that set him apart from other guitarists. His *falsetas*, or extended melodic statements, involve a great deal of repetition, including an extensive use of *ligado*.<sup>7</sup> Today, this style stands opposite the jazz-inflected modern strands of flamenco with simple and straight-ahead melodies, deep tones and the rough use of right-hand

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<sup>6</sup> Anthropologist William Washabaugh was the first person to theorize the significance of corporeality in flamenco performance in his *Flamenco: Passion, Politics and Popular Culture* (1996).

<sup>7</sup> The equivalent of *legato*, this refers to hammer-on and pull-off techniques on the guitar that tie notes together, often creating a slurring sound.

techniques, including *rasgueado*.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, Diego’s sound is characterized as “*a cuerda pelá*,” or “barebones,” due to the inordinate amount of single-string phrasing that he used. His technique was unpolished and, compared to some of his contemporaries, including Sabicas (1912-1990) and Niño Ricardo (1904-1972), quite limited. For these reasons, Diego’s *toque* sounds deceptively simple while it is actually quite complex in terms of melodic and scalar alternation and repetition.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a guitar piece. The first system is labeled 'Cejilla 2' and features a treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The melody is written on a single staff with a series of slurs and ties, indicating a continuous, repetitive line. Below the staff, the lyrics 'a m i m i m i - -' are written, with the first 'a' aligned with the first measure. A guitar tablature (TAB) is provided below the lyrics, showing fret numbers (0-12) and fingerings (1-3) for each note. The second system continues the melody with lyrics 'i m i m i m i m i' and 'm i m i m i m i m'. This system includes triplets of eighth notes, indicated by 'r 3' above the notes. The tablature for this system shows fret numbers and fingerings, including a double bar line with a '6' below it, suggesting a capo or a change in fretting.

**Figure 1.3 Diego del Gastor *falseta* in *bulerías por medio*, note the repetition and ligado (Notation courtesy of Claude Worms, © 2008)**

Diego twisted melodies and their variations into dynamic labyrinthine creations that simultaneously challenge and guide the listener. He often put listeners in a trance by

<sup>8</sup> One of the characteristics of the Morón *rasgueo* is that the thumb follows the other four fingers across the strings, giving it a rougher and stronger accent.

utilizing extended rhythmic repetition, only to startle them with a searing lead up to the *remate*.<sup>9</sup>

In the same way that the *cante* is open to constant borrowing and reinterpretation of melodies and *letras*, flamenco guitar *falsetas* are frequently quoted and integrated into contemporary performances.<sup>10</sup> Discerning listeners are able to recognize passages and trace them back to particular authors, players and locales in Andalusia. Although artistic citations in flamenco are practically unavoidable, they often serve as performative expressions of musical preference, including homage to and solidarity with particular musicians and localities.

Diego del Gastor was a keen listener and admired many other guitarists including Ramón Montoya (1879-1949) and Niño Ricardo. Diego was a major *ricardista*<sup>11</sup> and, in fact, he often sent his nephew, Paco (del Gastor, b. 1944), from Morón to Seville as his musical courier. Paco recalled,

For a long time I was fortunate enough to act as a messenger between Diego and Ricardo, because during that period all of us were *ricardistas*. I would go to Sevilla...and go look for [Ricardo] and he'd say, 'Take this *variación*<sup>12</sup> and give it to your uncle Diego.' And my uncle Diego, when he was in the right mood, would also tell me: 'Take this *falseta*, take this *variación*, take it and give it to

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<sup>9</sup> *Remate* refers to the closing phrase, or cadence, at the end of a *falseta*. It is a very important device because it often leads back into the base of the *toque* or the beginning of a *letra*. Consequently, the *remate* functions as a short connective segment that can be used to establish or juxtapose textures and dynamics with subsequent sections of the performance.

<sup>10</sup> Needless to say, this complicates issues of copyright and ownership. See Manuel 2010 for a discussion of authorship and royalties in flamenco.

<sup>11</sup> This term refers to serious followers of Niño Ricardo. Sabicas and Niño Ricardo are commonly viewed as the two most influential figures in the development of the flamenco guitar during the middle of the twentieth century. While Ricardo was almost universally admired for his *toque*, identification as a *ricardista* signifies an even greater sense of admiration and dedication.

<sup>12</sup> *Variación* is another word for *falseta*. Today, older artists and aficionados most commonly use this term.

Ricardo.’ Imagine, I found myself in between two of the most dynamic schools of that era, that of Ricardo and that of Diego (González-Caballos Martínez 2003: 137-138).

Even when Diego played other artist’s *falsetas* his interpretations possessed a coherent and consistent language that was all his own. In flamenco circles this is referred to as *sello propio*, which literally means one’s “own stamp.”

While guitar lineages exist in many towns, including Almería and Algeciras, the two most identifiable *sellos* come from Morón and Jerez de la Frontera. The guitar styles that radiate from these locales extend beyond familial heritage and are commonly referred to as bona fide *escuelas*, or schools, of *toque*. Thus, the *falsetas* and approaches to rhythm and technique that are characteristic of these schools are regarded as sonic articulations of municipal identity. These associations foster the widespread local adoption of stylistic attributes and methods that originally stemmed from the performance habits of an individual, small group or family. For example, during my visit to Morón in the summer of 2012, I attended a recital at the local *peña*, Tertulia Cultural Flamenca “El Gallo,” in which several novice guitarists gave solo performances of Diego del Gastor’s *falsetas por bulerías*. Such presentations constitute both a mark of tribute to and identification with Diego and Morón.

The direct inheritors of Diego’s *toque*, which include his brilliant nephews Paco and Juan del Gastor, as well as Diego de Morón and Agustín Rios, are extremely proud of the fact that their style is instantly recognizable upon listening. Juan del Gastor declared,

Anywhere in the world you can hear somebody playing in the Morón style [por Morón] and quickly somebody will say, ‘That guitar style comes from Morón!’ Today everybody plays the same, which is a shame because the guitar, just like the *cante*, is a feeling. Before you’d hear Ricardo and quickly know, ‘This is

Ricardo!’ You’d hear Melchor de Marchena and, ‘This is Melchor!’ You’d hear Diego del Gastor, [and] ‘This is Diego del Gastor!’ But unfortunately it’s not like that today. (González-Caballos Martínez 2003: 151-152)

While Juan laments the loss of individuality in flamenco, he also recognizes how this trend further separates the Morón *toque* as unique and important.

A common complaint from older artists and aficionados is that all of the younger guitarists sound the same – which is to say that they lack *sello propio*. Naturally, imitation among flamenco guitarists became especially prevalent when the availability and prominence of recordings began to overwhelm the local and familial modes of oral transmission. In 1973, for example, Paco de Lucía’s catchy *rumba* “Entre dos Aguas” was released to popular acclaim in which it was played in bars and discotheques across Spain. By the mid 1970s, the records of Camarón de la Isla (1950-1992) and Paco de Lucía (1947-2014) had catapulted both artists to fame that transcended the art of flamenco. According to Paul Shalmy, one of my field consultants in Berkeley, California, these albums marked the beginning of a movement in flamenco in which popular sound recordings eclipsed the preeminence of local and oral tradition.

I went with Fernanda [de Utrera]<sup>13</sup> to a baptism in, actually the Tres Mil Viviendas<sup>14</sup> more or less, and she somehow got roped into being *comadre*.<sup>15</sup> And there were a bunch of young kids that played guitar a bit. So trying to get somebody to play for Fernanda *por soleá* was impossible. Why? Because all these kids, *all of them*, were listening to Paco de Lucía records or Camarón records. That’s all they listened to. And that’s all that young people in Utrera were listening to and Lebrija were listening to. We’re talking 1976 or something

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<sup>13</sup> Fernanda de Utrera is often hailed as one of the greatest singers in the history of flamenco.

<sup>14</sup> The Tres Mil Viviendas is a well-known Gitano neighborhood located in Seville’s south side. This community was featured in a compilation album entitled *Las 3.000 Viviendas: Viejo patio* (1999) as well as a feature-length film called *Polígono Sur: El Arte de las Tres Mil* (2003).

<sup>15</sup> *Comadre* literally means “godmother.”

like that. But it was already beginning because those records of Camarón and Paco were *big man*, they were *super big*. (interview, 3/27/13)

Even though the adolescents that Shalmy mentions were listening to flamenco, the focus of these guitar players had likely shifted from that of understated accompaniment to virtuosic playing.

Herein lies the irony of Paco de Lucía's revolutionary influence: while he expanded the melodic and harmonic vocabulary of the flamenco guitar to a greater extent than any other artist, thereby opening up listeners' ears to new ways of hearing and conceptualizing flamenco, he also inspired a newfound emphasis on virtuosity and solo performance that often came at the expense of participatory music-making and realization of the *cante*.<sup>16</sup> However, Paco did not venture into these uncharted territories without first becoming a respected and masterful accompanist. Many listeners are unaware of de Lucía's overall trajectory, including the early years he spent honing his craft as an accompanist in *fiestas* with friends and family. Both his father, Antonio Sánchez Pecino (1908-1994), and older brother, Ramón de Algeciras (1938-2009), worked primarily as accompanists and Paco began his professional career playing alongside his brother Pepe (de Lucía, b. 1945). It is this background that enabled Paco to develop an expert understanding of the *cante* that served as the musical foundation for his forays into the avant-garde.

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<sup>16</sup> Several books chart the life and artistic influence of Paco de Lucía including: Donn Pohren's *Paco de Lucía and Family: The Master Plan* (1992), Paco Sevilla's *Paco de Lucía: A New Tradition for the Flamenco Guitar* (1995), Juan José Téllez's *Paco de Lucía: Retrato de Familia con Guitarra* (1994) and Diana Pérez Custodio's *Paco de Lucía: La Evolución del Flamenco a través de sus Rumbas* (2005).





**Figure 1.4** Released in 1963, *Los Chiquitos de Algeciras* featured Paco de Lucía (left) on guitar accompanying his brother, the *cantaor* Pepe de Lucía

The *cante* is widely considered to be the oldest and most important facet of flamenco performance. The vast repertoire of poems and *letras* sung into musical being by *cantaores* constitute a tremendous literary heritage in Andalusia. Many *letras* bear witness to historical occurrences and conditions there, including class antagonisms, collective burdens and everyday relationships. Thus, the *cante* is seen as a link between Andalusians both past and present. Moreover, the *cante* is unmistakably *Andaluz*, or Andalusian, because *letras* were composed, and continue to be pronounced, in the region's distinctive dialect.<sup>17</sup> For this reason, performance of the *cante* (as opposed to flamenco guitar or dance) is usually limited to native Andalusians.

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<sup>17</sup> Use of the Andalusian dialect in song is often frowned upon in popular music circles. The Andalusian speech pattern is extremely fast and results from the elimination of consonants from words. It is regularly viewed by Spaniards from other regions as a mark of ignorance, backwardness and carelessness.

Perhaps more importantly for the intents and purposes of this study, the performance of *cante* accompaniment requires the guitarist to focus closely on the singer—including everything from their facial expressions and physical movements to breathing patterns.



**Figures 1.5A and 1.5B Juan del Gastor accompanies the *cantaor Jerezano*<sup>18</sup> Luis Moneo during a performance in Seville.**

Such performances both breed and thrive upon performative reciprocity, including active listening, and rely much less on technical wizardry than solo guitar, or instrumental, performances.

Virtuosity, however, is not necessarily antithetical to local flamenco practices or even the maintenance of *sello propio*. Diego's nephew, Paco del Gastor, for example, plays with incredible command and is perhaps the greatest exponent of the Morón *toque*. Unlike his uncle, Paco del Gastor has conspicuously integrated the music of Sabicas and Niño Ricardo into his own sound. Moreover, Paco overpowers the guitar with a driving style and formidable technique. As Diego's leading pupil, Paco learned early on how to

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<sup>18</sup> This word refers to a person from Jerez de la Frontera.

implement advanced techniques in ways that were consistent with the values of the Morón *toque*. He explained,

[Diego] made me understand that rapid guitar playing can be learned, but not for the purpose of conveying [feeling]. You either have that gift or you don't. And that is exactly where the *toque* of Morón is so strong. One note from Morón is as beautiful, or creates the same brilliance as ten from any other school. And therein lies the mystery of the Morón school. (González-Caballos Martínez 2003: 138)

In Morón, the ability to *transmitir*, or transmit profound feeling, is of utmost importance. While there is certainly a place for speed and complexity in this tradition, these qualities do not constitute primary objectives for students of the Morón style.

By emphasizing expressiveness, or more specifically communicative aptitude, this *toque* highlights reciprocity in which the performance space and its occupants must be prepared to receive and respond to the artists. At the same time, the artist must be perceptive enough to understand the moment and environment in which he or she is performing. Juan del Gastor asserted,

Sometimes a silence playing *por bulería* or *por siguriya* or *por soleá* is worth more than four million notes. A sad silence is worth more than four million notes! You have to know where to put that silence and how to meditate on that silence. And in which place, what moment, and what rhythm.  
(interview, 5/30/12)

The pregnant silences that Juan mentions here cannot be fixed or predetermined. Rather, they must be predicated upon intuition, communication and reaction. As Juan del Gastor's quote at the opening of this chapter suggests, spontaneity is an essential component of what is referred to as "*flamenco puro*"—"pure" or "real" flamenco.

For many flamenco artists, the ultimate objective in performance is to conjure up the magical essence known as *duende*.<sup>19</sup> The latter term denotes a transcendent feeling of ecstasy that arrives when the music touches a person at their core. It has also been described as a feeling of oneness that is created when an artist translates a feeling in her soul into its aural equivalent (Schreiner 1990: 26). According to Diego del Gastor, *duende* is forever elusive:

You can play all night and nothing happens and then suddenly there it is...It comes and goes...but it makes you feel very good...It has a will [all] its own. All you can do is be ready, and welcome it when it comes (George 1969: 72).

Consequently, Gastor believed that flamenco should not be played on command, as it must be done for commercial ventures. One must be spiritually and emotionally ready before launching into a performance. Diego declared,

You can't tell a guitarist, 'Play!' and then expect him to play. A flamenco artist is not a machine into which you can put a coin and get a sudden response. Flamenco needs the *ambiente*, the proper atmosphere...The *cante* is serious. It is not a woman of the streets, to be bought and paid for. The *cante* must be venerated...But look what they have done to it! Listen to the radio. Look at television. See what passes for the *cante*. Is it not a sacrilege? (George 1969: 70).

Thus, Diego del Gastor conceived of flamenco as a sacred art form that commercial interests could only serve to corrupt.

Moreover, he believed that flamenco should be played in familiar environments, including bars, private residences and other community venues. For this reason, he seldom left Morón for any professional engagements. Diego declined many invitations to

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<sup>19</sup> *Duende* is often considered to be the most difficult Spanish word to translate among linguists and interpreters (Dictionary.com 2011). The word can refer to “elf,” “magic” or one who is restless, among other things. The great Spanish poet Federico García Lorca discussed *duende* in a 1933 lecture that he delivered in Buenos Aires, Argentina, entitled, “Juego y Teoría del Duende” or “Play and Theory of the Duende.” Christopher Maurer’s English translation of this essay is included in Lorca’s *In Search of Duende* (2010: 56-72).

play for lucrative *juergas* because he did not approve of the setting or the *cantaor*. In 1939, he accompanied Manuel Vallejo, one of the great *cantaores*, on a tour of northern Spain, only to return to Morón prematurely after several performances.<sup>20</sup>



**Figure 1.6 Advertisement for Manuel Vallejo’s performance with Diego del Gastor (listed as Diego Amaya) featured in *Imperio* on February 9, 1939**

Juan del Gastor remembered, “Diego del Gastor only went where he felt like going. And so if he did not feel like going he would send me in his place [to perform in *fiestas*]” (González-Caballos Martínez 2003: 147).

Diego’s artistic independence remains a point of pride for his descendants, as well as his admirers in Morón. Since poverty was widespread in Spain and especially concentrated in Andalusia, economic self-determination was inconceivable to

<sup>20</sup> It is unclear whether Diego left the tour because the performances were too choreographed for his liking or Vallejo was overly domineering as an artistic partner. Pohren (1964: 296) argues that it was the former while Sody de Rivas (2004: 58) claims the latter. In all likelihood, it was a combination of both aspects that prompted Diego to return home.

*Andaluces*,<sup>21</sup> much less Gitanos, under Franco's dictatorship. Thus, Diego's apparent disinterest for fame and fortune was regarded as a principled and purposeful way of maintaining artistic purity and control.

Finally, Diego del Gastor's defiant nature corresponds with the identity of his adopted hometown. In Andalusia, the population of Morón is renowned for its rebelliousness, which is epitomized by its symbol, *El Gallo de Morón*, or "The Rooster of Morón." In a legend that dates back to the sixteenth century, the Chancellery of Granada sent a hired hand to establish law and order in Morón. When the enforcer arrived to town, he declared to the residents of Morón: "*donde canta este gallo no canta otro*" ("where this rooster crows, no other shall do so"). The townspeople grew tired of his boasts and quickly took off the man's clothes and beat him. This incident gave rise to the saying, "*Te vas a quedar como el gallo de Morón, sin plumas y cacareando en la mejor ocasión*" ("You are going to end up like the rooster of Morón, clucking and featherless when you least expect it").

Thus, Diego remained in Morón where he could spend time chatting and making music with friends and family. With the arrival of an American author and flamenco devotee in the mid-1960s, commercial opportunities, however informal, would become increasingly common in Morón de la Frontera. A pronounced international presence in the town would soon shape this tradition in new and unforeseen ways.

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<sup>21</sup> This is the word for Andalusians.

### *An American Transplant in Morón*

In 1947, a teenager from Minnesota named Donn Pohren traveled with his family to Mexico City on vacation. While walking through the city streets one day, Pohren stumbled onto a performance of flamenco song and dance. He recalled, “I heard a guitar, singing, foot-stomping issuing from a bar, and went in. During a break I asked the guitarist what the music was. He smiled and told me it was flamenco” (Rhine 1999). As it happens, Pohren had witnessed a performance by two of flamenco’s greatest stars: the guitarist Agustín Castellón Campos, better known as Sabicas, and dancer Carmen Amaya (1913-1963). Like many artists and intellectuals of the period, Amaya and Sabicas fled Spain in 1936 to escape the horrors of the Spanish Civil War and the rise of fascism in their homeland.<sup>22</sup> Pohren’s fortuitous encounter with these brilliant artists marked the beginning of an intense and lifelong relationship to flamenco music and culture.

Six years after his experience in Mexico, Pohren bought a one-way ticket to Spain, setting sail aboard the Queen Mary for the Iberian Peninsula. He lived in Seville for a short period and then moved to Madrid, where he attended college and ran a private flamenco club. While the latter enterprise failed after only a year, Pohren was determined to make a living that involved his passion for flamenco.<sup>23</sup> In 1966, he purchased a farmhouse in Morón de la Frontera that became known as the Finca

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<sup>22</sup> The civil war and Franco’s subsequent rise to power in Spain brought many illustrious flamenco artists to the Americas, including Mario Escudero, Niño de Utrera and Luisa Triana.

<sup>23</sup> Pohren also married the Spanish flamenco dancer Luisa Maravilla.

Espartero.<sup>24</sup> He converted this property, which was formerly an olive farm, into a haven where foreigners could stay and experience seemingly informal flamenco gatherings at relatively reasonable prices.

Flamenco artists in Morón gained international prominence after Pohren released the first book in his flamenco trilogy, entitled *The Art of Flamenco*, in 1962. This English-language work became a cult-classic in the United States and inspired many Americans to either write or journey to the home of Diego del Gastor. Pohren popularized Morón to a considerable following of American youth and, as a result, Diego del Gastor became internationally known practically overnight. In Tao Ruspoli's documentary film on flamenco and Gitanos, entitled *Flamenco: A Personal Journey*, Juan del Gastor recalled, "People would write letters addressed [to] Diego del Gastor, University of Flamenco, Morón de la Frontera. And they would arrive!" (Ruspoli 2005).

At the *finca*, local artists mingled with travelers from the United States and England as well as France, Australia, and Italy. Years later Pohren recalled,

The scene appealed to professional people, lawyers, doctors, scientists. We had lonely divorcees, writers, poets, music buffs and so forth. The finca brightened Moron de la Frontera's normally quiet existence (Rhine 1999).

These short-term visitors spent most of their time in and around the *finca*, which was located over a mile outside of Morón. Pohren hired Diego, Anzonini del Puerto, Luis Torres "Joselero" and others to play in *juergas* for tourists so that they could experience what he referred to as "true flamenco."

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<sup>24</sup> The word "*finca*" refers literally to a farmhouse, boardinghouse or ranch. *Espartero* denotes a person who makes and sells articles of feathergrass and, according to ethnomusicologist Tony Dumas, Pohren's haunt was named after this type of vegetation (2012: 89).



During the late 1960s and early 1970s, dedicated foreign students of the Morón *toque* remained in town to socialize and make music with locals. Often they convened in a bar called Casa Pepe that functioned alternately as a makeshift bank and post office. Newly arrived visitors could place and receive phone calls as well as establish credit at this multipurpose bar. The owner of this establishment, Pepe Camacho, was a kind and trusting man who was very supportive of local flamenco artists and aficionados. Since the bar was a neighborhood institution, Pepe allowed his customers to carry running tabs, which he marked with chalk all along the bar. For all of these reasons, Casa Pepe was the setting where local artists, aficionados and foreign students routinely convened and hosted flamenco *fiestas*.

With all of the international attention that Diego del Gastor received, it was not long before both Spanish and foreign record companies began to take interest. During my fieldwork, I heard many stories about how Diego managed to elude *señoritos* and commercial suitors by hiding or fleeing the scene. On several occasions, however, he relented and agreed to record for companies that included the Ariola label (in 1971 and 1972) and the National Geographic Society (in 1973). The earliest of these recordings was a forty-five rpm side entitled *Fiesta en Morón: Bulerías para Bailar*, which featured Diego's brother-in-law, Joselero, and one of his nephews, Fernandillo de Morón. Recorded live in a *fiesta*, this document prompts many questions: What does it mean to stage a *juerga* in order to make it available for popular consumption? How do such engagements blur the distinctions between amateur and professional artists, as well as

public and private spaces? How do the values of record producers and listeners (or consumers) manifest in the final product?



**Figures 1.7 and 1.8 Two of Diego del Gastor's official recordings: *Fiesta en Morón: Bulerías para Bailar* (1971) and *Misterios de la Guitarra Flamenca* (1972)**

And how do such values clash with the philosophies and aspirations of performers?

Finally, what can these recordings tell us about the social, spatial and temporal situatedness of musical performance in general and flamenco performance in particular?

Unlike popular music, flamenco performance does not involve playing a song; rather, it calls for performing *in* a given style, or *palo*, by combining recited and improvised *letras* and *falsetas*, as well as rhythms, melodies and movements. In this way, flamenco praxis brings attention to the singularity of each performance. Moreover, the *fiesta*, which is an inherently exclusive social formation, is founded upon communal interaction and performative reciprocity. The flamenco *fiesta* constitutes a gathering that is highly contingent upon social relationships, as well as collective spirit and atmosphere.

Like Diego del Gastor, Pohren viewed the *fiesta* as the purest display of flamenco

life and music. As late as 1999 Pohren maintained that, “The flamenco *juerga*, or jam session, is the only vehicle for true flamenco expression” (Rhine 1999). He also dedicated his first book, *The Art of Flamenco*, to “the true *flamencos* [flamenco artists and aficionados], a rare breed in danger of extinction” (Pohren 1962: 7). Pohren’s work has had a tremendous impact on discourses in English-language flamenco communities. The expression, “Flamenco is a way of life” is a common aphorism within these groups. The phrase itself, which comes from the title of Pohren’s third volume (*A Way of Life*, 1979), is often used to refer to Gitanos and *fiestas*. Pohren cited commercialism and the “encroachment of universal sophistication” as the culprits for the gradual extinction of true flamenco (1962: 12).

Quality in flamenco is not only judged by the sounds, but also by the social bonds that emerge and deepen through performance. Therefore, spontaneous performances among friends are conceived as the fundamental model for *flamenco puro*. Authority in flamenco circles, whether Spanish or foreign, is grounded in first-hand, or direct experience. In many ways, flamenco persists as an oral tradition in which learning must happen live and in the flesh. Although one can study the flamenco guitar out of a book or via YouTube, artists and aficionados always ask, “Where did you study?” and “Who did you study with?” With the increasing availability of tools for learning and experiencing flamenco that are separate from live interaction, including sound and video recordings, local flamenco cultures become virtually extended but also thoroughly transformed. Isolated learning, listening and performance contradict the ethos of participation, interaction and solidarity that mark the Morón *toque* in particular and flamenco in general.

### ***The “Morón Fiesta Tapes”***

*Yo creo que todos tienen algunas grabaciones de Diego. Todos se llevan en las venas.*

I believe that everybody [in Morón] has some recordings of Diego [del Gastor]. All of us have [his music] in our veins.

– José Castro, longtime Morón resident (personal communication)

The prominent position of the *fiesta* in flamenco culture, narratives, and the social imagination is precisely what lends an aura of authenticity and mythology to the so-called “*fiesta tapes*,” comprised of hundreds of recorded hours of excellent flamenco singers and guitar players who resided mostly in pueblos surrounding the Andalusian capital of Seville, including Lebrija, Utrera and, of course, Morón. Many artists featured in these tapes, including Juan Talega, El Perrate and Diego del Gastor, were scarcely recorded prior to their encounters with their U.S. American visitors. U.S. American presence in Morón, formally established with the construction of an air force base in 1953, allowed for comprehensive visual and aural records of native life and music to be captured on film rolls and tape reels throughout the 1960s and 70s.

In Andalusia, poverty rates were acute, industry practically nonexistent, and economic activity based chiefly on agriculture and sharecropping. The local population rarely had access to sufficient food, let alone cameras or recording machines.

Christopher and Moreen Carnes (also known as María Silver), Steve Kahn, and Evan Harrar were among the main U.S. American flamenco devotees in Morón who recorded extensively at lessons and fiestas. The Carnes’ collection, in particular, constitutes the most prolific set of recordings from Morón, including over four hundred hours of audio

material. Chris Carnes was one of Diego's best American students and friends and his wife, María, received *cante* lessons from Juan Talega. Ricardo Pachón, an esteemed flamenco record producer and archivist, recalled:

[Christopher and María Carnes] had an Uher, a German reel-to-reel tape recorder, and they recorded in fiestas. At that time, nobody [in Morón] knew what a tape recorder was. The Gypsies called María, 'María el Zurrón,' or 'María with the big bag,' because she always carried a big bag with her for the [recording equipment]. (interview, 7/30/12)

Although there was little contact between U.S. Americans in the flamenco community and U.S. Americans serving at the local air force base, the military outpost itself eventually provided local residents with access to blank reel-to-reel tapes and recording equipment. During my fieldwork, I discovered that several natives of Morón have collections of tapes with Diego del Gastor from the late 1960s and early 1970s as well.<sup>25</sup>

Unlike most of the *fiesta* recordings from this period, the tapes made by Chris and Moreen Carnes are exceptionally clear. In July of 2012, I visited Ricardo Pachón in his home in Seville to discuss and listen to the Carnes's *fiesta* tapes. Pachón, who acquired the original tape reels from the couple over thirty years ago, credited Moreen, also known as María, with an uncanny ability to discern the relative importance of numerous performances:

I think that María recorded the best material. She had the wonderful intuition of knowing the importance of Juan Talega, Fernanda [de Utrera] [and] Antonio Mairena. And I say this because, in order to save tapes, tape recorders could normally record at three speeds. The Uher had four. [María] recorded at the middle speed. But when Juan Talega or [Antonio] Mairena or Fernanda [de Utrera] or [El] Perrate sang, she always recorded at the highest quality. This

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<sup>25</sup> Special Collections and University Archives at the University of California, Riverside houses over fifty of these tapes that were made in the 1960s by local *aficionado* Ted McKown.

expends twice as much tape, but she knew intuitively what she was doing.  
(interview, 7/30/12)

As an extremely knowledgeable aficionado of the *cante*, María was able to effectively preserve hours of performances by many of flamenco's greatest singers. Today, Ricardo Pachón is working diligently to remaster these recordings and eventually donate them to the Centro Andaluz de Documentación del Flamenco (Andalusian Center for Flamenco Documentation, or CAF) in Jerez de la Frontera.



**Figure 1.9** Part of the Carnes's original reel-to-reel tape collection that is housed in Ricardo Pachón's studio

The fiesta tapes are remarkably valuable to Morón-style enthusiasts for several reasons. First, the artists on them were exceptionally skilled and generally averse to recording. According to Mica Graña, another Morón transplant from the United States, one record company sent a beautiful young woman to Morón to visit Diego del Gastor to lure him back to New York City. She inevitably returned unaccompanied back to the United States. Second, the sixties and early seventies are regarded as a “golden age”

during which distinctive artistic voices regularly gathered to make music solely for the love of the art. These artists performed song forms regarded as the purest and most profound, including *soleá* and *siguiriyas*,<sup>26</sup> while generally avoiding playing those deemed less serious.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, this era ended just before the widespread commercialization of flamenco, the emergence of “nuevo flamenco,” and the advent of hard drugs, including hashish, cocaine and heroin, to the flamenco scene. Unlike alcohol, these drugs were not conducive to drawn out sessions of participatory music-making. Consequently, the music of these recordings stands as a paragon of traditionalism and flamenco “purity.” Finally, the extraordinary U.S. American involvement in this flamenco scene inadvertently brought widespread awareness of the Morón style to new generations of Anglophone performers and aficionados in the United States.

Despite generally pleasant relations between Morón musicians and international visitors, feelings of bitterness and anxiety, springing from disproportionate power relations, were also present. The fact that Americans could live and travel in Spain without having to work perplexed many of the locals. Mica Graña reflected:

That business about resenting Americans – sure, there were all kinds of reasons to resent us. Why not? We were filthy rich by *their* standards. We came from homes where there was running *water*, flushing *toilets*. On the other hand...By coming there and getting completely enthralled by it, we brought a kind of legitimacy to it in a way. Whereas like if people from the outside think that this has meaning...I mean *they* knew it did, but to have recognition from the outside is

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<sup>26</sup> These song forms, which center on life’s tragedies, are believed to originate from Gitano communities and are, therefore, considered to be more authentic or pure.

<sup>27</sup> In fact, Pachón recalled Camarón’s reaction to the tapes, saying, “*Camarón ha escuchado a mucho Diego en mi casa...y a Juan Talega, y Fernanda, y Camarón me decía a mi, dice, ‘Esto es el flamenco de verdad. Lo que hago yo es pa comer.’*” (“Camarón listened to a lot of Diego in my house...and to Juan Talega and Fernanda, and Camarón said to me, ‘This is true flamenco. What I do is simply to eat [or make a living].’”)

not without its merits. And the kind of people who became involved in the flamenco scene, the foreigners, were *so* devoted. It wasn't like they were just trying to take the music and run. (interview, 9/10/12)

While U.S. Americans had seemingly endless access to money, local musicians controlled the sonic and kinesthetic activities they sought out. Diego and others could play where and when they wanted, like they had always done.

With the arrival of the tape recorder, however, U.S. American apprentices could finally play and replay the music they were so eager to learn and understand. The appearance of this recording device on the Morón scene diminished the power and threatened the musical self-determination of local musicians, however slightly, precisely because it allowed others to “take the music” wherever they pleased. Evan Harrar, for instance, listened to copied tapes of Diego prior to taking lessons with him in 1967. To Diego's dismay, Harrar was able to imitate his melodic lines after a few short minutes of lessons. After Evan explained he had listened to another student's recordings, Diego responded by playing extremely difficult original passages—presumably to reestablish his artistic superiority and illustrate the fundamental irreproducibility of his talent. Thus, while Diego reserved certain musical material and wisdom exclusively for close friends and family, the presence of recordings forced him to confront fears about losing control of his tradition.

More recently, Harrar was involved in a dispute with Gastor's descendants, including nephews Juan del Gastor and Agustín Rios, for selling copies of the “*fiesta* tapes” at \$12 a disc. After some years of estrangement, Juan agreed to visit Evan at his home in order to settle their disagreements. Mica recounts the story:



We kept saying, ‘Juan, you kind of don’t understand Evan’s living circumstances. You kind of don’t get it.’ Finally, after years of this, finally Lucy [Juan’s wife] gets [Juan] over to Evan. And of course what does Evan do? He gives [Juan] endless videos, lists of recordings, copies of all these letras translated. For free. And the timing of this is Juan’s going to go do a class, a seminar that’s at UC Santa Cruz that happens over a three-week period. All of this is material he can use. Evan’s [saying], ‘Whatever you want! Just tell me what you could use! It’s yours! Whatever you want is yours!’ And Juan’s looking around and going, ‘Um...Ok, this guy is living in a one-room basement apartment.’ So his whole deal about Evan making money off the Gypsies is rearranged. (interview, 9/10/12)

In this instance, the “*fiesta tapes*” reveal assumptions that some Andalusians have about U.S. American wealth. Like others in his family, Juan believed that Evan made substantial profits from selling his uncle’s music. On the contrary, Evan neither earns much money on the recordings nor lives comfortably. Nevertheless, the “*fiesta tapes*” intensified these preconceptions because Evan wields with them some influence over how the Morón style is received and experienced today. When I asked Evan why many Gastor family members resented him, he responded:

I think the fact is it’s *their* music. It’s his *family’s* music and here I am dispensing it. They’ve got no power over that. And I can kind of understand that. I could have gone to record companies with some of the music that I have of Diego and had things issued, and tried to keep all of the money myself - which I never did. But, they don’t like the fact of anyone else having any power over their family’s music. And I can understand that, but I’ve also made a lot of people very happy by giving them Diego’s [music]. (interview, 9/5/12)

Like other aficionados of the Morón *toque*, Harrar sees the private recordings as markers of dedication to and connection with the tradition. At the same time, his relative authority and control of the tradition are rooted in collection and documentation, as opposed to performance.



**Figures 1.10 and 1.11 Evan Harrar holds up an assortment of *fiesta* tapes that he has copied onto compact discs; On the right, a collection of Evan’s own recordings from lessons and *fiestas* that survived a house fire**

In the mid-1980s, Harrar compiled a book of transcriptions with 450 of Diego del Gaster’s *falsetas*. Using the same four-speed Uher tape recorder that Moreen Carnes employed to record *fiestas*, Harrar was able to slow the music down and figure out Diego’s *falsetas* on the guitar. Together with instructional audio and *fiesta* recordings, Harrar sells this volume for \$110 on his website ([www.gypsyflamenco.com](http://www.gypsyflamenco.com)). In the “practice tips” area of this site, Evan asserts, “The guitarists who do well in Flamenco go out and get it. They realize what they need and don’t rest until they find someone or some tape to show them what they want to learn” (Harrar 2014). Harrar’s suggestion that flamenco performance can be learned through isolated listening runs counter to the

participatory and lived aspects that are fundamental to music-making in Morón as well as Andalusia at large. In order to make the Morón *toque* available to a wider public, however, this emphasis on non-living resources is inevitable.

While Evan has introduced this music to numerous people around the world (via the internet), he has also repatriated recordings back to the younger generation of the Gastor clan in Morón. In 2000, he sent Diego's great nephews Pepe Torres and Paco de Amparo a number of Chris Carnes' personal recordings. Harrar stated:

When I met Pepe Torres and Paco de Amparo at Dieguito's in 2000, they had never heard much Diego they said. So when I came back to the states, you know I had this huge collection. I sent them about eighteen tapes, plus I sent them all of the Diego movies.

You know Diego had a brother, Mellizo. And he was considered to be totally nuts, but he actually played very good guitar. And Chris [Carnes] recorded him. I had the copy of that recording. So I sent that to Pepe [Torres] and Paco [de Amparo]. Fast-forward another five years later. Pepe and Paco come, on that original recording Mellizo plays these really neat *sevillanas falsetas*.... They came here and gave a concert with Juan in San Francisco. One of the things they did was this whole *sevillanas* thing, and most of it was Mellizo's stuff. And it had to be the stuff that I sent to them. I had sent them the tape that they took it from. (interview, 9/5/12)

In 2003, Pepe Torres and Paco de Amparo united with Manuel Flores, Raúl Rodríguez and Moi de Morón to form the popular group Son de la Frontera. I will discuss this group more at length in the following chapter. The band modified El Mellizo's music to fit a group setting and later recorded these arrangements on their second and final album, *Cal*.

With such an abundance of relatives in this extended family, not everyone has access to the wisdom and teachings of Diego's primary inheritors—Dieguito, Agustín Rios

as well as Juan and Paco del Gastor. Since this generation of *Gastoreños*<sup>28</sup> was able to study with Diego in person, they view the *fiesta* tapes primarily as family records, as opposed to documents with instructional value. For Diego's younger descendants, however, the *fiesta* tapes allow them to faithfully carry on their family's legacy. In a curious instance of role reversals, the American guitarist and photographer Steve Kahn, who studied with Diego in the late 1960s, became Pepe Torres's link to the music of his great-uncle. While the two exchanged *falsetas*, Pepe asked Steve if his playing was faithful to Diego's style and technique. Kahn remembered,

I'd say, 'Almost...' And [Pepe would] look at me and he said, 'What? What's wrong with it?' 'First of all, there's nothing wrong with it. You've appropriated this sound and this *falseta*, this idea and what you're doing is incredible! But it's not *exactly* the way Diego used to play it, because there's a certain technique that you're missing. What you can't *hear* on the tapes. Like, if you don't know that he's doing a particular kind of thing, you can't *hear* it. But if you *know* he's doing that thing, *then you can hear it.*' Very interesting. There were a couple of things like that. (interview, 9/6/12)

As I mentioned before, Diego's style is quite deceptive in that he alternates between plucked and *ligado* passages very quickly. Consequently, it can be very difficult to discern what techniques he is using without seeing them in action. In this particular case, Pepe utilized downstrokes with the thumb where Diego would thumb both back and forth. These examples illustrate how the American contingent of students from Morón has inadvertently become a pivotal component of the familial perpetuation of this tradition.

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<sup>28</sup> This word, which literally means "citizens of El Gastor," is used in this context to refer to descendants of Diego del Gastor. The oldest living generation of *Gastoreños* includes Diego's nieces and nephews.

### ***Fiestas and Flamenco Albums***

Today, *fiestas* are often staged during recording sessions in order to present performers in casual and intimate settings that are characteristic of close-knit flamenco communities. Diego's official *fiesta* records (see Figure 1.6) are just one example of how the *juerga* has been integrated into recording practices. For example, intense *jaleo* and a *fiesta* atmosphere often feature prominently on albums by artists from Jerez. In these instances the *fiesta* is not limited to one or several tracks, but extends into the concept of the album itself.

The audibility of *jaleo* in studio recordings acts as a marker of reciprocity between performers that allows listeners to aurally witness the bonds that are created and reaffirmed through flamenco performance. Moreover, studio banter is occasionally included as a way of situating the music within its social world and context. These techniques are used to sonically reproduce the "live" and lived experience associated with homemade flamenco. In *Music as Social Life*, Thomas Turino refers to this practice as "high fidelity," which he defines as "the making of recordings that are intended to index or be iconic of live performance" (2008: 26). While much of the rapport between flamenco artists is transmittable through sound, dance movements and body language, including facial expressions, need to be seen in order to be experienced. Naturally, certain *palos* are more reliant upon *jaleo* and the social configuration of the *fiesta* than

others. For example, *bulerías*, *tangos* and *rumba* are among the song forms that require the most prominent use of *jaleo* and *palmas*.<sup>29</sup>

The “Morón *fiesta* tapes” have inspired a number of official *fiesta* recording sessions involving *Gastoreños*. In 1989 and 1990, the British label Nimbus Records released two *fiesta*-based albums, entitled *Cante Gitano: Gypsy Flamenco from Andalusia* and *Cante Flamenco: Recorded Live in Juerga and Concert in Andalusia*, featuring Paco and Juan del Gastor, as well as *cantaores* that included José de la Tomasa, María la Burra, Miguel Funi, Chano Lobato and Gaspar de Utrera. Robin Broadbank, the producer of these albums, was deeply affected and influenced by copies of the *fiesta* tapes that he acquired:

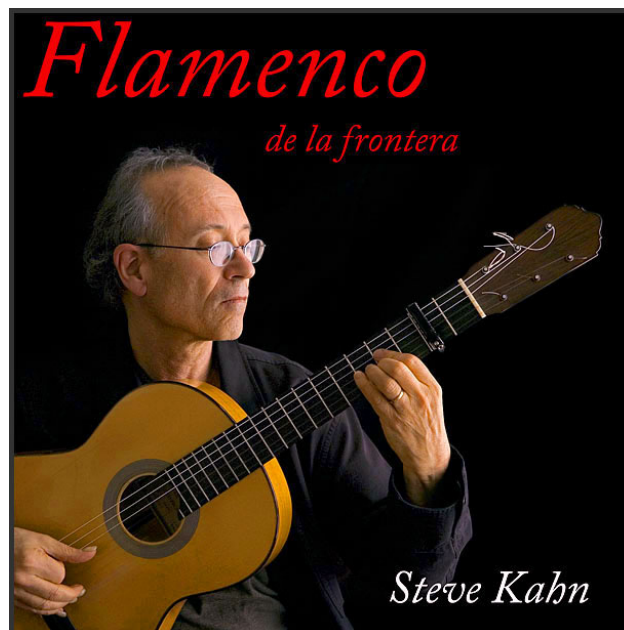
The interesting thing is this connection between people who were in Morón in the sixties and who were hugely affected by what they witnessed, and people like me who were also afflicted a couple of decades later; the ripples are that powerful. There’s a kind of lived in quality in the music on those *juerga* tapes, also a sense of adventure and probing that is absent on most of the commercial flamenco CDs I’ve come across. Those rough old tapes were certainly an inspiration to me (Broadbank 2007).

The *fiesta* tapes that Broadbank obtained inspired him to replicate the informal and unconfined social atmosphere on officially licensed recordings with contemporary Gitano artists in Andalusia. Broadbank brought his gear to the region in order to record “on the spot” (Broadbank 2007). Unlike many studio recordings, the tracks on these albums often exceed seven minutes and the *bulerías* at the end of *Cante Gitano* lasts over twenty-two minutes. Moreover, many of the shorter tracks flow continuously and chronologically without any cuts to the original tape.

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<sup>29</sup> According to Juan Vergillos, the *bulería* was previously referred to simply as “*fiesta*” before Pastora Pavón, known as La Niña de los Peines, coined the term that prevails today (Nuñez, 2012).

In Steve Kahn's 2005 album *Flamenco de la Frontera*,<sup>30</sup> the American guitarist masterfully weaves together *falsestas* from Diego and Paco del Gastor in his interpretations of *bulerías*, *soleá*, *cantiñas* and *siguiriyas*. Six out of the nine tracks on this album feature Kahn performing solo guitar. Each of these recordings begins with the din of barroom chatter and clinking glasses and ends with applause. As it turns out, Kahn recorded these ambient sounds at La Peña Duende in Madrid in order to layer them underneath the sounds of his guitar, which he had taped previously in New York City. When I asked Steve why he went to the trouble of recording and matching up the sounds of the audience with his playing, he replied that the guitar sounded sterile on its own. On the two of the other three tracks that feature the *cante* of Marysol Fuentes, however, the sounds of the crowd in Madrid are conspicuously absent—except for on the *bulería*.



**Figure 1.12** Steve Kahn's album, *Flamenco de la Frontera*

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<sup>30</sup> This title, which literally means “flamenco from the border,” is the same as Paco del Gastor's album from 1992.

Kahn's production on this album is illustrative of the ways in which he has internalized the musical and social values of Morón flamenco. Each of the pieces on *Flamenco de la Frontera* features the sonic presence of an individual or group other than the guitarist himself. Thus, the crucial nature of reciprocity and a shared presence in Morón flamenco performance manifests here as a digitally constructed recital.

### ***Memories of Morón: The Flamenco Project***

In 2010, Steve Kahn published dozens of photographs that chronicle Morón's flamenco scene in a book entitled *Flamenco Project: Una Ventana a la Visión Extranjera, 1960-1985* (or "A Window into the Foreign Perspective"). Kahn is a professional photographer from Los Angeles, California who served as one of the major documenters of Morón during the late 1960s. He compiled photos and essays from a wide range of Spanish and American scholars, artists and aficionados for both online and print publication.

Kahn also took the *Flamenco Project* on the road as a traveling exhibit to cities that include Cádiz, Jerez de la Frontera, Utrera, Seville and Morón. Several of these exhibits included listening stations Kahn's collection of personally recorded *fiesta* tapes. In April 2013, the collection was donated to the Ayuntamiento de Morón, or the city's town hall, and has since been featured in a flamenco festival in Nimes, France.<sup>31</sup> Thus,

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<sup>31</sup> According to Kahn, the collection will be permanently housed in a former convent located down the street from the town hall in Morón.



the works of photographers like Kahn, David George, William Davidson and Phil Slight have become major reference points for Morón around the world.

During my time in Seville and Morón, I noticed that many of the photos in the *Flamenco Project* appear in a wide variety of posters, books and websites as well as photographic collections and displays. In one of Morón's local *peñas*, Tertulia Cultural Flamenca El Gallo, for example, there was an entire section of photos dedicated to Diego del Gastor. Known as the "Rincón de Diego," or "Diego's Corner," many of the photos there were taken by American photographers.

For Steve and other expatriates in the 1960s and 70s, the *fiesta* tapes serve as sonic snapshots in time that remind them of the moments they shared with their best-loved friends, teachers, guitarists, dancers and singers. Both the sonic and visual documents from the *Flamenco Project* act as a reminder of how flamenco was enacted in daily life prior to the extensive institutionalization and commercialization of the art form. Moreover, the collection compels artists, aficionados and community members to reflect upon a profoundly shared history where participation took many different forms.

### ***Conclusion***

Flamenco is an important marker of local identity in Andalusia. In Morón, Diego del Gastor's musical style remains popular and continues to represent the rich character and history of the pueblo. Many of my friends from Morón boast about their connections to Diego, including their own collections of tapes and photographs. These holdings constitute demonstrations of commitment to remembering, honoring and identifying with

the town and its musical legacy. This case study points to the capacity of schizophrenic processes to intensify and further reveal the quality of existing relationships, bringing them into full relief. The “*fiesta* tapes” provide significant insight into this musical community because they expose an imbalance of power in pronounced ways that compel cultural actors to respond – even while creating entirely new disparities. In sum, these recordings simultaneously sustain and complicate this tradition as it moves into the future.

## Chapter Two

### *Sounds from the Border: Maintenance and Development of the Morón Tradition*

[Son de la Frontera is] playing at being on the borderline, at not being from anywhere in particular, just from that place which divides mental spaces, patriotic spaces and cultural spaces. We try and imagine what would be playing on the borderline, a millimeter before where flamenco begins and a millimeter beyond where it ends. Who draws the line, what decides where the border should be between old-fashioned and modern, between local and universal, between flamenco and other musical styles in the world?

– Raúl Rodríguez, *tresero*<sup>1</sup> in the flamenco group Son de la Frontera (Calado 2004)

Today, the Morón *toque* continues to be performed by members of Diego del Gastor's family as well as foreign enthusiasts residing mainly in the United States. In recent years, Diego's grand and great-grand nephews have been active performing in traditional venues like peñas and festivals, as well as concert halls and nightclubs in metropolitan cities that include London, Mexico City, New York and Los Angeles. Flamenco's global presence has expanded in recent decades, providing local Andalusian artists with a host of new international opportunities for performance, exposure and income. Whereas artists from Diego del Gastor's generation generally found work in locales across Spain, and especially in the capital city of Madrid, today's top performers routinely tour across Europe, Japan and the Americas in addition to performing regularly in their home country.

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<sup>1</sup> This word denotes a person that plays the *tres*, an instrument with three double-string courses that is most often associated with Cuban *son* music.

In this chapter, I will chronicle the ways in which the latest generation of performers of the Morón *toque* simultaneously maintains and expands upon the foundations of this tradition. It is a constant challenge for these artists to carve out their own personal styles within the ideological, musical and social frameworks established by their predecessors – most notably Diego del Gastor and his nephews Paco and Juan del Gastor, Dieguito de Morón and Agustín Ríos. Naturally, the creation of a *sello propio* requires responses to contemporary pressures and exigencies that include blistering technique, a varied repertoire and popular appeal. In order to appeal to artistic collaborators, booking agents and audiences, guitarists must be able to accompany a wide array of *cantes* and play with an incredible amount of right-hand technique. Later in this chapter, I will explore how these demands combine with artistic aspirations to influence performers within the Morón tradition.

While I will discuss a number of different artists in this milieu from Morón, this study will focus primarily on the group Son de la Frontera, which performed from 2003 to 2008. This group, whose name denotes Morón “de la Frontera” and alternately translates to “Sound from the border,” “They are from the border,” and “Sound from [Morón] de la Frontera,” combines flamenco with influences from Cuban *son*, as well as elements from rock and blues music. The group was made up of guitarist Paco de Amparo (b. 1969), *tresero* Raúl Rodríguez (b. 1974), *cantaor* Moi de Morón (b. 1977), *bailaor* Pepe Torres (b. 1978), and dancer and *palmero*<sup>2</sup> Manuel Flores (b. 1969). Together, they emerged from the shadows of Diego del Gastor’s Morón to become one of

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<sup>2</sup> This term refers to an individual that provides and improvises upon the *compás* by clapping their hands.

the most acclaimed ensembles of “world music” in the first decade of the twenty-first century. In 2007, Son de la Frontera was a finalist for a Latin Grammy Award and the following year won the “Best in Europe” BBC World Music Award.



**Figure 2.1 Son de la Frontera, from left to right: Moi de Morón, Pepe Torres, Raúl Rodríguez, Manuel Flores and Paco de Amparo (Photograph by Mario Pacheco, © 2004)**

One of the most remarkable aspects about Son de la Frontera’s mainstream popularity is that nearly all of their music came from Diego del Gastor. Although his *falsestas* are often extremely lyrical and catchy, Diego’s music is also quite complicated. Even in Andalusia, flamenco is considered to be an esoteric art form due to the distinct vocal timbres and complex rhythms that it encompasses. Moreover, while flamenco originates from an incredibly diverse collection of musical cultures, it retains an intensely local character that is generally incomprehensible to uninitiated listeners and spectators.

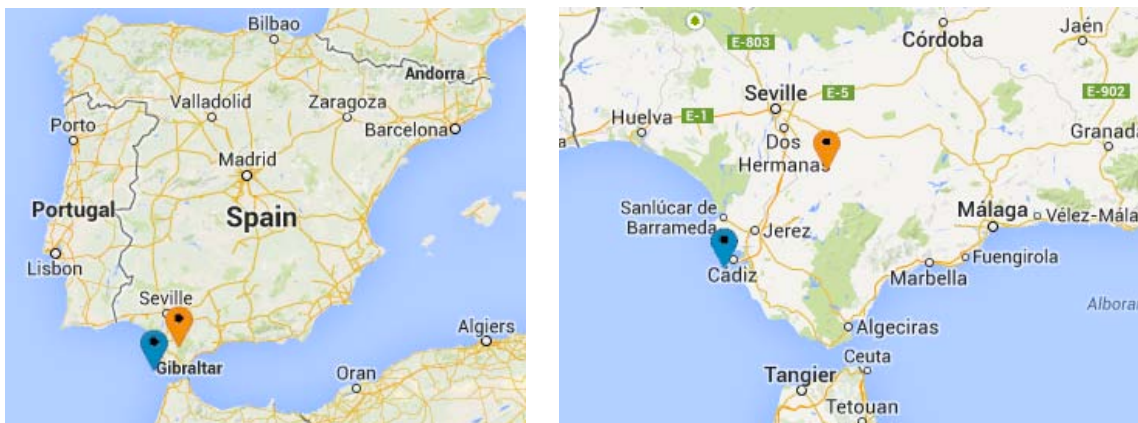
Son de la Frontera cleverly showcased Diego's music in a format that was straightforward, groundbreaking and captivating all at once.

First, Son de la Frontera presented themselves as a bona fide group as opposed to the standard collection of individual performers that constitutes a *cuadro* in flamenco performance. Normally, flamenco performers are promoted individually or as members of a troupe or company. The decision to form a veritable flamenco band reflects Rodríguez's affinity for and background in countercultural musical forms – including American and Andalusian rock, or *rock andaluz*.

Since the late 1960s, there have been a number of groups that fused flamenco with rock and blues, most notably Smash, Triana and Pata Negra. These acts were part of a local hippie and countercultural movement known as the “Underground” that was based in Seville and emerged from the relationships forged between Americans and locals in Morón de la Frontera.<sup>3</sup> Together with the community of American expatriates that studied flamenco in Morón, the presence of American service members at the Morón Air Base and seventy miles south at the naval base in Rota provided locals with access to rock and roll records and hallucinogenic drugs that were nearly impossible to obtain otherwise during the Franco dictatorship. These movements merit an entire study of their own, and so I will only evaluate them in relation to their influence on Son de la Frontera and flamenco in Morón.

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<sup>3</sup> This cultural phenomenon was the subject of a feature-length documentary film, entitled *Underground: La Ciudad de Arco Iris* (2003).



**Figures 2.2 and 2.3** These markers represent the Naval Station in Rota (blue) and the Air Base in Morón (orange)<sup>4</sup> (©2014 Basaroft, Geobasis-DE/BKG, © 2009 Google Maps GISrael, ORION-ME, based in BCN-IGN, Spain)

Next, Son de la Frontera garnered a great deal of attention for Raúl Rodríguez’s pioneering use of the *tres Cubano*, or Cuban *tres*, in flamenco performance. Since the guitar has long been cast as “the conscience of Andalusia” and the preeminent instrument in flamenco, this implementation of the Cuban *tres* represents a clear departure from traditional flamenco instrumentation (Starkie 1953: 98-99). While this instrumental adaptation is undeniably novel, Rodríguez positions the *tres* in terms of transnational flows:

It’s an instrument that had never been introduced to flamenco, and that is groundbreaking. However, the Cuban *tres* is historically linked to flamenco. In the 16th to 19th centuries many people from rural Andalusia immigrated to Cuba. The Cuban “*guajiro*”<sup>5</sup> has a lot of Andalusian roots and the *tres* is an instrument that came from the Cuban fields (Castillo 2010).

<sup>4</sup> These maps are available at: <http://militarybases.com/overseas/spain>

<sup>5</sup> In this context, the word “*guajiro*” refers to “field worker” or “peasant.”

By connecting the genesis of the Cuban *tres* to Andalusian migrants, Rodríguez consciously situates Son de la Frontera's music within an international, and historically rooted, exchange of ideas.

Performative expressions of cosmopolitanism are common, if not compulsory, in world music circles. Led by Rodríguez's interests and involvement in transnational and countercultural movements, Son de la Frontera enacted a singular cosmopolitanism that was imagined historically as opposed to chosen arbitrarily. As the name of their group indicates, Son de la Frontera worked at the edges of accepted flamenco practices in order to envision and create a new sound—a *sello propio* that was collaborative and collectively constituted. Unlike many popular world music groups, Son de la Frontera was quite celebrated among many local communities of flamenco traditionalists. I attribute this success to several factors: First of all, the group was comprised of an incredible collection of talented individuals, two of whom (Paco de Amparo and Pepe Torres) were direct inheritors of Diego del Gastor's *toque*. Furthermore, de Amparo and Rodríguez did a masterful job of arranging Diego's *falsetas* into fluid and complete compositions and weaving them into a group setting.

Flamenco traditions are constantly re-presented and remade through the shared use of *palos* and *falsetas*. In *Fado Resounding*, ethnomusicologist Lila Ellen Gray coins the phrase “cumulative listening” to refer to a form of listening that,

includes past renderings of the same traditional fado structure in the inner ear, a listening that juxtaposes styling one hears in the present with the styling one remembers by a different performer in the past, a performance located in a specific time-place (2013: 156-57).



There are many similarities between fado and flamenco music, in large part because of the geographical proximity and parallel histories that unite Portugal and Spain.

Cumulative listening is relevant to the art of flamenco because artists compose and perform within established rhythmic, melodic, harmonic and poetic frameworks, known as *palos*. These structures are constantly reinscribed with new melodies and approaches that are received aurally, and often visually, in the context of previously experienced performances. I use Gray's concept of cumulative listening to outline the ways that the shared use of sonic resources, including *palos* and *falsetas*, link artists in their quests to bring voices and places to life through sound.

Homage is enacted constantly through flamenco performance in a number of different ways. Performing artists commonly dedicate concerts, pieces, *falsetas* and stanzas to people and places that hold particular significance. In this chapter, I will illustrate how flamenco *palos* and *falsetas* function as mechanisms of historical continuity and are used to bring attention, and inscribe new meanings, to the sounds connected with specific localities and artists. Flamenco musicians, therefore, re-present and re-produce tradition through sonically articulated affiliations.

Finally, these affiliations generate close bonds that Steven Feld identifies through his notion of acoustemology in *Jazz Cosmopolitanism in Accra*.<sup>6</sup> In this work, Feld defines acoustemology as “sonic knowing [that] is the imagination and enactment of a musical intimacy” (2012: 49). Drawing from Feld's theory of acoustemology, I explore

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<sup>6</sup> Feld first coined the term “acoustemology” in the essay, “Waterfalls of Song” (1996b). Since my work in this chapter deals primarily with transnational relations, I draw more heavily from his elaborations on this concept in *Jazz Cosmopolitanism* than from the aforementioned study.

how the Morón *toque* has become entangled in larger processes of countercultural and transnational encounters that converge and become audible through the work of Son de la Frontera. The group's artistic output points to many questions regarding flamenco tradition, performance and authority including: How do expressions of cosmopolitanism in flamenco relate to declarations of patrimony and ownership? For instance, how does the enactment of divergent intimacies threaten existing claims to ownership and heritage in flamenco? What do these threats reveal about the individuals and communities that perceive them? How does cosmopolitanism in flamenco differ from other expressions or assertions of cultural universalism in world music spheres? In the following pages, I will explore these issues by tracing Son de la Frontera's performance practices back through the Gastor lineage as well as the unique countercultural movement in Seville known as the "Underground." By surveying the group's quick rise and eventual separation, I will demonstrate how Son de la Frontera's trajectory is illustrative of the diverse pressures, constraints and possibilities that are characteristic of and made manifest through flamenco performance practices and ideologies in Andalusia today.

### ***Prelude to the Gazpacho***

In early August 2012, I traveled by bus from Seville to Morón in order to attend the 46<sup>th</sup> annual "*Gazpacho Andaluz*," or "Andalusian Gazpacho" flamenco festival. Our bus passed over highways beside endless stretches of olive groves and occasional patches

of sunflowers.<sup>7</sup> I realized that we were close to town when we passed the American air base, which was marked by an antique jet held aloft in the middle of an intersection.



**Figure 2.4 An American “Freedom Fighter” jet in an intersection on the outskirts of Morón (Photo from 2009 by and courtesy of Jerry Gunner)**

An American presence has long been established as a regular component of day-to-day life in Morón. Many townspeople are employed at the base and it is not uncommon for local residents to have American friends and colleagues. Consequently, my arrival to Morón was only unusual insofar as flamenco was my primary concern. In town I was routinely met by wide smiles and stories about Diego and the local sound. This was a welcome contrast to my regular lukewarm reception in Seville, where thousands of international students and tourists flock to experience flamenco each year.

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<sup>7</sup> Andalusia is one of the greatest producers of olives and olive oil in the world. There is a seemingly perpetual surplus of olives because many of the region’s bars serve them free with every order.

The following day, I sought refuge from the oppressive Andalusian heat in a local restaurant and bar known as Casa Loren. Owned by Lorenzo Sánchez, this establishment was known as a meeting place for local *flamencos* and renowned for its offerings of fresh seafood. As it turns out, several of the Gazpacho festival's organizers were hovering over drinks at the bar and Juan del Gastor had only just left.

I introduced myself to Sánchez and began speaking with him about flamenco. He proceeded to play a number of different compact discs on a small boom box behind the counter. First, he put on what he referred to as a “private fiesta recording” of Juan del Gastor accompanying the *cantaor* Gaspar de Utrera *por bulerías* (1932-2008).<sup>8</sup> Flamenco devotees in Morón often showcase their private recordings as a form of demonstrating their social proximity to local artists and happenings. Next, Lorenzo played a recording of Dieguito de Morón, saying, “*Esto no tiene nadie*” (“Nobody else has this [recording]”). This declaration was meant to communicate Lorenzo's central standing in the local flamenco community. I immediately recognized this recording of Dieguito and realized that it was the first track on the album *Cultura Jonda 21*. Although this album is currently difficult to obtain, it is a commercial recording and was even available on the streaming music service Spotify at one time. I refrained from correcting Lorenzo so as to avoid embarrassing him and perhaps even precipitating an argument or confrontation.

Regardless of this mischaracterization, the attention given to private recordings in Morón is great. One's access to non-commercial recordings acts as a measurement of an

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<sup>8</sup> I believe that this recording was actually from the commercial album *Cante Flamenco* released by Nimbus Records in 1988.

individual's *afición*, or dedication and fondness, for flamenco and the local community. This is further proof of how contexts for performance, access and distribution of flamenco recordings shape the relationships between artists, collectors, listeners and the Morón community at large (Novak 2013: 210). Moreover, these dynamics are undoubtedly the result of Diego del Gastor's refusal to record professionally, the arrival and increasing availability of the tape recorder in Morón, and the throng of international students who regularly made use of this device in lessons and *fiestas*.



**Figure 2.5** Dieguito de Morón's album from the *Cultura Jonda* series

Lorenzo ended up presenting me with the Dieguito disc, but before he did we listened to the guitarist's masterful rendering of *bulerías*.<sup>9</sup> About halfway through the recording, Dieguito played what is perhaps the best-known *falseta* from the Morón school. Upon hearing this passage, Lorenzo remarked, "*Esto es solo en Morón, ná más*"

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<sup>9</sup> It bears mentioning that the people of Morón were extremely generous, presenting me with gifts at seemingly every turn. They welcomed me with open arms and clearly appreciated my dedication to studying the music in their town.

(“This is [heard] only in Morón, and nowhere else.”). Often referred to as the Zarzamora lick or *falseta*, this playful melodic line invariably stirs up audiences, inciting shouts of “¡Viva Morón!” (“Long live Morón!”), “¡Diego!” and “¡Olé!” In the following section, I will use this *falseta* to outline a particular genealogy of listening from a mid-twentieth century *copla*<sup>10</sup> to small-town flamenco through to urban rock music and finally arriving at the work of Son de la Frontera.

### ***Mapping the “Zarzamora” Falseta***

In 1946, a *copla* entitled “La Zarzamora” (“The Blackberry”) was written by three of the genre’s most prolific composers: Manuel López-Quiroga, Rafael de León and Antonio Quintero. The famous Spanish singer, dancer and actress Lola Flores was the first artist to popularize this piece in the late 1940s, and it became one of her most celebrated hits. De León’s lyrics tell the story of a beautiful and bewitching woman (with eyes like blackberries) who suffers in love after toying with the hearts of many men:

<i>¿Qué tiene la Zarzamora que a todas horas llora que llora por los rincones? Ella que siempre reía y presumía de que partía los corazones.</i>	<i>What is wrong with the Zarzamora? She is crying at all hours in the corner She, who always laughed and presumed that she was breaking [men’s] hearts.</i>
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<sup>10</sup> The *copla* is a type of Spanish popular song akin to the ballad that flourished from the 1940s through to the early 1960s. During this time, many *cantaoras*, including Juanito Valderrama and Manolo Caracol, sang *coplas*—often in order to achieve popular acclaim. Contemporary flamenco artists such as Estrella Morente and Miguel Poveda continue to integrate this form into their repertoire. It is important to note that the word “*copla*” refers literally to a lyrical “verse” in a song or poem and, therefore, is not always used to denote this particular musical genre.

Sung with an Andalusian accent, these are the lyrics from the chorus that are repeated intermittently throughout the piece. Diego del Gastor likely adapted the melody from this section to create his famous *bulerías falseta*.

In fact, it is not known whether del Gastor wrote the melody for the *falseta* himself or if he appropriated it from another source. Although no listener can deny the similarities between these musical fragments, several members of Diego's family were surprised when I suggested that "La Zarzamora" might have influenced his playing. There is evidence, however, to suggest that this *falseta* predates "La Zarzamora." An Odeón label recording from the 1930s opens with an introductory passage on the guitar that sounds strikingly similar to Diego del Gastor's *falseta*. The recording is a *guajira* entitled "Guajiras Cómicas" featuring the *cantaor* El Chato de las Ventas and guitarist Manolo de Badajoz.<sup>11</sup> The noted flamenco author and journalist José Manuel Gamboa believes that de Badajoz had simply modified Diego's *falseta* to fit into the *guajiras* form (Gamboa 2002: 159).<sup>12</sup> Regardless of the provenance of Diego del Gastor's famous *falseta*, it has become forever linked with Morón and its *toque*.

Diego del Gastor was known for integrating a number of different influences into his guitar playing. By many accounts he was a freethinking eccentric with many interests that included poetry and classical music. There are recordings of Diego in which he plays the music of Federico García Lorca and Beethoven, including a version of "Für Elise" set in *bulerías*.

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<sup>11</sup> I have my friend and celebrated flamenco author and journalist Estela Zatanía to thank for introducing me to this recording.

<sup>12</sup> It is worth mentioning here that *guajiras* are set in a slow-paced 6/8 time, whereas *bulerías* normally has a very rapid twelve-beat rhythm that is in 6/8.





Although Lorca's poetry is recited and sung frequently today by *cantaores* and *aficionados*, to do so during the Franco dictatorship was an open act of rebellion. Lorca was suspected of being homosexual and an outspoken leftist who represented a significant threat to Franco's Nationalist forces. The renowned poet was assassinated in 1936 and his writing was banned until 1954 and censored until the end of Franco's rule in 1975. According to Raúl Rodríguez, it was widely known that a colonel from the Civil Guard commonly attended *fiestas* in Morón. Therefore, Diego del Gastor risked significant personal harm by performing and even identifying Lorca's compositions for attendees in *fiestas*.

Diego's rebellious performances, however, were not limited to the works of Lorca. He also played "The Internationale," "La Marseillaise," and "El Himno de Riego," which was the hymn of the First and Second Spanish Republics (1873-1874 and 1931-1939). Franco and his forces had fought against the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War, a tragic and bitter conflict that lasted from 1936 until 1939. While veterans from Franco's triumphant army were admitted proper burials and memorialized by national monuments, many members of the vanquished side were left in roadside graves and sentenced to lives of servitude. Like numerous other victims of the war, Lorca was buried in a roadside trench after being gunned down by a small firing squad. His remains have yet to be located and unearthed.

Diego del Gastor also adapted the melody from a traditional Andalusian folk song, entitled “El Vito,” into his performances of *bulerías*.<sup>13</sup> A melody from this piece was used as the basis for the verse in the famous Republican anthem, “El Quinto Regimiento,” or “The Fifth Regiment.” In a similar fashion, the lyrical and melodic content from Lorca’s “Anda Jaleo” became the chorus in “El Quinto Regimiento.” Perhaps not surprisingly, Republican soldiers converted many of the songs that Lorca collected, arranged and recorded<sup>14</sup> into battle hymns. In this way, “El Vito” became strongly linked with Lorca and Republicanism in the popular imagination.

The verse lyrics from “El Quinto Regimiento” chronicle the heroics of an army company from Madrid that was formed in response to Franco’s military uprising against the elected Republican government in July of 1936.

*El dieciocho de Julio  
en el patio de un convento  
el pueblo madrileño  
fundó el quinto regimiento.*

*The eighteenth of July  
on the patio of a convent  
the people of Madrid  
founded the fifth regiment.*

*Con los cuatro batallones  
que a Madrid están defendiendo  
se va lo mejor de España,  
la flor más roja del pueblo.*

*With the five battalions  
that are defending Madrid  
go the best in Spain  
the reddest flower of the people.*

Created by the Communist Party, the fifth regiment was in charge of defending Madrid from the fascist invasion. In the wake of Hitler and Mussolini’s ascension to power, the Spanish Civil War perfectly embodied the clash between fascist and democratic ideals.

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<sup>13</sup> In *The People of the Sierra*, Pitt-Rivers writes, “The name *el vito* derives from a traditional dance of the same name associated, owing to the speed of its step, with St. Vitus. It is a popular dance no longer but was apparently a variety of *bulería*, a type of dance strongly infused with satire. Indeed, the words of the *vito* are clearly intended to mock” (1966: 170).

<sup>14</sup> See Lorca’s *Colección de Canciones Populares Españolas* (1931), which was recorded with the singer La Argentinita.

The eventual defeat of the Republican side and its long-lasting repercussions (the most obvious being a thirty-six-year-long fascist dictatorship) spawned a strong sense of nostalgia that still permeates leftist discourses and desires today.

Inheritors of Diego's *toque*, including Paco del Gastor and Paco de Amparo, continue to integrate "El Vito" and Lorca's works into their music. Paco del Gastor has also served as the premier accompanist for the outspoken *cantaor* El Cabrero for over twenty years. José Domínguez Muñoz (b. 1944), known as El Cabrero,<sup>15</sup> or "The Goatherd," is a shepherd and famous *cantaor*, recognized for his rebellious spirit and sincerity as well as his *letras* and contributions to *fandangos*. In an interview with the BBC, he asserted, "When there is something to say, one cannot be silent because to be silent is to die" (Whalley 2013). El Cabrero is best known for penning a highly anti-authoritarian piece in the *fandangos* form entitled, "Fandangos Republicanos," or "Republican Fandangos."<sup>16</sup>

*Como buen republicano  
tengo las ideas muy claras  
como buen republicano  
ya esta bien de tanta lacra  
que llevan miles de años  
viviendo de otras espaldas*

*Like a good republican  
I have very clear ideas  
like a good republican  
Fed up with so many leeches  
who have spent thousands of years  
living off the backs of others*

*A donde haya un hambriento  
no me hablen de igualdad  
ande(donde) haya un hambriento  
ya se encarga el capital*

*Wherever there is hunger,  
don't speak to me about equality  
where there is hunger  
They who are in charge of the money*

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<sup>15</sup> El Cabrero modeled his sartorial style and overall appearance on Clint Eastwood's characters in director Sergio Leone's "Spaghetti Western" films. Incidentally, these pictures were often filmed on location in the deserts of Andalusia's easternmost province, Almería.

<sup>16</sup> This piece appears on El Cabrero's 2011 album *Pastor de Nubes* ("The Shepherd of Clouds" or "The Cloudherder") as "Como buen Republicano."

*la monarquía y el clero  
que haya desigualdad.*

*the monarchy and clergy  
will make sure that there will be inequality*

*Aunque sea de muy viejo  
espero verlo algún día  
ni un céntimo para el clero  
menos pa la monarquía  
y mas beneficio al pueblo.*

*Even if I am old  
I hope to see it one day –  
not a cent going to the clergy  
less for the monarchs  
and more benefits to the people.*

El Cabrero continues to sing these *letras* today as a way of remembering, honoring and striving for the ideals that republicanism encompasses and represents in Spain. Paco del Gastor's continuing association with El Cabrero serves as a performative expression of solidarity with leftist movements.<sup>17</sup>



**Figure 2.8 El Cabrero singing a *siguiriyas* in the BBC Four film, *Flamenco: Gypsy Soul* (Screenshot taken from the film)**

Like El Cabrero, Diego was uncompromising in his beliefs and unafraid to express himself regardless of the company that he was in. In our interview together, Raúl

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<sup>17</sup> In 1997, for example, the music of El Cabrero and Paco del Gastor was featured in a documentary, entitled *Vivir la Utopía*, that chronicled the history and experiences of anarchists, communists and unionists during the Spanish Civil War.

Rodríguez asserted, “Diego was completely countercultural! He was an anarchist in the time of Franco.” In many ways, it is the integrity of these two artists—whether musical, social or political—that earns them great respect among *aficionados*. Moreover, Diego’s unyielding rebelliousness would later fit in with a younger generation of rockers that worked to fuse flamenco with distorted electric guitars and drum sets.



**Figure 2.9** Album cover from Pata Negra’s *Blues de la Frontera*

In 1987, Diego del Gastor’s “Zarzamora” *falseta* reappeared on the title track from Pata Negra’s fourth album, *Blues de la Frontera*. Surrounded by the sounds of electric guitar, including funky ninth chords and signature riffs from B.B. King, the *falseta* sounds quite out of place. It functions as a refrain of sorts in between bouts of jamming between the guitarists, brothers Rafael and Raimundo Amador. Pata Negra inserted the twelve-bar blues form, which unfolds in 4/4 time, into a *bulerías* replete with

*palmas* throughout. Today they refer to this piece as a “blueslerías”—a perfect combination of blues and bulerías.

While creating a new name for a song form may seem trivial, among flamenco artists this has become exceedingly rare. Performers often take lyrical and musical elements from one *palo* and use them in another. For many *aficionados*, however, the creation of a new *palo* smacks of irreverence towards tradition.<sup>18</sup> In the case of Pata Negra, it reveals a desire to bring together the musical culture that they were born into with the sounds and attitudes that they first experienced through records. There were several factors that made the composition and recording of “Blues de la Frontera” possible.

First, Ricardo Pachón received the Carnes’ tape reels and housed them in his place of residence. It was there that the Amador brothers first heard the music of Diego del Gastor – including the famous “Zarzamora” *falseta*. During the 1970s, Pachón immersed himself in the local “Underground,” as it was called, in Seville. He managed the flamenco rock group Smash and produced a number of groundbreaking albums with legendary artists like Veneno, Pata Negra, Lole y Manuel and Camarón. These were among the first projects that brought both the spirit and sounds of rock and flamenco together.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Some *palos* that were created more recently include Camarón’s *canastera* and El Lebrijano’s *galeras* in the 1970s.

<sup>19</sup> In perhaps the earliest attempt to merge flamenco with rock, Sabicas recorded the album *Rock Encounter* with electric guitarist Joe Beck in 1966. Rather than bringing these two forms together in an interdependent fashion, however, the performances on this album are extremely fragmented.

Seville's "Underground" was sparked in large part by the presence of Americans in Andalusia. Both of America's military bases in Spain were located in the south, and this provided local residents with access to music that they had never heard before. In Morón, the radio station and troops from the air base introduced neighbors to the music of Jimi Hendrix and Pink Floyd. Pachón recalled,

That connection [with the air base] was very, very important because in Madrid, in Barcelona, in the rest of Spain they hadn't ever heard Pink Floyd. All of that music—John Mayall, the Rolling Stones' first records—in Spain they did not publish anything like this. Nothing. So that's how we began to experience psychedelia, psychedelic rock, counterculture... (interview, 7/30/12)

Records from American soldiers passed into the hands of everyone from radio deejays and music storeowners to musicians and casual listeners. In this way, rock and blues music circulated very quickly across Seville. Nazario Luque, the Sevillian godfather of the Spanish underground strip cartoon, remarked, "This created an ear for music that didn't exist in the rest of Spain" (Iglesias 2003). In the 1960s, the influence of the American base in Morón was so great that, for a short period, Seville became home to perhaps the most progressive cultural and musical scene in Spain. This city, which is recognized as a bastion of traditionalism and orthodox Catholicism, became the stage where rock bands and clubs emerged to the delight of the local youth population. Pachón observed,

[What happened in] Seville had nothing to do with Madrid or Barcelona. Madrid and Barcelona were prehistoric at that time—musically speaking that is. Then groups like Smash came out. That was Seville. [At that time] nobody else played rock in the rest of Spain. Nothing came out. (interview, 7/30/12)

Encounters with American service members and flamenco enthusiasts exposed locals to new philosophies, cultures and sounds that set the stage for a revolution that would reverberate for years to come.

For example, Gualberto García, one of Smash's founding members, has integrated the Hindustani sitar and South Indian veena into flamenco performance for well over thirty years. García began his musical career on the guitar and switched over to the sitar after hearing it in Morón. He recalled,

The first time that I heard a sitar was in the home of an American who was a student of Diego del Gastor. He had some records by the Beatles, I listened to them and I was very impressed. Later, I went to the United States and began to take an interest in flamenco. [It was there that] I realized that the sitar had microtones with which you could imitate [the sounds of] the *cante*. (“Gualberto y Ricardo Miño ‘Soleá’” 2009).

This initial encounter in Morón inspired Gualberto to travel to the United States, where he recorded with Aretha Franklin, attended Woodstock and showed The Band<sup>20</sup> how to play bulerías (Calado 2002).

The youth in Seville gravitated towards new sounds because they represented an escape from the constant propaganda, dogma and dominance of the Franco regime and the Catholic Church. Rock music's associations with liberation and rebellion were heightened in Spain, where such ideas were expressly and systematically forbidden. Thus, the introduction of bohemian cultural philosophies in Seville presented locals with the opportunity to challenge existing norms—whether musical, spiritual, social or otherwise.

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<sup>20</sup> This group was famous for backing Bob Dylan and performing in Martin Scorsese's documentary *The Last Waltz* (1978).



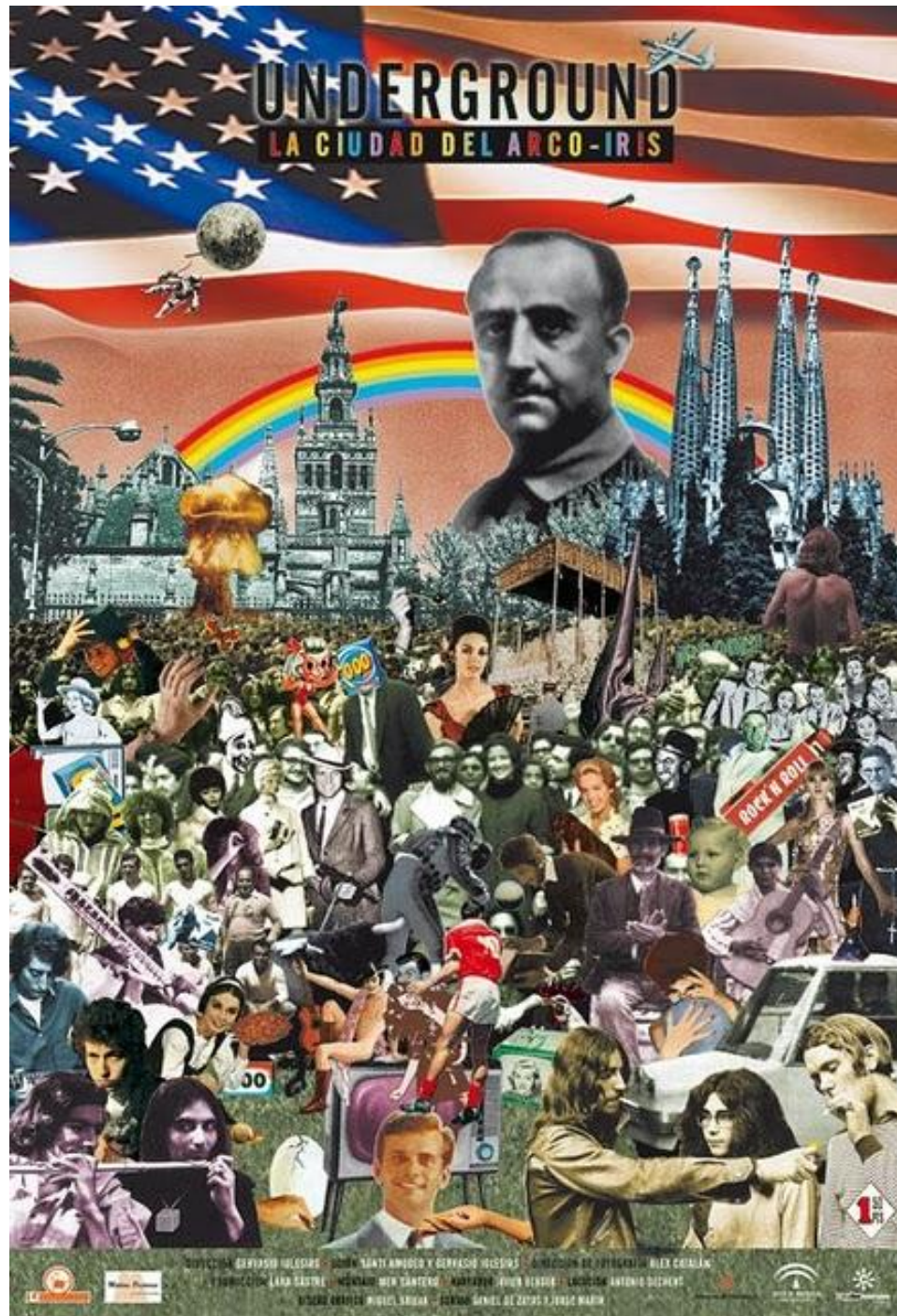


Figure 2.10 The official movie poster from the film *Underground: La Ciudad del Arco-Iris* juxtaposes traditional, modern and radical symbols, personages and elements from 1970s Spain – all of which are beneath the portrait of an unsuspecting Francisco Franco.

The cultural rupture that resulted from these societal changes deeply impacted Raúl Rodríguez's artistic sensibilities as a young man. When I interviewed him, Raúl described his upbringing to me:

I grew up in counterculture. My parents were hippies in the early period. And I was born during the age of the transition from dictatorship to democracy, it was a very liberating time. [Musically] they did everything, mixed everything. When I was a boy, Pata Negra played at my house and I saw these Gitanos playing electric guitars and I thought that the world was going to be like that, you know? (interview, 7/29/12)

Although he did not realize it at the time, the latter arrangement was extremely unusual. As Gitanos, Rafael and Raimundo Amador faced a great deal of pressure to remain faithful to their race by only performing *flamenco puro*. Raimundo Amador refers to his music as “fusion” and is quick to point out, “When I play blues, flamenco has to come out because I have it in my blood” (Amador 2009). As I have mentioned previously, the statement, “*lo llevo en la sangre,*” or “I have it in my blood,” is a common refrain among Gitanos that equates proficiency in flamenco with biological inheritance.

Gitanos in Andalusia are often raised with their family members singing and dancing flamenco in the home. Children are taught to participate in these activities from a very young age. Furthermore, as they become older, there are many expectations that younger generations of individuals will honor their elders by carrying on their particular styles and nuances of performance. With the predominance of mass media that began to reach Andalusia in the late 1970s, however, these traditions have changed tremendously.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Some of these changes are visible in the film *Polígono Sur: El Arte de las Tres Mil* (2003). For example, one scene in this movie features a pair of young men rapping to rhythms that are played on the cajón.

Before setting off on a solo career, Raúl's mother (Maribel Quiñones), who performs under the stage name "Martirio," became a member of the band Veneno in 1984. Together with Kiko Veneno, as well as Rafael and Raimundo Amador, she recorded the album *Si tú, si yo*. Years later, Raúl immersed himself in flamenco after hearing the "Zarzamora" *falseta* in Pata Negra's recording of "Blues de la Frontera." He explained,

I discovered that only this *falseta* is more irreverent [*vacilona*], more rocker and forceful than anything else. And the music of Pata Negra is the most irreverent music that's been made in Spain in the last twenty years (González-Caballos 2003: 224).

Rodríguez's genealogy of listening belies a very different relationship to Diego del Gastor's music than his bandmates in Son de la Frontera. Raúl was the only member of the group that did not grow up in Diego's adopted hometown. Rather, he arrived to Morón by way of Seville's "Underground," and, as a result, his vision and approach to the Morón *toque* were less a result of family or self-identification than interests connected to Diego's artistry and musical language. This approach continues to be defined by a commitment to transnational and cosmopolitan sounds and experiences.

### ***Encounters with Son Cubano***

In July of 1993, the Spanish musician Santiago Auserón organized a festival of *encuentro*, or meeting, in Madrid to highlight the relationship between poetry and Cuban *son* music. The event brought together Spanish and Cuban musicologists, including Danilo Orozco, Faustino Núñez and Rolando Pérez, together with Cuban poets Cintio Vitier, Fina García Marruz and Bladimir Zamora. During the following summer, Zamora and Auserón coordinated a second *encuentro* that focused on flamenco and Cuban *son*.

The latter musical style originated in eastern Cuba at the beginning of the twentieth century. It features a combination of European and Afro-Cuban musical instruments and traits. The *Encuentro* brought more than thirty Cuban musicians over to perform with flamenco musicians in the Andalusian pueblos of El Coronil, Mairena del Aljarafe, Lebrija, Utrera as well as Seville.



**Figure 2.11 Faustino Oramas “El Guayabero” performs on the *tres* at the 1994 Encuentro in Lebrija (from the archive of Jesús Cosano)**

According to Auserón, the goal of this gathering was to,

stir up the musical conscience of the Spanish youth, to stir up new musical events so that conscience may recuperate the memory of its historic past...and to provoke encounters and connections. In short, the objective is to take a new step to ennoble our popular culture on all of our streets and in all of our homes (Zamora et al. 1994: 6).

Musicologists there highlighted the links between the clave rhythm and beat patterns in the *tangos* flamenco form. They also examined correlations between Cuban and Spanish

poetic forms and schemes.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, Auserón and his colleagues established close relationships with many great Cuban musicians including Compay Segundo (Francisco Repilado, 1907-2003). The event sparked an important dialogue between the two cultures that resulted in a number of future collaborations, both in studio and on stage.

During the fall of 1995, for example, Auserón produced Compay Segundo's album *Antología*, which features a comprehensive sampling of the artist's repertoire. This is the recording that inspired Ry Cooder to work with Compay and immerse himself in Cuban *son*.<sup>23</sup> Several months after the album's release, Auserón found himself in a studio with Cooder, the pop singer Luz Casal and bagpipe player Carlos Nuñez. After playing the album for them, Auserón distinctly remembers Cooder's reaction. On his website, "La Huella Sonora" or "The Sonic Trace," he wrote: "Sprawled out on a couch in the background and wearing slippers was Ry Cooder, listening with his eyes half-closed. He opened the copy of [the album] with interest, he had never heard of [Compay Segundo] before" (Auserón 2014). Auserón's work with Cuban *son*, which began with

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<sup>22</sup> For example, *décima* poetry, which is the basis of Cuban *punto* music, can be traced back to sixteenth-century Spain. The *décima* form is comprised of one or more stanzas with ten octosyllabic lines. Ethnomusicologist Peter Manuel presents the *punto Cubano* as the "primary inspirational core" of the genre set that he refers to as the "*guajira* complex" (Manuel 2004: 138). He defines this group as a "set of interrelated genres, which can be seen to constitute various efflorescences, or adaptations, of Cuban *campesino* [or peasant] music" (Manuel 2004: 137). The term *guajiro* itself refers to Cuban farmers of primarily Hispanic descent. The Spanish *décima* was adopted by such peoples and became a hugely popular vehicle of both recited and improvised expressions.

<sup>23</sup> Cooder went on to produce the Buena Vista Social Club, whose eponymous album became, and remains, the best selling world music album of all-time. The release of this record in 1997, as well as a documentary film two years later, created an international revival of Cuban *son* and salsa music. The album has now sold over eight million copies, more than any other Cuban recording.

several trips to the island in the late 1980s, eventually led to a full-scale revival of this music in the United States, Spain and various other European countries.<sup>24</sup>

Before Compay Segundo was ever featured in the world-famous Buena Vista Social Club, he was touring and recording in Spain with Santiago Auserón. Later, Compay also worked with Raimundo Amador and Martirio, among others.<sup>25</sup> In 1997, Raúl's mother traveled to Havana to perform and celebrate the Cuban musician's ninetieth birthday. She returned to Spain with a *tres* guitar for her son and thus began his immersion into musical forms from the Americas. Raúl started to incorporate the musical language of Morón into a totally unique style of performance on the *tres*.

The following year, Raúl formed a musical group to accompany his mother on tour to the United States and various locales in Latin America. The group was comprised of several musicians from Morón that included Paco de Amparo, Moisés Cano, Pepe Torres and Manuel Flores. Together, they recorded several albums, including *Flor de Piel* and *Mucho Corazón*, and embarked on a number of tours over five years. The ensemble was forced to incorporate flamenco techniques and aesthetics into Martirio's diverse repertoire, which included boleros and Argentine tangos as well as rhythms from Colombia, Venezuela and Cuba. This training and experience eventually sparked the idea for Son de la Frontera in 2002. With Martirio's blessing, the group set out to record an album and launch a tour of their own.

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<sup>24</sup> In the early 1990s, Cuban music experienced a solid resurgence in the United States. The U.S. government initiated policies that allowed American recording companies to license the music of Cuban citizens (Scruggs 2003). In addition, the disintegration of Cuba's fiscal relationship with the Soviet Union led to Castro's appreciation for recorded music as a means of generating hard currency. These two factors were crucial to the explosion of Cuban music that came later in the decade.

<sup>25</sup> See Galilea 1997, as well as Compay Segundo's album *Duets* (2002).

### *Traces of the Border*

*¡Cómo reluce la cal de Morón  
bullendo en el Malecón  
burlando fronteras  
con ese son  
y su poquito de ron!*

*The limestone<sup>26</sup> of Morón shines  
boiling in the Malecón<sup>27</sup>  
evading borders  
with that sound  
and a little bit of rum!*

– José Manuel Gamboa<sup>28</sup>

In 2003, Son de la Frontera recorded a self-titled album that was dedicated to Diego del Gastor. Out of the eight tracks included on *Son de la Frontera*, only two featured original compositions by the group. Paco and Raúl arranged Diego's *falsestas* into entire compositions that were woven with spaces for individual, as well as group, improvisation. Rodríguez played Diego's melodic fragments on the *tres* while de Amparo shadowed him on the flamenco guitar. The *tres*'s steel strings immediately add an unusual timbre and texture to the sound of flamenco performance.

While leading flamenco artists like Paco de Lucía and Tomatito have occasionally incorporated metal-stringed or nonnative (i.e., non-Andalusian) instruments into their recordings, including the bouzouki and oud, these are usually featured during short intervals.<sup>29</sup> These practices denote an artist's willingness to draw from an open sonic

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<sup>26</sup> Limestone, or *cal*, is converted into a traditional form of white paint (also known as *cal*) that covers a vast number of homes in Andalusia. It also acts as a symbol of domestic life in Morón and Andalusia. I explain the significance of *cal* later in this section.

<sup>27</sup> The Malecón is an expansive boulevard, pier and sea barrier that extends across the Cuban coast in Havana.

<sup>28</sup> This stanza appears in the liner notes from Son de la Frontera's album *Cal*.

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, the opening track on de Lucía's *Almoráima* (1976) and the second piece from his album *Cositas Buenas* (2004).

palette, and constitute an audible expression of the performer's intercultural, and possibly cosmopolitan, identity.



**Figure 2.12 The cover from Son de la Frontera's first album features a set of abstract figures, which is unusual for a flamenco disc.<sup>30</sup> Released and distributed by the World Village Label, this album was clearly geared towards listening audiences and consumers outside of Andalusian flamenco communities.**

Rather than enacting solidarity with contemporary communities in Andalusia, such actions often constitute efforts to reinscribe flamenco sounds with bonds to the generally unheralded legacies of peoples that no longer inhabit southern Spain – including Jews and Muslims from North Africa.<sup>31</sup> Spain was defined by an intensely homogenous nationalism under Franco, and, as a result, these expressions remain emblematic of personal freedoms that were denied for much of the twentieth century. At the same time,

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<sup>30</sup> The vast majority of flamenco album covers that I have seen feature images of artists, instruments or *fiestas*. Less often they will depict Andalusian landscapes and monuments.

<sup>31</sup> A well-known example is the album *Encuentros* (1985), which features collaboration between the *cantaor* El Lebrijano, *tocaor* Paco Cepero and the Andalusian Orchestra of Tangiers.



unorthodox forms of instrumentation in flamenco often represent a desire to move beyond the racial binary of Gitano/*payo* and acknowledge the diverse peoples that contributed to historically rooted cultural formations in Andalusia. Medieval Moorish fortresses, mosques and palaces stand as testaments to the presence of former residents in this region. Like the rebellious Andalusian rock music of the 1970s, the integration of transnational and historically imagined musical elements into flamenco is a conscious rejection of Spanish isolationism and monolithic nationalist ideology. Together, these movements represent efforts to come to terms with life in post-dictatorship Spain.

Son de la Frontera is unique in that they featured an Andalusian musician playing on a foreign instrument *throughout* the project. Moreover, as a self-taught *tres* player Rodríguez was forced to draw from his technical and conceptual resources on the flamenco guitar and modify them to fit onto his new instrument. Using a plectrum, the sound of Raúl's attack on the strings is less varied than on the guitar.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, he maintained a distinctly flamenco voice by reproducing and improvising upon the rhythmic structures and melodic shapes of this music through the ringing tones of his *tres*. He utilized quick glissando flourishes and a great deal of open string work to complement de Amparo's booming guitar with a spacious and bright sonority. Together, they harmonized and played unison passages from Diego del Gastor's musical world, adding a number of different textures in the process.

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<sup>32</sup> There are a number of right-hand techniques used to play the flamenco guitar that alter the timbre considerably. These include free-stroke and rest-stroke variations with the index and middle fingers in *picado*.

Naturally, the “Zarzamora” *falseta* appears on this album and, if you listen closely, you can hear one of the musicians from the group say “Diego!” during the performance. This is a common practice in flamenco, where artists accompany instrumental, including rhythmic, declarations with shouts that explicitly describe the people and places that are being rendered and remembered through song. For example, at the beginning of a performance of *tangos* from Triana, performers often announce, “¡Vamos a Triana!” (which means “Let’s go to Triana!”). In this way, artists prepare their audiences for an aural visit to Triana, which is always accompanied by a particular set of rhythms, melodies, *letras* and harmonic sequences. Moreover, these journeys are evidence of how performers and listeners in flamenco locate themselves through sound. Only knowledgeable artists and listeners can fully generate and appreciate these travels, including the locales and individuals that are paid a visit along the way.

Son de la Frontera’s debut album received glowing reviews and enthusiastic audiences in the world music circuit. The American singer-songwriter Jackson Browne touted Son de la Frontera as “The best new group I’ve heard recently, in any genre. A riveting tribute to the seminal flamenco master Diego del Gastor, this CD embraces the tradition of *flamenco puro* and succeeds in making it new” (Byram: 2014). Many reviewers focused on the addition of the Cuban *tres* to flamenco, describing the group with charged adjectives like “crossover,” “hybrid” and “radical.” The *tres* captured the imagination of non-flamenco listeners and fit in easily with the ubiquitous and fetishized internationalism of world music circles.<sup>33</sup> Critics described the group’s music at once as

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<sup>33</sup> For more on this phenomenon, see Timothy Taylor’s *Beyond Exoticism* (2007).

Argentine, Mexican, Middle Eastern, Colombian, Egyptian, Lebanese and even east Indian. In a online review for *All About Jazz*, Chris May wrote,

The centerpiece of the album is the intense, nine-minute workout ‘Cambiaron Los Tiempos,’ a primal raga duet between Rodriguez’s tres-as-sarod and Pepe Torres’ handclaps-and-footstamps-as-tablas. Close your eyes and you could be somewhere on Pakistan’s northwest frontier....On a lighter note, ‘Tango [sic] De Mi Novia,’ in which Rodriguez bizarrely and delightfully takes bluegrass mandolin down Mexico way, is also remarkable (May 2006).

While Son de la Frontera unquestionably drew from a diverse set of musical influences, reviewers missed the mark by exaggerating these associations and fabricating a host of others. “Tangos de Mi Novia,” for example, has nothing to do with bluegrass, Mexico or Argentine tango.<sup>34</sup> Rather, it is taken from a number of Diego del Gastor’s compositions in the *tangos* form. Instead of outlining the relationships between group members and musical influences, these writers explain what they *themselves* are hearing. While non-Andalusian influences are often deployed to promote and corroborate racialized visions of flamenco’s origins, in this case they are introduced to appeal to a wider set of consumers. Finally, even as reviewers point out the group’s relationship to Diego del Gastor and Morón de la Frontera, many of them failed to explain other contexts for creation—including the experience that they gained from working with Martirio and touring Latin America.

On their second album, entitled *Cal*, Son de la Frontera delved further into their own visions of flamenco by featuring a wider array of *palos* and more original compositions than on their first record. The opening piece is “Un Compromiso/Toda Una Vida,” a *bulerías* that combines the work of Cuban poet and songwriter Osvaldo Ferrés

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<sup>34</sup> The reference to Argentine tango was made in Cindy Byram’s online profile of Son de la Frontera.

with Spanish composer Gregorio García Segura.<sup>35</sup> Rodríguez also samples the melody from a well-known Puerto Rican tune called “Cumbanchero” on his *tres*. What results is an innovative sonic and poetic patchwork that creates a dialogue between Cuban and Spanish musical resources.

Flamenco songs that draw from Latin American and Caribbean sources are referred to as “*ida y vuelta*,” or “round trip,” forms. This class of *palos*, which includes *guajiras*, *rumbas*, and *colombianas*, was widely maligned by *aficionados* in the middle of the twentieth century as impure, foreign and inconsequential. Part of the reason for this reception is that these song forms were disconnected from local affiliations and simultaneously linked with foreign lands and peoples. The singer Pepe Marchena (1903-1976), for example, created the *colombianas* form by combining elements of the Mexican *corrido* with a Basque dance style known as *zortziko* (Radiolé 2014). While personal creations can be integrated into the staged repertoire fairly quickly, it often takes longer for them to filter into local practices. Moreover, since Marchena was a popular singer and film star, he was never viewed as an exponent of *flamenco puro* and his *colombianas* never became representative of any communities in Andalusia. More recently, influences from the New World have been accepted and fully integrated into the flamenco repertoire. Son de la Frontera’s music is rooted in pueblo flamenco, but presented through the lens of distinctly Cuban and Latin American textures, melodies and timbres.

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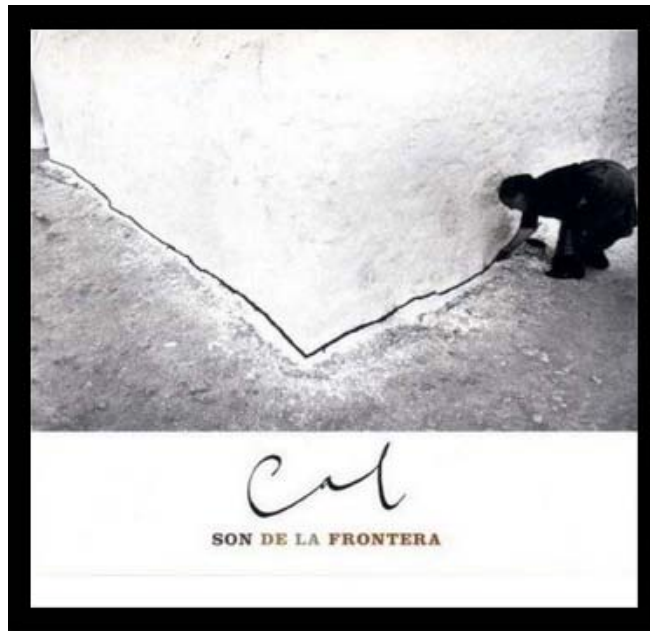
<sup>35</sup> Fernanda de Utrera also sang these *letras*, which doubtlessly inspired Moi de Morón to perform them here.

*Cal* also features music from Diego del Gastor's brother, Antonio Amaya Flores, who was known as "El Mellizo." As mentioned in the previous chapter, Evan Harrar gave a number of the *fiesta* tapes to group members Pepe Torres and Paco de Amparo. Through this exchange, Son de la Frontera was able to assimilate Mellizo's *falsetas* from both the *sevillanas* and *tarantos* forms into a group context. After forty years of remaining dormant on cassette and reel-to-reel tapes in California, Son de la Frontera breathed new life into El Mellizo's music.

The album title, *Cal*, refers to a limestone mortar that is routinely and repeatedly applied to homes in southern Spain for cleaning and painting. In Andalusia, limestone is converted into a white paint (also known as *cal*) that is used to decorate a vast majority of buildings and residences. This paint fortifies building structures and protects inhabitants from the region's oppressive heat. Andalusia's *pueblos blancos*, or white towns, which collectively constitute a major regional symbol, are all coated with *cal*. This material builds up over many years and eventually serves to fortify the structure to which it adheres.

The group sees this practice as intimately connected to the home, land and culture of flamenco from the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries. *Cal* also serves as a metaphor for the accumulation of various compositions and artists within a single tradition. Raúl Rodríguez stated,

The fact that *cal* is applied in coats makes it like flamenco's oral tradition, one person singing or playing someone else's composition is like applying another coat of paint. That's the main reason for treating the past with respect because you're painting over someone else's work (Castillo 2010).



**Figure 2.13 The album cover from *Cal* features a woman painting a black line on the underside of a residence covered in limestone paint.**

Son de la Frontera is acutely aware of the cumulative nature of flamenco performance. The group viewed tradition as a historically rooted layering in which the simultaneous accretion and amalgamation of diverse elements ideally lead to greater fortification.

After winning the “Best in Europe” BBC World Music Award in 2008, Son de la Frontera was invited to perform at London’s Royal Albert Hall on July 30, 2008. Their performance was organized in conjunction with four other winners of World Music Awards from BBC Radio. At this pivotal moment in the group’s trajectory, Raúl, Paco and Pepe disagreed over what to perform during the concert. Paco and Pepe each wanted to perform solo numbers in the style of a flamenco *cuadro*. During traditional flamenco *cuadro* performances, each member is given an opportunity to showcase their talents individually. Although these performances can include accompaniment, they highlight solo efforts at the expense of a cohesive group identity. For this reason, *cuadros* do not

usually possess group names, but, rather, identify the names of individual performers on posters and marquees.

Son de la Frontera's revolutionary character was linked not just to the integration of Raúl's *tres*, but also to the collaborative concept that they boasted and developed through performance.



**Figure 2.14 Son de la Frontera pictured alongside heaps of limestone grounds inside Morón's quarries.<sup>36</sup> From left to right: Moi de Morón, Pepe Torres, Manuel Flores, Raúl Rodríguez and Paco de Amparo. (Photograph © 2006 Mario Pacheco)**

In the liner notes to *Cal*, Paco Pavía declared emphatically, “El concepto ‘grupo’ no se aplica en el flamenco, sino términos como ‘cuadro’ o ‘cuadrito,’ pero SON DE LA

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<sup>36</sup> This photograph is taken from the inside cover of the group's second and final album, entitled *Cal*.

FRONTERA ES UN GRUPO FLAMENCO” (“The concept of a ‘band’ does not usually apply in flamenco, where loose combos like the ‘cuadro’ or ‘cuadrito’ are the norm. But SON DE LA FRONTERA IS A FLAMENCO BAND.”) This statement was confirmed visually as well as sonically, because the group posed for album photographs in all black outfits—complete with stylish sunglasses.

It is within these contexts for collective performance that the aforementioned disagreement between group members surfaced in July of 2008. These differences of opinion and approach contributed to the group’s disintegration shortly after their high-profile performance in London. At the Royal Albert Hall they combined concepts from both camps by performing several group pieces from their albums, including “Tanguillos de la Frontera” and “Bulería Negra del Gator,” as well as several solo interludes by Paco de Amparo and Pepe Torres. In Raúl’s mind, Son de la Frontera was meant to be “a *fin de fiesta* all the time, in all of the *palos*. When we perform a *soleá*, all of us [should] perform.” Rodríguez believed that his bandmates underestimated the importance of their performance at Royal Albert Hall, treating it like a traditional setting as opposed to an international stage.

The dispute between group members stemmed from a debate over priorities. While de Amparo and Torres envisioned Son de la Frontera as a flamenco band, Rodríguez undeniably considered it to be a band that played flamenco. Raúl was interested in drawing connections across borders while his bandmates were primarily concerned with honoring their maestros, many of whom are blood relatives. This is understandable because, unlike Rodríguez, Pepe Torres and Paco de Amparo were raised



in a family where flamenco was viewed as an integral part of their social and spiritual existence. Although they are of mixed-race heritage, or *mestizo*, both artists identify enthusiastically as Gitanos. Therefore, Pepe Torres and Paco de Amparo had an additional responsibility of not only representing themselves as individuals, but also as members of an extended family of flamenco legends that includes Diego and Paco del Gastor. This obligation usually involves enacting local and familial intimacies before any others and is fulfilled through the use of specific techniques, styles and configurations of performance. In addition, these approaches are more closely linked with home life in Gitano communities. As a result, Gitano artists often are more inclined to perform within established frameworks because they are associated with fond memories and close relationships.

In the end, the musical and conceptual changes that Raúl sought were considered to be antithetical to other members' affiliations with flamenco and Morón. He wanted Son de la Frontera to adapt traditions to settings, communities and audiences located outside of Andalusia. While the group was able to create inspired and extraordinary music for a short period, ultimately their various allegiances proved to be incompatible.

### ***Life Beyond la Frontera***

In the years since the breakup of Son de la Frontera, the group's former members have performed in a wide variety of musical projects. Paco de Amparo continues to experiment with non-traditional instrumentation in a project called Son Aires de la

Frontera. In the group's first and only album to date, entitled *Moroneando*,<sup>37</sup> Paco leads an ensemble that includes mandola player Keko Baldomero, violinist José Gregorio Lovera, as well as local residents Mercedes de Morón, David El Gallí and Ignacio de Amparo. With nine participants in all, this group focuses less on purely instrumental performance and incorporates more selections with *cante* and percussion. The group retains the moniker "de la Frontera" because, as Paco explains, "we are from la Frontera...from Morón" (de Amparo 2010). With the constant presence of Diego's *toque* and the metallic sounds of the mandola, the group sounds similar to Son de la Frontera. This is a testament to de Amparo's consistent compositional brilliance within the Morón *toque*. Without Raúl in the group, however, the bandola is only conceived in terms of its sonic contribution and never explicitly theorized in relation to history, culture or community. Paco de Amparo describes the group's music as, "always flamenco, in which the guitar, *compás*, *cante* and *baile* intertwine with the sole purpose of giving voice to the flamenco of our land" (de Amparo 2010). Whereas Son de la Frontera located themselves at the borders of cultural and musical spaces, drawing from a host of influences and styles, Son Aires de la Frontera is focused entirely on the past, present and future of Morón. Also unlike the former group, Son Aires de la Frontera has not performed internationally and appears indifferent to the world music circuit.

Rodríguez has also returned to his personal roots, touring with artists that include Martirio, Raimundo Amador, Kiko Veneno and Santiago Auserón's group, Juan Perro y

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<sup>37</sup> In Spanish, nouns can easily be converted into verbs by adding an -ar, -er or -ir suffix to the end of a word. In this case, *Moroneando* translates as "*Moroning*," implying that this verb denotes playing the flamenco music of Morón and, of course, Diego del Gastor.

La Zarabanda. These professional engagements allow him a great deal of freedom for improvisation and provide him with the opportunity to perform in a wide array of styles that include blues, jazz and rock music. In these settings, he performs alongside electric guitarists, bassists, keyboardists and rock drummers. In 2013, Raúl and his mother recorded an album that was dedicated to the famous Mexican singer Chavela Vargas. Even as he continues to work in rock and other popular styles, Raúl is committed to studying and performing Latin American musical forms.

More recently, Rodríguez finished recording his first solo album, *Razón de Son*, which is set for release in the fall of 2014. In the first week of May 2014, he performed material from this record at the Shoko room in Madrid. I caught a glimpse of Rodríguez playing an original blues-based number at this performance in an online video. In this piece, entitled “Si Supiera” or “If I knew,” he sings stanzas that are full of sexual innuendo and double entendre in a throaty style similar to Kiko Veneno. Raúl’s virtuosity is on full display in this performance as he launches into improvised solos with a commanding stage presence that evokes the showmanship of blues and rock guitarists like Chuck Berry. These aesthetics of corporeal movement were never unleashed in Son de la Frontera’s shows, because showmanship is usually reserved for dancers in flamenco concert settings.

Since departing from Son de la Frontera, Rodríguez has continued to search for a sound that combines sonic and cultural influences from several continents. A few years ago, he worked with the Triana-based luthier Andrés Domínguez in order to create a

veritable *tres flamenco*. They arrived at an instrument that brings together the strings of the flamenco guitar and laúd on the body of a Cuban *tres*.<sup>38</sup>



**Figure 2.15 Close-up of Raúl Rodríguez’s *tres flamenco*, which combines strings from the laúd, flamenco guitar and Cuban *tres*. Each pair of strings (from left to right) is tuned to F#, B and E. (Photograph © 2012 Joshua Brown)**

With *Razón de Son*, Rodríguez suggests that “we should have a new music without bias, without thinking that we are creating fusion, but, rather, uniting together musics that are already siblings: with Cuban, Colombian, Venezuelan, Argentine and with African musics, too.” He continues, “I believe that we need a new music, a different horizon that has nothing to do with purity” (Rodríguez 2014). For Raúl, purity in flamenco is an

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<sup>38</sup> According to Raúl, it resembles instruments that preceded the arrival of the guitar, and remained popular in Andalusia during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Rodríguez 2014).

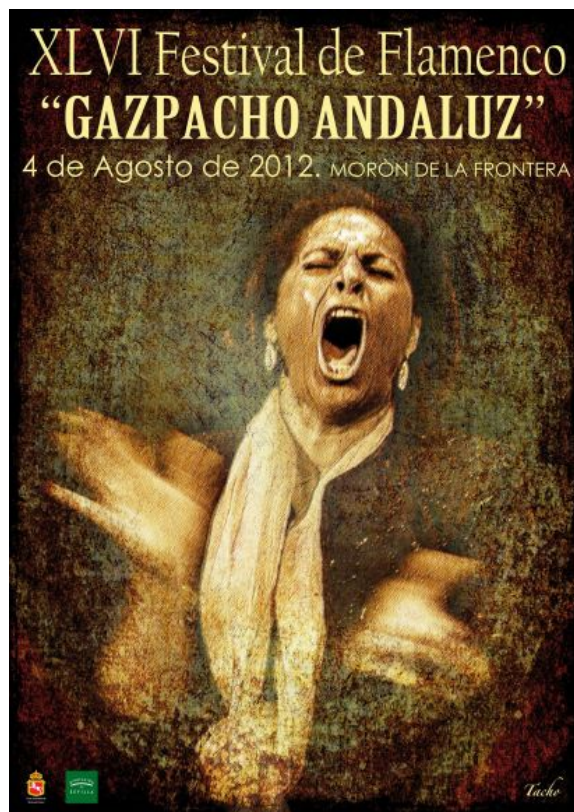
overbearing concept that limits his ability to move freely between musical, cultural and historical influences. *Pureza* is a barometer for orthodoxy based on artistic abilities, aesthetic decisions and social configurations, including ancestral and racial (namely Gitano) affiliations. This attribute is most often assigned to performers that articulate and reinforce local bonds. For this reason, adherents and proponents of *pureza* in local flamenco communities rarely embrace flamenco artists that enact divergent intimacies in transnational and cosmopolitan contexts. As Philip Bohlman writes, “World music can raise fears that we are losing much that is close to home” (2002: xii). Entrance into cosmopolitan spheres of influence, including the field of world music, not only represents affiliations that transcend the local, but also *necessitates* the enactment of divergent intimacies that are believed to threaten local ties in Andalusia. External affiliations are often met with distrust and perceived as threats because they symbolize a departure from locally lived histories and modes of expression. Part of the local attraction to flamenco performance is based on an understanding that today’s artists struggle with the sonic resources that were bequeathed to them by their predecessors and ancestors. To venture outside of these inherited reserves is considered to be an evasion of civic and personal responsibility.

### ***Festival in Morón: El Gazpacho Andaluz***

On August 4, 2012, just one day after my exchange with Lorenzo, I wandered over to a local schoolyard in Morón where the local flamenco festival was set to begin. Sponsored by the Andalusian Ministry of Culture and Morón’s city council, the

Gazpacho Andaluz festival dates back to May of 1963. This year’s lineup featured artists from Lebrija, including Antonio Moya and María Peña, as well as performers from Jerez and Morón.

Although Morón de la Frontera is known for its *toque*, the poster for this year’s festival featured a drawing of a *cantaora* engaged in an intense execution of the *cante*. Representations of *cantaoras* are often used to represent and promote pure manifestations of flamenco performance. Since the *cante* not only vocalizes native sentiments but is also the facet of flamenco that has seen the least change, it is viewed as the best-preserved, and therefore most pure and locally imbued, form of flamenco expression.



**Figure 2.16** A poster from the 46<sup>th</sup> annual Gazpacho Andaluz festival in Morón de la Frontera.

Several of Diego del Gastor's descendants were scheduled to perform, including Pepe Torres, Gastor de Paco (Francisco Moncayo Gómez, b. 1992) and Antonio de Gastor (Antonio Jesús Zamorano Gómez, b. 1993). The two latter performers are brothers that are in constant training with their grandfather, Paco del Gastor. Under his tutelage, they have learned to expand their family tradition by incorporating advanced harmonies and techniques into their playing. This springs from Diego del Gastor's initial desire to train Paco to be a classical guitarist. At his uncle's urging, Paco learned to read music and appreciate the value of classical music theory. As I mentioned earlier, Diego loved to play and listen to classical music, and this had a major impact on Paco's approach to music-making. In order to make a living in Madrid during the 1960s, Paco was forced to learn to play for dancers and singers with a much wider repertoire than he was accustomed to hearing in Morón. Today, his grandsons are subject to similar pressures regarding technique and repertory. In our interview together at the Gazpacho festival Antonio del Gastor, exclaimed, "Instead of playing *a cuerda pelá*, [those of us from the newer generations] will play a *picado*.<sup>39</sup> Of course [Diego's playing] is extremely varied and rich, but you can't eat from playing that alone nowadays." Professional engagements for flamenco guitarists are highly competitive in Andalusia, and, as a result, musical versatility and technical wizardry are often preconditions for employment.

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<sup>39</sup> *Picado* refers to a technique in which the guitarist uses rest strokes to pluck the strings with the index and middle fingers. In this context, however, Antonio is referring to the mastery of this technique and the ability to play an extremely fast passage of *picado*.

The style that Gastor de Paco and Antonio play bears little resemblance to their great-uncle Diego and this can be attributed to his grandfather's emphasis on composition and individual creation. In a publically staged interview with Fernando González-Caballos, Paco lamented, "Diego's guitar has fallen into very bad hands.... Yes there are four popular *falsetas*, but that is not Diego's *toque*. Diego's *toque* was knowing how to compose. I compose and sound like Diego did, but it is my music, that which I create" (del Gastor 2009). Paco's strong personal relationship with Diego enabled him to forge a sound that was both distinctive and connected to his uncle's tradition.

Today, Paco del Gastor's grandsons have that same advantage, which amounts to a self-evident expression of *pureza* and cultural capital. Both Antonio and Gastor de Paco wield the forceful and thumb-heavy techniques that their grandfather developed many years ago. This is a major point of pride among the Gastor family. Juan explained, "Everything that Gastor de Paco does, nobody else does. It's from his grandfather and his house." With an abundance of guitarists around the world that play Diego del Gastor's *falsetas*, Paco del Gastor sets himself, and now his lineage, apart through the use of original and extraordinary techniques and compositions. In this case, ownership is enacted through complex performance practices that *cannot* be duplicated or learned without intense study and direct training from Paco del Gastor.

Back at the festival, I sat and watched Juan del Gastor focus intently and proudly as his grandnephews performed solo numbers, one after the other. Gastor de Paco played a through-composed piece in *tarantas* that his grandfather wrote for him. At only



nineteen years old, Gastor de Paco won first prize with this composition at the prestigious Las Minas flamenco contest in 2010.



**Figure 2.17 Antonio del Gastor plays at the Gazpacho Festival on the evening of August 4, 2012. (Photograph © Joshua Brown)**

His younger brother, Antonio, played an original *bulerías* in the same style but with less technical prowess. I thought to myself about something Juan had assured me several months earlier: “As long as there are Gastoreños<sup>40</sup> playing the guitar, [the tradition] will be just fine.”

### ***Conclusion***

The Morón *toque* points to the ways in which traditions are collectively constructed, remembered and revitalized. These case studies also reveal how divergent intimacies can become juxtaposed competitively through performance in the eyes and

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<sup>40</sup> This expression refers literally to residents of the pueblo of Gastor. In this context, however, it describes the descendants of Diego del Gastor. This is an example of how the names of people and places become intertwined, creating new meanings and referents in the process.

ears of *aficionados*. Community members, including artists, are sensitive to and protective of the sonic styles and articulations that represent them. In addition to creating and reinforcing communal bonds and associations, flamenco performance enables artists to situate themselves ideologically, chronologically and geographically in Andalusia. By enacting retellings of local histories, the members of Son de la Frontera inscribed their own accounts of these narratives through sound. They explicated the meanings of the Morón *toque*'s past *and* present and, in so doing, claimed and reiterated an ownership of, and participation in, its development (Pollock 2006: 127).

## Chapter Three

### *Whose Flamenco?: Peñas, Patrimonies and Professionals*

*Hoy aparte de que hay muy poca afición, intereses es lo que hay hoy en el flamenco. Antes reinaba el compás por bulerías, tú entrabas en un sitio haciendo compás y todo el mundo iba a buscarte. Hoy entras haciendo compás y se da todo el mundo la vuelta, porque la afición se ha convertido en interés y ya no gusta la gente tan flamenca.*

Today apart from the fact that there is little *afición*, interests are what exist today in flamenco.<sup>1</sup> Previously, the *bulerías compás* reigned supreme, you would enter someplace doing *compás* and then everybody would come looking for you. Today you enter doing *compás* and everybody turns away, because *afición* has been converted into interest and the real *flamencos* are not well-liked.

– Paco del Gastor (Curao 2009: 148)

In the last three decades, flamenco has become established as a global artistic and commercial phenomenon. As a result, local institutions and government bodies in Seville have turned their attention to the promotion, regulation and consolidation of what has become known as the flamenco industry. The extensive institutionalization of flamenco has converted a number of artists into prominent public figures and champions of local music and culture. A multitude of newly minted conferences, periodicals and festivals stand as proof of the local government's desire to control how flamenco is perceived and consumed. These institutional efforts are based on a fundamental contradiction in which flamenco supports a five hundred million euro industry annually, but also somehow belongs to a culture that is considered to be quickly disappearing.

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<sup>1</sup> *Afición*, which is related to the term “*aficionado*,” is used to refer to one's respect, dedication and deep affection for flamenco. Here, Paco del Gastor juxtaposes *afición* with interest, which connotes monetary concerns and benefits in this case. Moreover, he bemoans how spontaneous and informal performances are looked down upon today.

Over the last ten years, the supposed diminishing position of flamenco in popular Andalusian culture has prompted large-scale preservation efforts by the local government. In 2007, the Andalusian Statute of Autonomy listed the conservation of flamenco as a guiding principle in public policy. The Andalusian government's ability to support flamenco artists and institutions has been severely lessened, however, due to the global economic crises. For nearly seven years, the autonomous government of Andalusia worked to promote the candidacy of flamenco as UNESCO Intangible World Heritage. Finally in November of 2010, flamenco was officially inscribed onto UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. While the UNESCO title is undoubtedly a prestigious marker of international recognition, the mobilization of flamenco culture at the institutional level has done little to impact local practices.

In spite of bureaucratic and promotional activities, flamenco performance remains rooted in close-knit communities where it is often enacted for small audiences in *peñas*, or social clubs. *Peña* organizations remain the lifeblood of flamenco communities because they provide both established and aspiring artists a place to hone their craft in front of experienced listeners that often include family and friends. A *peña* enlists members, stages concerts and hosts frequent social gatherings, and many musicians and *aficionados* view it as a veritable home away from home. *Peñas* are patterned after typical Andalusian homes and their stages are almost always replete with flowerpots and faux windows. In addition, the walls of most *peñas* are covered with photos of celebrated

artists and organization members with their friends and family. These decorative features constitute expressions of both social and aesthetic priorities and values.

*Peña* directors are responsible for cultivating an atmosphere that is conducive to a variety of performance styles and contexts. For example, while these clubs will host scheduled performances on Friday evenings, spontaneous and informal music-making sessions, known colloquially as *juergas*, will only develop if artists feel comfortable and inspired. Since many concert attendees are also avid flamenco students and performers, there is always the possibility that an impromptu execution of *compás*, or rhythm, will evolve into a full-scale frenzy of song and dance. Just as *peñas* provide a venue for both planned and unplanned performances, they also house explicitly public and private gatherings on a weekly basis.

Flamenco devotees began to establish *peñas* in the mid-twentieth century in order to create spaces dedicated to the preservation and protection of what they considered to be pure, or authentic, flamenco. Today, many *peñas* still feature a set of statutes or commandments on the wall to announce the organization's stated purposes. These tenets generally call upon *aficionados* to love and respect flamenco song forms. The Peña Torres Macarena's second article of statutes<sup>2</sup> states,

In establishing this *peña*, we set out to accomplish [the following]: create new friendships, strengthen existing ones, and, above all and by necessity, to care for, foment, protect, respect and promote our FLAMENCO, watch over it, free it from impurities and return it to its authentic reality. With this effort, the *peña* believes in fulfilling a duty that all *aficionados* have agreed to with flamenco and with Andalusia, without any lucrative purpose (Centeno Fernández, 1980).

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<sup>2</sup> This statute belongs to the "Decalogue for the Aficionado of Flamenco Song," which appears in the appendices at the end of this dissertation.

Aside from the elimination of “lucrative purpose,” the protectionist ethos of this clause is extremely similar to the stated objectives of UNESCO’s declarations. Undoubtedly, these points of aspirational convergence appealed to conservative *aficionados* across Andalusia.

The ambiguous status of these venues as both public and private spaces imbues them with a functional versatility that enables many modes of interaction and performance, but also poses problems with regard to governmental classification. The local authorities treat *peñas* as public entities on the one hand, and private domiciles on the other. The latter interpretation has allowed police officers to repeatedly fine these institutions for causing noise disturbances. Such actions indicate a particular disjuncture between the interests of *peña* administrators, community members and government officials. Furthermore, the municipal and regional government’s efforts to both assimilate legal standards from the European Union and strictly enforce laws that generate income in the current economic crisis have come at the expense of working musicians and venues across Andalusia. These developments not only contradict the protectionist ethos of UNESCO’s inscription of flamenco onto the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, but they also call into question the very purpose of such declarations.

Drawing from ethnographic fieldwork conducted in two of Seville’s *peñas*, Peña Torres Macarena and Peña Pies Plomo, I will reveal how the recent encroachment of institutional capital and decree upon artists and venues has threatened, rather than supported, the local flamenco community in Seville. The Andalusian government and

UNESCO champion protectionist ideologies that largely fail to address the non-saleable aspects of cultural promotion and protection. *Peñas* fall outside the category of flamenco industry because they are legally prohibited from charging entrance fees and, thus, generating income. As a result, the success of flamenco *peñas* is less of a priority for the local government, and the responsibility for their upkeep falls squarely on the shoulders of determined community members.

In this chapter, I will look at how *peñas* in Seville act as sites of community-building that are often antithetical to official municipal interests. Flamenco represents an Andalusian populism that has, up until fairly recently, been marginalized and suppressed by both regional and national authorities. While members of the middle and upper classes have often served as patrons of flamenco, these *señoritos* constituted a minority population within the ranks of the elite. Moreover, in the last several years, government corruption has reached new heights in Spain, resulting in a complete loss of faith in public institutions.<sup>3</sup> The current economic downturn in Andalusia and across Spain has severely restricted the government's ability to support unremunerative cultural ventures – including *peñas*. Throughout this chapter, I focus on Peña Torres Macarena and Peña Pies Plomo in order to demonstrate the ways in which Sevillian flamenco artists and community members continue to negotiate distinctions between public and private performance in relation to a wide variety of pressures and power structures.

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<sup>3</sup> See the following chapter for further details regarding criminal charges levied against elected officials and members of the royal family in Spain.

### ***Peña Pies Plomo***

On the evening of Friday, September 23, 2011, a friend and I walked from Seville's city center towards the Peña Pies de Plomo to see the *cantaor* Moi de Morón perform. The *peña* is located on Calle Dársena, or Dock Street, a narrow road in the San Vicente neighborhood located just a quarter mile east of the banks of the Guadalquivir River. This establishment is named after a local *cantaor*, Manuel Giorgio Gutiérrez (1924-2013), whose nickname was "Pies de Plomo," or "Lead Feet." Although many *aficionados* claim that this sobriquet derives from the singer's habit of moving slowly through the *cante*, it is believed to stem from an incident in which Gutiérrez accidentally stepped on a chicken as a child. The owner of the bird, and Gutiérrez's future father-in-law, reacted by saying, "*Niño, parece que tienes los pies de plomo*" ("Kid, it seems like you've got lead feet") (López Rodríguez 1997: 503). Many *peñas* are named after local artists, and this practice is just another form of honoring performers that are viewed as the torchbearers of native heritage in Andalusia.

We arrived at the venue fifteen minutes before show time, and I spotted Moi and several of his friends smoking on the concrete stoop in front of one of the neighboring residences. When we walked inside the tall metal doors at the entranceway, there was a small table where a man was selling tickets to the performance. Flamenco music was playing on the stereo while people socialized at the bar and in their seats. After securing my ticket, I went back outside to chat with Moi. We exchanged pleasantries and talked about his experience with Son de la Frontera. Not long afterwards, the ticket vendor politely notified Moi that he was running late and asked him to take the stage. Moi, who



is patently bald, responded, “Oh, I’m sorry but I really need a haircut first.”<sup>4</sup> His friends and I erupted in laughter before returning inside for the performance.

On this night, the brilliant guitarist Jesús Guerrero accompanied Moi de Morón. Together, they ran through two sets that were divided by an intermission. I would come to learn that this format was used for nearly all flamenco concerts, irrespective of the venue.<sup>5</sup> At the end of the second set, Moi delivered an open invitation for enthusiastic members of the audience to join him onstage for a *fin de fiesta* in *bulerías*. Six bold individuals walked from the darkened space occupied by the audience onto the brightly lit stage.



**Figure 3.1** The *fin de fiesta* with audience members crowding the stage, Jesús Guerrero on guitar, and Moi de Morón to his right

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<sup>4</sup> This type of cheeky humor, often referred to as *guasa*, is extremely common in Andalusia. It is usually performed at the expense of others, however, and less often self-deprecating.

<sup>5</sup> In this instance, I am referring only to formal concerts as opposed to private *fiestas* or affairs.

Guerrero, who was seated, began playing an introductory passage to establish *compás* while everyone else stood clapping their hands to the lively rhythm. One, two, three, one, two, three, one, two, three, one two, three...Moi began to sing over the beat before drawing the listener's attention back to the rhythm with a staccato phrase at the end of the first verse: "*Vente, vente, vente, vente conmigo*" ("Come, come, come, come with me").<sup>6</sup> In *bulerías*, the beat often remains steady for long periods of time before rising to a crescendo during the *remate*.

The latter component is critical because it not only brings an end to a section but also requires all of the participants to anticipate and collectively act upon its arrival.<sup>7</sup> The *cantaor* will sing a *letra* until he decides to conclude a phrase with a *remate* – which can happen at a moment's notice. This potential for spontaneity and the redirection of energy and rhythm imbues masterful flamenco artists with the ability to unleash a dramatic forcefulness at will. Moreover, it allows *palmeros* and other accompanists to demonstrate over and over—both to each other and to onlookers—that they are conscious of the leading performer's intentions and emotions. In this way, accompanists enact a mode of continual complicity through the recognition and performance of rhythmic cadences. Meanwhile, the intensity with which singers and dancers perform often becomes mirrored in the actions taken by accompanists, including *palmeros* and guitarists. As the singer becomes louder, for example, the shouts of *jaleo* coming from accompanists and audience members will also increase in volume. The energy created in flamenco

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<sup>6</sup> Each syllable that Moi sang here holds the value of an eighth-note in 6/8 time.

<sup>7</sup> Many *cantaores* prolong the arrival of the *remate* in *bulerías*, thereby creating increasing amounts of tension. This practice is especially prevalent among singers and guitarists in Jerez de la Frontera, including La Paquera de Jerez and Moraíto.

performance ebbs and flows according to how the leading artists steer the music and the rhythm.

In this particular finale at Pies Plomo,<sup>8</sup> Moi and the rest of the performers drew the concert to a close with a rousing frenzy of clapping, foot stomping, strumming and singing. Together, they exited by walking across the stage to the pace of their *bulerías*. Contemporary flamenco concerts almost always conclude in this way. In the 1960s and 1970s, performances often ended with *fin de fiestas* in the *rumba* form. Beginning in the late 1970s or early 1980s, however, more and more performers began to set this finale in *bulerías*. This change is likely due to the influence of Camarón de la Isla, who is considered to be one of the greatest interpreters of *bulerías*.

The *fin de fiesta* models privacy and solidarity as ideal components of flamenco performance. Such qualities are emphasized in *peñas*, where interior decorations are modeled after traditional Andalusian homes and often include faux windows, patios and potted plants. In Pies Plomo, for example, elaborately tiled walls surround the stage and a stylish iron window grate hangs from the back wall over a polka dot window shade. These kitsch elements constitute pronounced examples of simulacra that are designed to stand out as imitations of traditional Andalusian settings. Local fairs in Andalusia, known as *ferias*, showcase the same stylistic features, including rustic wooden tables and chairs as well as textiles covered in stripes and polka dots. In place of family photographs, *peña* administrators cover the walls with framed photographs and

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<sup>8</sup> In this case, I omit the word “*peña*” from “Pies Plomo” because community members often refer to *peñas* simply by their names (without prefacing them with “Peña”). Normally, this practice does not create any misunderstandings because: 1) *peñas* are named after artists that are often deceased or retired and 2) these institutions are places that are talked about differently than artistic figures.

illustrations to commemorate their favorite artists, past events and performances as well as gifts and awards from community members and sister institutions.



**Figure 3.2** Like many *peñas*, the walls in Pies Plomo are covered with photographs of beloved artists, and especially *cantaores*. In the top row, for example, are pictures of Manolo Caracol, Pastora Pavón, Manuel Agujetas and Manuel Vallejo.

The directors of Pies Plomo were very welcoming and invited me to not only attend *cante* classes as an accompanist on the guitar, but also to become a member of the *peña*. I was a bit surprised by their openness because *peñas* are often rumored to be exclusive venues designed for established *aficionados* and *artistas*. I heard several stories about *peñas* in remote towns where older men met to perform and discuss flamenco in isolation. As it turns out, *peñas* in larger towns and cities are inclusive sites

where locals and tourists alike can immerse themselves in the sights and sounds of flamenco.

Several weeks after Moi de Morón’s concert, I returned to Pies Plomo to gain experience by accompanying students of the *cante*. Alicia Acuña led three weekly classes where both *Sevillanos* and *extranjeros*<sup>9</sup> came to study *cante* performance. Alicia grew up in Pies Plomo because her parents were responsible for opening and subsequently directing the *peña*.



**Figure 3.3** During a *fin de fiesta*, Alicia Acuña sings while everyone else keeps *compás* with *palmas*

On the walls, there are numerous photos of Alicia performing as a young girl, an adolescent and an adult. Her mother, Aurelia Avelar Martínez, served as president of the *peña* from 1993 until 2011. During my stay in Seville, Alicia’s husband, Pepe Jiménez

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<sup>9</sup> *Sevillanos* refers to “Sevillans,” while *extranjeros* denotes “foreigners.”

(José Antonio Jiménez Berenguer), took over the title and responsibilities that formerly belonged to Aurelia.

Avelar not only managed Pies Plomo, but also became the first woman secretary, and later president, of a provincial chapter (Seville) of the Federación de Peñas Flamencas (Federation of Flamenco Peñas). This was a major development in the flamenco world because of the prevalence and persistence of patriarchy and *machismo* in Andalusia and Spain at large. In Spain, women have long been confined to domestic spaces and tasks, including cooking, cleaning and raising children. Traditional gender roles intensified under the Franco dictatorship, during which married women were legally regarded as minors (Chuse 2003: 100). Naturally, this ideology of patriarchy was just as pronounced in flamenco circles where bars and other venues outside the home were considered unsuitable for women.<sup>10</sup> The female witnesses to flamenco gatherings were most often escorts that accompanied *señoritos*. Although the Franco regime glorified women as homemakers and discouraged them from working, fiscal realities forced many women into roles as textile workers, domestic servants and prostitutes.

Today, gender divisions in Andalusia remain quite pronounced in the social sphere. In general, Andalusians and Spaniards tend to socialize within large groups of friends. When I spent time with local friends in Seville, there were many instances in which these groups split along gendered lines. In our interview together, Aurelia explained how these dynamics manifested in flamenco *peñas* and how she responded to them:

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<sup>10</sup> I discuss the dichotomy between male and female spaces and spheres at length in the following chapter.

Flamenco has always been a male chauvinist [*machista*] field. Women have always had to sweep the *peñas*, prepare the food, put away the chairs and put out the chairs—but not direct [a *peña*!] Men in the *peñas* were fine with excluding women. I remember one year at the Punta Umbria *peña* in Huelva, I arrived and introduced myself and they said, ‘You are Aurelia? The president of Peña Pies Plomo?’ I said, ‘Yes.’ ‘The secretary of the federation?’ I said, ‘Yes.’ And there were some older ladies there that said to me, ‘Thank goodness! Because here they only want the women to clean and mop.’ In my *peña* I also clean up, but so do the men. And since I am qualified to do certain things, well I like to do those things. In my *peña*, I have spent nineteen years bringing artists here and organizing things and all without a dime. (interview, 3/5/12)

Before she began working in Pies Plomo, Avelar served on the local city council’s board of directors, dealing with issues that ranged from neighborhood relations to prostitution.



**Figure 3.4 Aurelia Avelar Martínez**

Thus, when the time came to select a leader for the *peña*, Aurelia’s friends and colleagues nominated her for the job. At the same time, however, she faced significant opposition because many *peñas* continue to function as old boys’ clubs.

In the city of Huelva, for example, which is located fifty-seven miles west of Seville, women were shut out of local *peñas* entirely. María Carmen Wall Abad explained, “The men believed that we couldn’t understand or feel flamenco, and so they didn’t allow us in” (Rodríguez Pagés 2014). In response, Wall joined together with a group of women to establish the Peña Cultural Flamenca Femenina, or “Feminine Flamenco Peña,” in 1983. Even as *cantaoras* and *bailaoras* like Pastora Pavón and Carmen Amaya were (and continue to be) held up as paragons of flamenco purity, women were still viewed as second-class citizens outside of the contexts of performance.<sup>11</sup> At *peñas* in Huelva, female singers and dancers were allowed to perform while female patrons were denied entry. “They thought that we were going to crochet,” Wall remarked (Rodríguez Pagés 2014).

Back in Seville, Aurelia was expected to socialize in the women’s corner of Peña Torres Macarena. She recalled,

Next to the fireplace, that’s where all the women sat at their tables and their husbands at the bar. And I would be at the bar with my husband. Many times they would say to me, ‘Aurelia, well why don’t you sit [over there] with the other women?’ And I’d say, ‘Because I’m not a woman. I’m a *person*.’ I’d say that I’ve had it up to here with clothes, food and the kids. I come here to talk about other things. (interview, 3/5/12)

Since the flamenco *peña* is modeled after traditional Andalusian patios and residences, perhaps it is not surprising that these venues operate according to time-honored gender roles.

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<sup>11</sup> For more information on the personal and professional struggles and triumphs of *cantaoras*, see Chuse, 2003.





discontinued their memberships with the *peña*, some of whom complained that they could no longer enjoy their wine and tapas in peace. On the other hand, Pies Plomo became a popular hangout among tourists as well as young flamenco artists and students.

*Peñas* have long served as locales where budding artists train and hone their talents. With the collapse of the economy in Spain, however, established artists that once graced the stages of large theaters have been relegated to performing in *tablaos*. As a result, lesser-known professionals have a tougher time finding work and oftentimes rely on tours and performances in *peñas* to make ends meet. Although, as many artists have told me, flamenco has always been in crisis (and never been extremely lucrative), this collective demotion has left many younger artists without venues where they can develop their craft. Many of the *peñas* that were once open to students and emerging performers no longer offer these opportunities.

As I mentioned before, Peña Pies Plomo offered three *cante* classes each week. These classes provided *aficionados* and beginners with the opportunity to learn from the highly acclaimed *cantaora* Alicia Acuña. The vast majority of *cante* students were Andalusian, while all of the guitarists were from foreign countries that included Armenia, Italy, Mexico and the United States. It is very difficult for non-Spaniards to correctly pronounce and sing *letras* from the *cante*. Moreover, while flamenco dance and guitar are taught online and in studios around the globe, there are hardly any international outlets for learning flamenco song. Consequently, it is almost impossible for flamenco guitarists from outside of Spain to hone their *cante* accompaniment skills with a live partner. Non-Spanish flamenco guitarists, therefore, often become technically proficient

without fully grasping the melodic, harmonic and rhythmic vocabulary that underlie this dynamic and diverse musical culture. During the fall of 2011, for example, two Italian flamenco guitarists that had toured extensively with a flamenco dance troupe visited Seville in order to deepen their knowledge of the *cante*.

Over a period of six months we ran through a number of different *cantes*, including *soleá*, *malagueñas*, *siguiriyas*, and *caña*. Alicia often spoke about the *cante* as something that was living, breathing and brought into being through performance. As an accompanist, she showed me how the guitar is crucial in establishing stylistic boundaries and framing the *aire*, or feeling, of each *cante*. The guitarist is responsible for following the *cantaora*'s every move and giving her a chance to breathe by providing a sonic cushion. In several *palos*, including *malagueñas*, the tempo fluctuates and allows for significant improvisation and discretion among performers. In these instances, flamenco performance constitutes a musical conversation between *cantaora* and *tocaor* that is full of charged silences. For all of these reasons, foreign *aficionados* and artists journey to Andalusia each year with the intention of gaining experience and further insight into the basic principles of flamenco performance.

Aside from classes and official concerts, Peña Pies Plomo held several exclusive events for *socios* that included birthday parties, raffles and *tertulias*. On one occasion, Pepe cooked a huge pot of *potaje*<sup>13</sup> to celebrate the coming of Christmas with friends and family. He invited a choral troupe from a neighboring *peña* in Triana to perform and

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<sup>13</sup> This is a type of stew that is rich with onions, carrots, garbanzo beans, garlic, rice and ham.

partake in the fare and festivities of this *zambomba*.<sup>14</sup> The group, which was comprised of fifteen men and women, squeezed onto the *peña*'s diminutive stage and performed Spanish Christmas carols, known as *villancicos*.<sup>15</sup> Towards the end of the performance, Pepe and Aurelia walked on stage and surprised the choir, presenting them with a plaque commemorating the event. *Peñas* often conduct exchanges in which *socios* travel to sister institutions in order to promote cooperation and collaboration in the flamenco community at large. It is common for *peñas* to hang commemorative plaques and plates as decorations that represent their efforts to foster a larger sense of community among *socios* and *aficionados*.



**Figure 3.5 A local choir sings during the *zambomba* event**

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<sup>14</sup> A *zambomba* is a traditional Andalusian gathering during Christmas time in which friends, relatives and neighbors meet to celebrate and sing *villancicos*. This practice is believed to have originated in Jerez de la Frontera.

<sup>15</sup> Renditions of these pieces resemble flamenco performance in that they often feature guitars, *palmas*, *jaleo* and a meter of 6/8.

Since *peñas* are self-sustaining entities, they usually rely on membership fees to cover their monthly costs. During my stay in Seville, I was one of close to fifty *socios* that paid fifteen euros each month to remain members of Pies Plomo. Membership benefits included free access to all concerts and private events held at the *peña*, as well as discounts on food and drinks from the bar.

Occasionally, tourists and other visitors outnumbered the *socios* at Pies Plomo. During holidays, important soccer matches and bouts of bad weather, for instance, hardly any *socios* came to the *peña*. Meanwhile tourists and international students appeared every Friday, completely unaffected by the concerns of locals. In order to attract international audiences, Pepe almost always scheduled dancers to perform with *cuadros* on Friday evenings. He also put photographs of dancers on fliers to appeal to these foreign patrons.



**Figure 3.6 Flyer posting for a flamenco performance at Pies Plomo**

While dance is considered to be extremely important in flamenco circles, the *cante* is widely regarded as the purest and most potent form of expression among *aficionados*. As a result, many festivals project an allegiance to tradition and purity by featuring pictures of writhing, contorted *cantaores* on fliers and other advertisements.

### ***Peña Torres Macarena***

In the winter and spring of 2012, I conducted fieldwork at Peña Torres Macarena, just north of Seville's city center. Established in 1974, this peña stands on hallowed ground at Torrijano Street where the famed *cantaor* Manuel Torre once lived. Numerous legendary Sevillian performers, including Esperanza Fernández and José de la Tomasa, began their careers within the walls of Peña Torres Macarena.

In contrast to Pies Plomo, many people view Peña Torres Macarena as a bastion of tradition and *pureza*. For example, I attended several concerts at Pies Plomo that featured reggae, rock and other styles of music. In this way, Pies Plomo is a nonconformist establishment that its directors make available to larger swaths of the local and foreign populations. Staging a non-flamenco concert at Torres Macarena would be considered inappropriate and a needless departure from the institution's objectives.

Next, while there were no prerequisites for membership at Pies Plomo (except for payment), achieving the status of a *socio* at Torres Macarena normally requires at least several years of attendance and involvement at the *peña*. Torres Macarena can afford to be more selective regarding membership because they have many *socios* to finance their activities and upkeep. Furthermore, Torres Macarena has its own *caseta*, or marquee tent,

during Seville's Spring Fair, known as the *Feria de Abril*. At this local celebration, the vast majority of *casetas* are private, and therefore act as a marker of success and elevated status within the local community.<sup>16</sup> Each *casetas* provides friends, families and institutions with a private space where they can run their own bar, kitchen and sound system. There is such a high demand for these structures that it can take years, or even decades, for a *casetas* application to be fulfilled by the local government.<sup>17</sup> According to several of my fieldwork consultants, many people remain *socios* at Torres Macarena for the sole purpose of gaining access to the *peña's casetas* during *feria*.

The *peña* is set in a large two-story building replete with a concert area, kitchen, bar and fireplace, as well as an outside patio and an upstairs library. The diverse qualities and sheer amount of space featured in Torres Macarena allow for a multitude of opportunities for congregation, interaction and performance. For example, behind the bar and kitchen, there are two rooms where artists can rehearse and change into their stage attire. I witnessed several fiestas take place in these private quarters after staged concerts had ended. The area itself is referred to as the "*Callejón del Cante*," or "*Cante Alley*," while tiled signs identify the two rooms as "Triana" and "Jerez y los Puertos" ("Jerez and the Ports"). Triana, Jerez and port towns (including Cádiz) in southern Andalusia are often considered to be the locations where the purest forms of flamenco *cante* originated and developed. By naming their green rooms in this way, the directors of Peña Torres

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<sup>16</sup> Outside of Seville, all of the *ferias* in Andalusia feature majority public *casetas*. As a result, people from outside cities and pueblos see Seville's fair as elitist and pretentious (which is, perhaps not surprisingly, how they view *Sevillanos* in general).

<sup>17</sup> Aurelia from Pies Plomo revealed to me that her *peña* was on the waiting list for a *casetas* for over nineteen years.

Macarena are not only paying tribute to these locales, but also establishing them as requisite destinations that must be reached through song. The signs stand as visual proof of how artists and *aficionados* locate themselves and their art through sound.



**Figures 3.7 and 3.8 The “*Callejón del Cante*” which includes Triana and Jerez y los Puertos**

In addition, tiles and photographs featuring revered artists like Antonio Mairena, Manuel Vallejo, Niño Miguel and Lole and Manuel cover the walls both inside and outside of the building. Resting on a ledge above the bar, there is a bronze bust of Camarón that is evocative of statues depicting famous Western composers like Beethoven and Chopin. These are all testaments to the wealth of flamenco as an art form, and the vitality of the local flamenco community. In this way, *peña* directors and members create an environment that is based upon remembrance and tribute.

Homage is a way of locating oneself in relation to the past, and it is constantly enacted through flamenco performance and other activities among artists and *aficionados*. As I pointed out in previous chapters, tributes are often paid through the recitation of a particular *cante* or *falseta*. At the same time, spoken declarations of tribute can occur



before the performance of a concert, piece or *letra*. For example, in May 2012, I attended a tribute concert dedicated to the late *cantaor* Enrique Morente in Seville's Central Theatre (Teatro Central). One of the performers at this event, Tamara Escudero, dedicated her performance of a *vidalita* to another *cantaor*, Pepe Marchena, before she began to sing. At this moment, I wondered what compelled Escudero to momentarily take the spotlight off of Morente and shine it towards another artist. Nobody in the audience, however, seemed to mind the way in which this homage piece was framed within an homage concert. Flamenco audiences and *aficionados* are accustomed to processing multiple strands of reverential performance in which peoples and places are proclaimed and paid tribute through sound.

It is a common practice among *peñas* to present acclaimed artists with awards in order to honor them and compel them to perform at their institutions. Thus, high-profile artists like José Mercé, who commands fees far outside of any *peña* budget, will sometimes honor these invitations for the purposes of goodwill and solidarity. In spite of geographic, class, ideological and ethnic divisions, there continues to be a pervasive sense of camaraderie among flamenco communities in Andalusia. A shared appreciation for flamenco artistry and identification with the sounds and movements enacted through this art form bind individuals together in the face of what they commonly view as encroachment by commercial and political interests. In addition, experienced flamenco artists often enjoy performing at *peñas* because they offer an intimate setting with knowledgeable and demanding audiences.

Even though *peñas* are modeled after private residences, I quickly learned that audience members are expected to remain silent for the duration of staged performances. In Pies Plomo, for example, there is a sign by the bar that reads, “*Durante la función, la barra está cerrada*” (“During the show, the bar is closed”). On an arch above the stage in Pies Plomo, a group of tile letters spelled out the following message: “*Saber Escuchar es un Arte*” (“Knowing How to Listen is an Art”). Knowledge of the *cante* signifies a thorough understanding of flamenco histories, artists and geography. In Peña Torres Macarena, there is a framed black and white portrait of the Mona Lisa with her right index finger covering her lips. Around the picture it reads, “On certain occasions, silence is art. Silence, please.” During concerts at Torres Macarena, the bartenders would lower their voices to a whisper and either slow or cease transactions with the public. This is another reason why *peñas* are considered by artists to be ideal spaces for performing. As I mentioned before, silence is an integral part of flamenco performance in which artists breathe with the music. Since time in flamenco elapses through rhythmic cycles, *compás* not only carries on but also thrives upon the distinctions between sound and silence, as well as loudness and stillness. These cycles allow artists to frame space and time at will by creating and juxtaposing intervals of silence with vocal, instrumental and corporeal sounds.

Peña Torres Macarena also offered *socios* and other interested parties the opportunity to convene for casual bouts of singing on most Sundays. On the first Sunday in May of 2012, I attended a *tertulia* at Torres Macarena in the early afternoon. During these informal gatherings, Pepe, the resident cook, served up outstanding *tapas* that

included *champiñones* (mushrooms in a marinade), *espinaca* (pan-fried spinach and garbanzos), *boquerones fritos* (fried anchovies) and *carrillada* (slow-cooked pork cheeks). Whereas the pace of the *peña* was always hurried before concerts, with everyone rushing to save seats and order food, *tertulias* were relaxed and always sparsely attended. Popular concerts at the *peña* would bring in well over a hundred people, while no more than fifteen people ever showed up at the Sunday gatherings that I attended. As a result, Sundays provided Pepe and his brother-in-law Manuel, who worked at the bar, with some time to socialize with *socios* and, occasionally, even sing.



**Figure 3.9 One of the larger *tertulias* that I attended in March 2012**

The vast majority of people who attended these *tertulias* were older gentlemen that wanted to sing for one another. Most of the *socios* at Torres Macarena are also middle-aged men and women. On this occasion, they hired Ulrich Gottwald, a professional flamenco guitarist from Germany, to accompany their singing for the afternoon. One of the singers, Diego brought a small sound recorder to tape his

performances. Diego explained to me that used these recordings in order to study and improve his sound quality and command of the *cante*. At this event, however, he revealed that he was recording in order to create an aural keepsake, especially since Gottwald would be there to play behind him.

By this time, there were two ducks waddling around the back patio while everyone stood by the bar drinking *manzanilla*, a dry white wine from the coastal town of Sanlúcar de Barrameda, sipping *cañas* (small beers), and feasting on the special *tapas* that Pepe prepared. As it turns out, the ducks were a gift from Pepe to Manuel, who lives on a small farm outside of Seville. After a few more people showed up, the singing began and Ulrich followed each *cantaor's* every move. Although these singers considered themselves to be amateurs, one or two of them had performed professionally and many of them sang with incredible force and control. Diego sang a *fandango* in which he moved quickly and flawlessly through an array of melismatic flourishes, often with a single breath.

After several other men took their turns singing, José Padilla, the *peña's* president, arrived and showed everyone a notice that he had received from the Junta de Andalucía, the Andalusian government. This document ordered the *peña* to close its doors due to recurring noise violations. Padilla was shaken by the news and several people left after news of the government order because they expected the singing to cease. In fact, once everyone settled in again by the bar, the music recommenced, this time with a more serious air. Padilla, who always has a very deliberate manner of moving and speaking, had a stern look on his face for the remainder of the gathering. He lamented that the

UNESCO declaration was “by and for politicians” and merely a strategy for “hanging gold medals” on people in press conferences and photo ops.

In the last several years, Torres Macarena has been in the news due to police raids, forced closures and protests. On February 10, 2010, Carmen Ledesma’s performance was interrupted when police invaded the premises. Peña member Jerónimo Roldán Pardo recalled,

Fifteen minutes after the concert began two police vehicles burst onto the street and six officers entered the peña—without a judicial order and without asking our permission—in a house that is private property and belongs to the members. They intimidated the treasurer, demanding that he hand over the money earned at the door for entrance—that which is used to support our organization (Bohórquez 2010).

A similar incident transpired in May of 2012 in which police entered the premises and ended a concert that was in progress. On both occasions the police reported that they were responding to noise complaints filed by neighbors. According to the *peña’s* directors, these complaints began in 2009.

Peña Torres Macarena has stood on Torrijano street in Seville’s Macarena district for over thirty-five years. The neighbors that filed noise complaints for the last five years inhabit an eight-year-old building that is located behind the Torres Macarena facilities. The gentrification of this formerly modest district has put Torres Macarena under a legal microscope that is overseen by the local government and police force. The irony of this situation is that, during this same period, the local government funded many performances at the peña. Flamenco peñas in Andalusia are not afforded licenses to stage concerts or performances of any kind. Yet, for over fifty years, and up until recently, they did so without any problems from the authorities. Thus, peñas are funded as public

institutions by local government bodies but also simultaneously denied access to the legal means to fulfill the responsibilities created by those subsidies. Moreover, as Padilla explained, “We want to put on live performances, because, without them, [Torres Macarena] would just be another bar, and we have enough bars already” (Carmelo 2014).

For the last several years, live music venues throughout Andalusia have come under attack. In 2004, the Spanish government suffered a rebuke at the hands of the European Court of Human Rights for not adequately protecting the rights of citizens in Valencia from noise pollution.<sup>18</sup> Since then, governments within Spain have paid increasing amounts of attention to residential noise disputes. With the imposition of laws restricting the ability of musicians to earn a living at the local level, however, provincial governments in Andalusia are encountering resistance from organizations that include “Salvemos el Directo” (“Saving Live Music”) in Cádiz and “Granada en Vivo” (“Live in Granada”). Local residents are also increasingly staging free concerts and theatrical performances on rooftops for neighbors and volunteers.

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<sup>18</sup> Pilar Moreno Gómez brought her case to the authorities after suffering from noise caused by a number of discotheques and nightclubs that operated close to her home in Valencia. See the appendices for “Chamber Judgment in the Case of Moreno Gómez v. Spain” (2004).

### ***A Generational Divide: Performance and Responsibility***

*Los genios de este arte se tiene que motivar por algo menos por dinero. El dinero en esto no sirve.*

The geniuses of this art have to be motivated by something besides money. Money in [flamenco] is useless.

– Paco de Valdepeñas (*Flamenco: A Personal Journey*, 2005)

*El flamenco es un arte popular hecho por profesionales.*

Flamenco is a popular art form performed by professionals.

– Carmen Linares (de la Flor 2011: 7)

Further proof of the blurred boundaries between public and private flamenco performance lies in a generational divide that is defined by how artists perceive and respond to audience expectations. Improvisation, inspiration, and sincerity are intimately linked in flamenco expression. Many of today's elder artists matured in an era in which they only sang at gatherings when they were inspired. As a result, such artists, including Diego Agujetas and Camarón de la Isla, approach their scheduled performances in much the same way: they proceed according to how they feel and disregard the expectations of paying audience members.

At the end of January 2012, I went to see Diego Agujetas perform at Peña Torres Macarena. I arrived to the venue early in order to take photographs and reserve seats for some friends. Diego belongs to one of the most celebrated families of *cantaores*, the Agujetas, which includes his father Agujetas El Viejo (Manuel de los Santos Gallardo,

1908-1976), brother Manuel Agujetas (Manuel de los Santos Pastor, b. 1939) and niece Dolores Agujetas (Dolores de los Santos Bermúdez, b. 1960). Like many Gitanos in Andalusia, Diego grew up in a blacksmith forge where his father earned a living. Blacksmithing was a traditional occupation among Gitanos in Spain because they had limited vocational opportunities. Therefore, a small number of *cantes*, including *martinetes*, are believed to have originated in the forges of Andalusian Gitanos.<sup>19</sup>

When I entered the *peña*, there were three older women seated by the fireplace for warmth while three men stood ordering food and drinks at the bar. A talk radio program blared from the oversized boombox situated on a brick ledge above the fire. Back in the kitchen, José was busy preparing hot foodstuffs while Manuel was setting out hams, cheeses and potato omelets behind the bar. The row of seats directly in front of the stage had already been covered in small pieces of paper that reserved seats for *socios* of the *peña*. As the start of the concert drew nearer, there was a great deal of anticipation among audience members who were excited at the chance to see a member of the Agujetas family perform up close. Even Juan del Gastor, who rarely attends local performances, showed up with his wife, Luci.

The concert, which was scheduled to start at 9 p.m., began forty-five minutes late after Diego burst through the doors, clearly out of breath. Diego performed three pieces before declaring facetiously that he had walked all the way from a far-off soccer stadium, and was dying of hunger. The *cantaor* quickly moved off the stage, sparking a

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<sup>19</sup> For an ethnographic and historical reading of Gitano blacksmiths and flamenco in Andalusia, see Gretchen Williams's M.A. thesis entitled "Buen Metal de Voz: The Calé Blacksmiths and Flamenco Cante Jondo" (2005).



spontaneous intermission in which audience members left their seats to return to the bar. Soon afterwards, I overheard Juan del Gastor telling a friend of mine that two or three out of the five times that they performed together, Diego Agujetas stopped the show because he was hungry. Thus, even colleagues from Diego's generation were frustrated with his unreliability as a professional performer.



**Figure 3.10 Diego Agujetas performs with Juan Campos**

Thirty minutes later, Diego and his accompanist, Juan Campos, returned to the stage and members of the audience took their seats, hoping for a lengthier set this time around. When he began to sing again, Diego performed masterful renditions of *siguiriyas* and *soleá*. During the former *cante*, however, he rushed the tempo and joked nervously between *letras*. *Siguiriyas* is a very serious *cante* that is almost religious in its depth and esteem among artists and *aficionados*. Thus, while Diego's voice was powerful, his body language and overall manner revealed a nervousness and urgency that

stayed with him throughout the entire concert. As the show progressed, it became clear that Diego was not particularly inspired to sing on this evening.

In contrast, Juan Campos played with determination and intensity that belied the momentousness of this occasion for him both personally and professionally. Campos is a talented young guitarist who was fortunate to be paired with one of Andalusia's great *cantaores* on this evening. Members of Juan Campos's family sat in the row behind me, supporting him with shouts of encouragement and advice.

When the time came for a performance of *bulerías*, a young man and woman were invited on stage to accompany Juan and Diego as *palmeros*. After only a few *letras*, Diego rose out of his seat, intending to take a final bow. When Juan continued playing, however, Diego quickly sat back down after realizing that he was expected to continue singing. *Cantaores* that are seated will occasionally stand in the middle of a performance in order to dance or conspicuously sing without the aid of a microphone. In this case, however, Diego gestured towards the *palmeros* in order to generate a final round of applause for them. A little over one minute later, Diego finished a *letra*, grabbed his highball glass full of whiskey and waved goodbye to the audience. Diego's companions onstage quickly called him back while the public screamed his name, desperate to hear more. At this juncture, he had performed for little over forty minutes in a concert setting that usually calls for two forty-five-minute sections. Diego sipped his whisky, shrugged and nervously rubbed his belly while Campos also shrugged his shoulders, unsure of how to prevent a premature end to this performance. Ultimately, Diego sang one more *cante*, a *martinete*, without accompaniment and left the stage once and for all.

This sequence of events reveals major disjunctures regarding past and present expectations of *cantaores*. Like many Gitano *cantaores* of his generation, Diego Agujetas learned to perform only when he was moved enough to express himself through song. This sensibility imbued the performance of flamenco *cante* with a striking spontaneity linked with emotional authenticity and self-determination. During all-night *fiestas*, *aficionados* often had to invent ways to make artists comfortable and compel them to perform. In Tao Ruspoli's documentary film *Flamenco: A Personal Journey*, the great *festero* Paco de Valdepeñas shared his methods for convincing artists to perform:

Say you meet the greatest singer in Spain...How are you going to get him to sing for you? You have to attach yourself to him. Have a drink with him, then another, then another...Make him stand at a bar. Don't let him sit down. I know all the tricks! He wants a bar, and quiet, he wants harmony and *soniquete*. And he might sing to you after five hours of drinking whiskey. You have to listen to him when he wants to sing. You can't say to him, "Come here, sing! You could even give him twelve million pesetas...forget about it (*Flamenco: A Personal Journey*, 2005).<sup>20</sup>

With the professionalization of flamenco performance over the last four decades, *cantaores* who were raised to sing in private and informal contexts have increasingly appeared in public concert settings. Thus, the unpredictability and challenges associated with artistic motivations remain almost exclusively tied to private modes of flamenco performance. Moreover, while flamenco *peñas* tend to combine public and private sensibilities, their audiences still maintain expectations that are consistent with professionally staged presentations.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> This translation comes from the subtitles in Ruspoli's film.

<sup>21</sup> Staged *peña* performances generally consist of two forty-five minute halves separated by an intermission.

When *cantaores* accustomed to private settings enter into professional engagements, there is always the possibility that the artist will perform for an amount of time that is considered unacceptable among general audiences. For example, when Camarón de la Isla was the most heralded *cantaor* during the 1980s, he earned tens of thousands of dollars for each performance. At many of these concerts, however, he either failed to show up or arrived late in order to perform a few *cantes*. One could argue that Camarón's upbringing combined with his use of hard drugs, including cocaine and heroin, made it very difficult for him to comply with the expectations of concertgoers. Artists such as Camarón and Diego Agujetas, it could be argued, bring the character of private performance into public environments. Since these artists grew up with flamenco in the home, they are usually marked as the most authentic and Gitano and are therefore excused for committing these transgressions. It could also be claimed, however, that these artists wrongly renounce their responsibilities as performers. Either way, the professionalization of contemporary flamenco artists ensures that such issues will become less prevalent over time.

### ***Conclusion***

*Peñas* are spaces that combine elements of public and private performance and proprietary rights. While this versatility is a byproduct of diverse contexts for flamenco performance, it also creates major problems with regard to government licensing and organization. As non-commercial ventures, flamenco *peñas* do not command much influence in legislative circles. Consequently, they remain legally unauthorized to stage

concerts of any sort. While bureaucratic organizations work to convert flamenco into a valuable brand, *peñas* represent a grassroots institutional model based on community involvement. At the heart of the dichotomy between flamenco industry and community is the notion that flamenco culture transcends sonic and corporeal performance because it encompasses cherished relationships between peoples and places.

Flamenco is an enduring, but also highly fraught, marker of local identity in Andalusia. Aficionados, artists, politicians and businessmen all compete for control over how this musical culture is represented and enacted. The frenzied and unpredictable nature of flamenco performance, however, is what makes it so dynamic and forceful. This case study points to the various institutional, environmental and cultural challenges that community members must confront in order to sustain traditional practices. Furthermore, it illustrates how discourses surrounding such practices intersect with disparate spheres of influence.

## Chapter Four

### *“The Banks are Our Stages”: Flo6x8 and Place-Making through Performance Protest*

*Ocupar es poesía.*

Occupying is poetry.

– Message on a sign from one of the protesters in Seville’s Plaza de Encarnación from 15O, October 15, 2011

*Tienen seguro el comer,  
banqueros, curas y reyes.  
Y el pueblo tiene el deber,  
de rebelarse a sus leyes  
y quitarlos del poder.”*

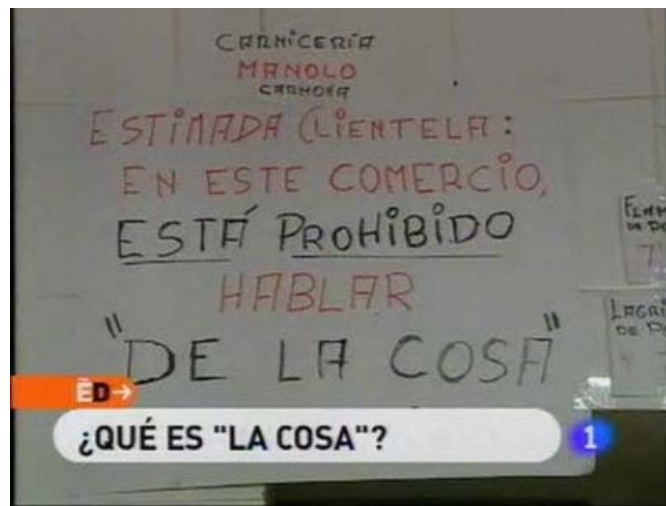
Bankers, priests and kings  
will surely eat.  
And the people owe it to them  
to rebel against their laws  
and remove them from power.

– El Cabrero, Fandango for 22-M in Madrid (March 22, 2014)

Today, Spain is in the middle of a severe economic crisis in which it suffers from Europe’s highest unemployment rate of almost one in every four workers. For Spaniards between the ages of twenty and thirty, the unemployment rate exceeds 50 percent. Those percentages are even higher in Andalusia where “*la crisis*,” as it is known in Spanish, is discussed so regularly that it has become simply known as “*la cosa*,” or “the thing.” It is such a sensitive subject that business owners around Seville have posted signs in their stores that ask customers to refrain from even mentioning “*la cosa*.”

The massive economic downturn and unfettered banking fraud in Spain has led to the widespread galvanization of the Spanish people. It began on May 15, 2011, when thousands of people occupied Madrid’s center square, the Puerta del Sol, in protest—turning it into their own makeshift village in the process. The community, which boasted

a library, a kitchen and a hospital remained intact for several weeks and is considered to have generated the original model for the Occupy Wall Street movement in the United States.<sup>1</sup> Like the latter movement, protests in Spain emphasize the sustained and purposeful occupation of public spaces.



**Figure 4.1 Screenshot from a nationally broadcast news report that profiled Manolo’s butcher shop in Carmona (24 miles outside of downtown Seville). The sign reads: “Dear Customers: In this shop, talking ‘ABOUT THE THING’ IS PROHIBITED.”**

In Seville, for example, protesters seized an evacuated marketplace in one of the city’s busiest centers—the Plaza de Encarnación. In a response to the government’s privatization efforts and massive spending cuts on social services, their posters declared: “If you privatize what is public, we will take that which is private.”

Since 2007, a performance collective known as Flo6x8 (or Flo) has effectively put this slogan into action, entering banks and disrupting “business as usual” by scolding bankers and startling customers with their politically conscious brand of flamenco song

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Castañeda (2012)

and dance. The group, whose name combines an established abbreviation of “flamenco” with the meter that is most typical of the style (6/8), is comprised of activists that protest the unethical practices of corporate banks in Spain through flamenco performance. Flo combines the participation of flamenco singers, dancers, aficionados, scholars and journalists together with graphic designers, film editors and sound engineers. They film meticulously coordinated performances in banks that are later edited and uploaded both to their homepage ([www.flo6x8.com](http://www.flo6x8.com)) and to YouTube.<sup>2</sup> As of December 9, 2013, Flo6x8 has uploaded thirty-two videos that have accumulated 2,272,126 views.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, Flo’s videos have taken on a life of their own with many YouTube users uploading them to their own accounts as well.

After over a year of corresponding with Flo6x8 via YouTube messaging and, later, email, I finally secured a meeting with a member of the group in early 2012. On a cool and windy day in mid-January, I walked swiftly from my apartment in central Seville to meet a man known as “El Moody’s” at an Italian restaurant located along the north end of a long public promenade known as the Alameda de Hércules. Like many of the artists in Flo, El Moody’s’ name is related to the subject of finance. He shares the moniker of the market ratings company, Moody’s, in order to create a greater public awareness and interest in the workings of the economy. Other Flo members include Dani el Euribor (the abbreviation for Euro Interbank Offered Rate), La Prima de Riesgo (a double entendre meaning both “The Risky Bonus” and “The Risky Cousin”), Paca la Monea (another play

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<sup>2</sup> For a complete listing of the group’s videos, visit: <http://www.youtube.com/user/flo6x8/videos>

<sup>3</sup> The number of views for each video varies widely: ten have over 25,000 views; five have over 50,000 views; three have over 100,000 views and one video has more than a million views.



on words that means “Bring the money here”) and La Niña Ninja (With NINJA functioning as an English-language acronym that stands for “No Income, No Job, no Assets”). Flo uses these labels as a means of shifting the focus away from individual artists and onto their collaborative and multilayered critique of the capitalist system. At the same time, they use these monikers as a way of concealing their identities from authorities.<sup>4</sup>

As I waited for El Moody’s, I had no idea who or what to expect. After several minutes, a bespectacled man with salt-and-pepper hair and beard greeted me and kindly invited me to sit down. I was immediately struck by his intense, yet cheerful, disposition. He identified himself as a serious flamenco devotee, but expressed frustration with the conservative elements and exclusive nature of the Andalusian flamenco community in general. While reverence for tradition is often the glue that holds together flamenco communities, it also frequently undergirds a rigid and hypercritical esotericism.

Flamenco performances are often judged by how well artists navigate traditional forms and by how powerfully they communicate emotion. Flo, however, evaluates their performances according to how well they interact with their surroundings. The group is unique in that they convert highly controlled and unwelcoming environments into performance and recording spaces. El Moody’s considers their work to be a “situational flamenco” in which artists are challenged to create something new. He explains:

We bring in a particular context that is unconventional, an adverse situation. At best you must improvise and relate to what is around you. When the traditionalists in flamenco say that ‘this isn’t correct dancing, or this isn’t correct

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<sup>4</sup> In accordance with the wishes of my friends and informants, I will be referring to each of the participants in Flo6x8 by their artistic nicknames, as opposed to their birth names.

singing, ' I would respond by telling them that when you go into a studio, you have everything prepared...everything is perfect. If you get up on a stage with your choreography, with your songs prepared, the lights, the microphones...Now try to do that in a context, a situation, that is completely adverse. You have to confront a changing situation...The studio is a laboratory. The stage is a live laboratory where you have an audience watching you. And [in the case of the bank] it is a laboratory where one has *much* less control of the variables. (interview, 1/13/12)

Thus, Flo6x8 calls attention to the ways in which environments set specific performative parameters. In *Flamenco: Passion, politics and popular culture*, anthropologist William Washabaugh argues that the physical device of the stage promotes presentational uniformity and discourages experimental performative practices (1996: 92). By confronting spatial norms, Flo demonstrate how movement cultures often necessitate active social, aesthetic and spatial recombining (Eyerman and Jamison 1998: 22). In their volume *Music and Social Movements*, Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison frame movement cultures in terms of collective and interactive knowledge and processes of learning (1998: 22). They argue that music constitutes a form of “cognitive praxis” in which cultural actors contribute actions and ideas that create a rupture within the social order (1998: 24).

In this chapter, I will reveal how Flo6x8 not only stands as proof of the versatility, continued relevancy and charged quality of flamenco performance in Spain's southernmost region, but also how their sophisticated and symbolic deployment of such actions is indicative of the crucial nature and vast utility of flamenco's spatial, visual, corporeal and extemporal components. Moreover, I will argue that Flo's performances are not simply antagonistic to banks, but to all of the neoliberal machinations used to coopt flamenco for consumption and governmental manipulation. Since many of Flo's

members live, work and study within the local flamenco performance community in Seville, they are acutely aware of the ways that governmental and commercial institutions influence artists, venues and professional opportunities.

Throughout this chapter I will be answering the following questions: First, how does Flo6x8 alter popular conceptions of space and power? How do Flo's physical confrontations with banks connect with the larger aims of the *Indignados*<sup>5</sup> movement in Spain? What does this say about the inherent power of embodied expression in general, and flamenco expression in particular? In what ways do online video recordings with unlimited playback transform the capacity and character of these forms of expression? Additionally, how can artists harness the "situational," and therefore unpredictable, nature of performance in ways that are empowering within broad spheres of influence? Why is this facet of performance useful for articulating messages of protest? Finally, how are Flo's methods reflective of the changing relationships between unconventional performance spaces and online video viewership?

### ***Local Mobilization for Global Change***

On Saturday, October 15, 2011, exactly five months after the start of the 15M, or 15<sup>th</sup> of May, movement across Spain, I walked through Seville's narrow cobblestone and concrete streets to reach the scenic Plaza de España in María Luisa Park. The entire city, it seemed, was journeying there with me in groups of all sizes and sorts. This scene reminded me of Seville's renowned *Feria de Abril*, or Spring Fair, in which all of the

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<sup>5</sup> *Indignado*, which means indignant or angry, refers to members of the 15M movement in Spain. The term itself derives from Stéphane Hessel's influential manifesto entitled *Indignez-vous!* (2010), which Marion Duvert translated into English as *Time for Outrage!* in 2011.

city's inhabitants descend at once upon an entire neighborhood of marquee tents that is erected each year to celebrate local life and the end of Lent with family and friends. Only this time their purpose was not to celebrate local life, but to defend it.

I arrived at the Plaza de España prior to the scheduled departure time of 6pm. The plaza features a giant Moorish-style pavilion that forms a semicircle around a vast open space replete with a fountain and moat. For over fifty years, this site has been a staple feature in tourist advertisements promoting Andalusia's, and by extension Spain's, picturesque difference. Naturally, many of these photographed advertisements feature traditional and folkloric symbols of Spain, including young women in bright polka-dot flamenco dresses dancing *sevillanas*. Other images depict serene scenes of old Spain with horse-drawn carriages driven by men in flat-brimmed Cordoban hats.

All of the protesters met outside of the confines of the Plaza de España on an adjacent street. Inside the plaza, tourists were caught by surprise as they took photographs and drifted carelessly through the moat in small canoes. Encounters between tourists and protesters are quite common in Andalusia, and they have become even more regular since the collapse of the Spanish economy began in 2008. Such meetings are important because they contradict, and therefore challenge, the popular notion that Andalusia is simply a sun-kissed paradise where life is carefree and untouched by modern-day problems and quotidian concerns. With countless streets full of homeless and hungry beggars, tourists are now scarcely shielded from evidence of the incredible mass suffering of the local population in Seville.

Shortly after 6 p.m., we began marching noisily from the Plaza de España onto the broad boulevard known as Avenida del Cid. There was a small drum corps that helped set the pace of chants and gaits as we all trudged slowly forward. The international character of the event was made evident with signs that read, “We are the 99%,” and “The whole world is mobilized.” There was even a mock directional arrow sign with the word “indignant” written out in numerous languages, including English, Spanish, Turkish, French, Italian, German, Chinese and Arabic. This was one of over 950 demonstrations held in more than eighty countries on October 15, 2011. All of these protests were united in their active opposition to neoliberal economic programs and the vast fiscal and social inequities that they have generated across the globe. The two largest protests were located in Madrid and Barcelona, with attendance totals of 500,000 and 400,000 respectively.

In Seville there were 50,000 protesters in attendance, which accounted for over 7 percent of the city’s total population. Still, demonstrators were compelled to chant, “*¡Luego diréis que somos cinco o seis!*” (“Afterwards you [the media] will say that we numbered five or six!”). The local and national media in Spain often grossly underestimate the number of marchers, presumably to undermine the reputation and authority of the movement in question. This protest conspicuously included people of all ages and from all walks of life. There were musicians, mechanics, teachers, students, government workers and entire families walking together with a shared purpose. An anti-capitalist stance is no longer considered radical in Andalusia due to the inordinate amount of pain and misery that the free-market system has caused its people.

As we made our way through the most visible public spaces in the city, the chants grew louder and louder. One of the protest organizers, serving as emcee through a massive stereo system set aboard a pickup truck, led us in a lively song and dance in which we all marched back and forth to the lyrics:

<i>Las ciudadanas caminan pa' lante</i>	<i>The citizens move forward</i>
<i>Los gobiernos caminan pa' atrás</i>	<i>The governments move back</i>
<i>Eyo! Eeo</i>	<i>Eyo! Eeo</i>
<i>Eyo! Eeo</i>	<i>Eyo! Eeo</i>
<i>Eyo Eyo Eyo Eyo</i>	<i>Eyo Eyo Eyo Eyo</i>
<i>Eyo!</i>	<i>Eyo!</i>

While this chant normally refers to a singular “government,” the pluralization of the aforementioned noun in this instance is further evidence of the international scope of both this particular protest and the *Indignados* movement in general.



**Figure 4.2** A marcher holds a sign that reads, “People before markets!” (Photo by and courtesy of Ana Rey).

Thronges of tourists watched as we advanced down the Avenida de la Constitución past a string of souvenir shops and the city’s massive Gothic cathedral.<sup>6</sup> The streams of protesters seized control of each area that they inhabited as a result of their overwhelming physical and sonic presence. After moving through the downtown shopping district, we finally arrived at the Plaza de Encarnación.<sup>7</sup> There, protesters applauded each of the groups that arrived after them, imbuing the event with the character of the end of a marathon race.



**Figure 4.3 After the march, demonstrators socialized underneath the giant mushrooms of the Metropol Parasol structure located at the Plaza de Encarnación.**

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<sup>6</sup> Completed in 1528, the Seville Cathedral is the largest Gothic cathedral and the third-largest church in the world. The bell tower of the cathedral, known as the Giralda, is one of the city’s leading municipal symbols.

<sup>7</sup> The plaza is now commonly referred to as “Las Setas,” or “The Mushrooms,” for the mushroom-shaped Metropol Parasol structure that was constructed there in April of 2011.

Many of the protesters viewed the turnout in Seville as a proper defense of the local population. At the close of the demonstration, we watched as video clips from scores of protests in other cities were projected onto one of the bases of the mushroom structures in the plaza. It was invigorating to see such a tremendous outpouring of support for a populist movement that clearly transcends national, political, geographic and ethnic divisions.

### ***La Crisis (“The Crisis”)***

In Seville, I met trained teachers, lawyers, and doctors that were working for minimal wages as bartenders and waitresses. With an overload of bureaucratic, governmental positions where the turnover rate is extremely low, Spain’s economy has been unable to make room in the workplace for the latest generation of high school and college graduates. As a result, a majority of people between the ages of eighteen and thirty are forced to remain living at home with their parents without any prospects for work.

To make matters worse, the implementation of austerity measures by the federal government has weakened communities and pushed countless people to the brink of survival. On a visit to the city’s cathedral in December of 2011, I stumbled upon a large encampment of unemployed teachers striking against budget cuts. There were several former teachers sitting on barren mattresses, surrounded by picket signs, cloth banners and metal barricades.





**Figure 4.4 Teachers camp and protest inside Seville’s cathedral**

One of the demonstrators explained that they were there to inform and enlist others in their fight for job security and fair pay. The clergy at Seville’s Cathedral allowed these protesters to live and sleep within these quarters for over five months.

In 2012, spending on education was reduced by 2.2 billion euros, equivalent to 22% less than 2011. Health care was cut by 3.9 billion euros and employment programs were cut by 1.2 billion euros nationally in 2012. These figures do not even account for the mandatory cuts of at least 7.5 billion euros that regional governments were forced to legislate (López 2012).

Another issue is that the introduction of the euro currency into the Spanish economy in January of 2002 caused a rapid rise in the consumer price index. While the cost of living rose 31.6 percent between 2002 and 2009, salaries have only risen a mere 13.9 percent in that same period. When the euro was established as Spain’s currency, a

huge lending explosion occurred that was concentrated principally in property markets. As real estate prices soared, so too did the sizes and quantities of loans offered to potential homebuyers. Unregulated development ensued and in late 2008, after being touted by former Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero as “probably the most solid financial system in the international community,” the Spanish economy fell apart, beginning with the construction and property sectors (Arce 2012).

In 2012, an average of 115 Spanish families were evicted from their homes each day, the equivalent of one eviction every fifteen minutes, with the majority occurring in Andalusia (Barrón 2013). Spain’s current eviction laws allow banks to continue charging citizens for repayment on their loans even after they have been evicted. While the Spanish government is reportedly taking steps to modify these regulations, such laws have effectively saddled citizens with the debts that resulted from corrupt and irresponsible business practices on the part of corporate and governmental institutions of finance.

Several prominent economists, including Vicente Navarro, believe that the crisis was caused by the Spanish government’s increasing reliance upon neoliberal economic policies in the past fifteen years. Such principles have allowed wealthy partnerships and economic corporations to commit rampant fiscal fraud. In June of 2011, for example, it was revealed that Emilio Botín, president of Santander Bank, which is the third-largest banking conglomerate in the world, hid two million euros in a Swiss bank account. Five months later, the Duke of Palma de Mallorca and King Juan Carlos’s son-in-law, Iñaki Urdangarín, was accused of laundering millions of euros through offshore bank accounts

and an alleged non-profit foundation that he directed. The latter findings have humiliated the royal family to such a degree that they have effectively prohibited Urdangarín from representing them—erasing all public traces of him from websites and street signs.<sup>8</sup>

More recently, Spain’s Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy was implicated in a scandal in which he is accused of accepting illicit payments of at least 25,000 euros from his party’s former treasurer, Luis Bárcenas. Additionally, it was revealed that Bárcenas hid 47 million euros in Swiss bank accounts.



**Figure 4.5 Demonstrators in Alicante mourn the loss of democracy in Spain (screenshot taken from Alicia Arce’s 2012 film, *The Great Spanish Crash*).**

These disgraceful incidents have intensified the sociopolitical climate considerably and further outraged the struggling citizens of Spain. In an interview with the BBC’s Tom Burridge, the deputy director of Spain’s *El Mundo* newspaper, Eduardo Inda, explained, “We are living in the worst moments of our democracy because people

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<sup>8</sup> On June 18, 2014, King Juan Carlos I abdicated the throne in favor of his son, Felipe VI, after being linked to a number of scandalous incidents that shocked and angered the Spanish people. Juan Carlos, who reigned as king since Franco’s death in 1975, was long revered for his role in thwarting a military coup in February 1981 in favor of the democratically elected government.

[don't] believe in our politicians. We have a problem with some members of the royal family. It is like an atomic bomb, what is happening here in Spain" (Burrige 2013).

### ***The Roots of Politics and Flamenco (Flo6x8)***

In 2007, the Sevillian performance collective Flo6x8 began to forge a three-pronged attack upon local banks with flamenco song, dance and guitar. Using the flamenco body as their core vehicle for expression, they announce their presence in banks through heel-clicking, foot-stomping and raucous singing. Through flamenco performance, the group represents a strong local force of opposition and contestation to the neoliberal order in Spain and abroad.

Flo6x8 cites anthropologist William Washabaugh as a major influence on their conceptions of the expressive capacity of the flamenco body. In his *Flamenco: Passion, Politics and Popular Culture*, Washabaugh asserts that the primacy of physicality in flamenco was at the core of its political expressiveness:

Elucidating flamenco politics, therefore, means demonstrating the politics of bodies, rather than minds, and showing how ideologies are promoted physically even though they might stand outside of thought and consciousness (1996: 1).

Furthermore, Washabaugh argues that the bodies of aggrieved flamenco singers function as sites of resistance. These ideas are what prompted Flo to consider utilizing flamenco as an instrument of political articulation and representation.

While debates among flamenco scholars and critics are often politically charged, flamenco performance itself is generally deemed to be apolitical. Before Washabaugh posited the flamenco body as a locus of political power and expression, scholars

generally referred to *letras* (or lyrics) and lifestyles as the only spheres of political representation in flamenco.

During the Second Spanish Republic (1931-1939), many artists performed and recorded *letras* that were supportive of the republican government and its troops during the civil war (1936-1939). One cannot overstate either the importance or courage of flamenco singers in the 1930s that fought fascism with their art and, in some cases, with guns in battle. Artists like Manuel Vallejo, who created the *fandangos republicanos*,<sup>9</sup> and Manuel González, known as *Guerrita* (the Andalusian pronunciation of the word “*guerrista*,” meaning “Combative”), who reputedly earned his nickname by singing countless republican lyrics, constituted a major assembly of popular support throughout the span of the republic. It was during this period that flamenco artists were well paid and treated with considerably more respect than in the eras preceding and following the Second Republic. After the defeat of the Republican Loyalists in the Spanish Civil War, however, many of these artists paid dearly with harsh labor and prison sentences and even with their lives.<sup>10</sup>

Not surprisingly, blacklists, threats of violence and, therefore, self-censorship prevented artists from explicitly communicating sentiments that were antagonistic to authorities during the Franco dictatorship (1939-1975). At this time, flamenco artists were often assumed to be communist sympathizers until they could prove otherwise. It

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<sup>9</sup> This is a style of *fandangos* based on lyrics that praise the Second Republic and its defenders.

<sup>10</sup> The list of flamenco artists that have used their art as a political platform, whether lyrically or otherwise, is fairly long and has been covered extensively in the works of Juan Vergillos, Manuel Bohórquez, Antonio Burgos, Juan Pinilla, Carlos and Pedro Caba and José Luis Ortiz Nuevo. Some of the most well known artists in this group include Manuel Vallejo, Pastora Pavón and Juanito Valderrama.

was in this environment, plagued by intense fear and economic hardship, that not only was anti-authoritarian flamenco neutralized politically in the public sphere, but it also became increasingly important to be able to distinguish the character of and divisions between public and private spaces and gatherings in order to survive.

In his dissertation, “Gendered Authenticity: The Invention of Flamenco Tradition in Seville,” anthropologist Timothy Malefyt explores how social values within flamenco communities became closely linked with the character of performance spaces. Public and private spaces, or “external and internal realms” as Malefyt refers to them, are representative of traditional Andalusian gender roles and ideologies that became magnified during the Franco period (1998: 65). According to this binary framework, men inhabit the masculine public realm, which is considered hierarchical, competitive and unpredictable. In public spaces, cultural actors become subject to the wills of others and, therefore, must learn to negotiate a wide array of unequal power relationships. Meanwhile, the private sphere, which is defined by intimacy and egalitarianism, is characterized as feminine. As a result, women were considered unfit to appear, at least with any regularity, in many bars and public parties where flamenco was routinely performed. Females that transgressed these social parameters were cast as prostitutes and regarded as immoral. Naturally, this social climate made it extremely difficult for female flamenco artists to develop and perform as professionals.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> For more information on the conditions faced by *cantaoras* in the middle to late twentieth century, see Chuse, 2003, 91-116.

### ***Occupying Banks***

Upon arriving in Madrid in September of 2011, I was stunned to see many banks marked with highly visible anti-capitalist graffiti. Although I was aware of animosity toward the stewards of the economic system in my visit to Spain in the summer of 2010, the graffiti covering banks signaled a new mentality and approach by protesters that was defined by fearlessness and aggression. With the emergence of the 15M movement in the spring of 2011, emboldened activists began targeting one of the only physical spaces that had previously been off-limits: banks.

Flo6x8 was one of the first groups to take the protest movement inside the banks, and by far the most visible group to do so. As early as 2010, the group performed, filmed and released “*acciones*,” or “actions,” as they refer to them, on YouTube that received thousands of views.



**Figure 4.6 A Banesto bank, located at the Plaza del Emperador Carlos V, outside the Reina Sofia Museum, in Madrid is covered in graffiti.**

In one of their earliest videos, a female dancer known as La Niña Ninja is seen dropping dozens of small one-cent pieces onto the marble floor of a Sevillian bank. Wearing a black dress and flamenco heels, she clears out the floor space in front of her with her right foot while perplexed customers look on and take pictures with their cell phones. Next, she slowly and deliberately raises her arms above her head before swaying her body gently back and forth. Without warning, La Niña begins marking time by stomping fiercely in succession on top of the scattered coins, thereby rendering her presence undeniable to the bank staff. At this point, an older male employee, and presumably the bank's manager, approaches one of the teller windows and asks, "Can you explain to me what is going on here?" Without a word, La Niña Ninja turns and exits the establishment.

Like many of Flo's videos, this performance calls attention to the inherent power of female flamenco bodies in action. In these scenarios, women are purposefully deployed as agents that publicly (via video reproduction) hijack and dominate spaces intended for private commercial dealings. Thus, Flo's performances are transgressive on two counts: they violate conventional rules of use for spaces within banks and they enact a strong and righteous *public* femininity previously denied to women through rigid structures of religious and governmental patriarchy.

Furthermore, the image of the female flamenco dancer has been coopted so many times throughout history that, in many respects, it has been thoroughly emptied of any revolutionary import. As an enduring Orientalist symbol of Spain, the non-threatening image of the graceful and stunningly beautiful *bailaora* is often used to promote



commercial, as well as administrative, interests. When the female flamenco body is in motion, however, it becomes infinitely less controllable and appropriable.

For instance, bodies and faces become twisted, tangled and unrecognizable in flamenco performance. Just as the performance of *cante* distorts the Spanish language, drawing words out in distinct forms, the postures, movements and tensions requisite for flamenco song and dance performance transform the physical appearance and presence of artists.

In *The Archive and the Repertoire*, Diana Taylor reveals how embodied performance enacts a form of knowing that is constantly in flux and, therefore, much more difficult to control than written culture. Writing has long been the expressive form favored by elites because its practice is often limited to members of the educated upper classes. Taylor declares, “If performance did not transmit knowledge, only the literate and powerful could claim social memory and identity” (2003: xvii). In the same way that texts are highly stable and manageable forms of communication, still images of flamenco dancers can be easily appropriated and manipulated. The kinesthetic repertoire that *bailaoras* enact, however, retains its power precisely because it does not allow for the separation of knowledge from the knower in either time or space (Taylor 2003: 19). Flo6x8 demonstrate how, in spite of the widespread commodification and appropriation of flamenco sounds and imagery, the act of performance allows for the continual and decisive resignification of flamenco (or any art form) in the popular imagination.

Before they became well known on the Internet and in the city of Seville, Flo’s performances engendered a great deal of fear and confusion among bank employees and

customers. The spaces inside banks call for bodies to follow specific orderly (trans)actions, postures and movements. Corporeal movement inside banks is prescribed by the logic of capitalism in which productivity, measured in capital gains, is considered of utmost importance. Therefore, significant behavioral violations automatically signal and constitute an attack on this order. As Jean Baudrillard points out in *Simulacra and Simulation*, a fake holdup in a bank is impossible because it inevitably provokes real responses to an anticipated and projected attack in which the seizure of capital is the ultimate goal (1994: 20). By relocating protests into the banks, Flo6x8 defies these behavioral and gestural expectations in a way that firmly rejects their underlying logic.

In Flo's first actions, bystanders were understandably bewildered by the group's apparent indifference to physical capital located in the bank. Flo's movements were illegible to witnesses because they were neither motivated nor dictated by economic self-interest. Rather, the group viewed its performances as opportunities to publicly and symbolically disrupt, however slightly, the standard operating procedures in banks across Seville.

As I mentioned before, Flo6x8 was one of the first activist groups in Spain to move the protest movement into banks. This was an extremely important step because it demonstrated to protesters and community members that banks were vulnerable to the same physical tactics, including large-scale marches and occupations, that continue to define mass movements in general, and the *Indignados* movement in particular. One member of Flo6x8, Pepe Cifuentes, recalled,

I mean people [had] been in the council, been in the cathedral, been in the streets. [They had] been in the schools. But, why are the banks so sacred? Don't they say anything to them?

Although it may seem like a logical development for the *Indignados* movement, the artistic occupation of banks continues to be a highly precarious strategy. Moreover, while this cultural and political work is extremely important, it often comes at a high price.

Several recent examples of creative political occupation point to the dangers of this work. On February 21, 2012, the feminist punk band Pussy Riot stormed into the Christ the Saviour Cathedral in Moscow, often considered to be the holiest site among Russian Orthodox believers, and aggressively danced and lip-synced to their recording of "Punk Prayer." This act landed three of the band's members in jail, two of which were imprisoned for twenty-one months. Nadia Tolokonnikova, Maria Alyokhina and Katia Semutsevich were all convicted of "disrupting social order by an act of hooliganism that shows disrespect for society and is related by religious hatred or enmity" (Lerner 2013).

In the song "Punk Prayer," the band implores the Mother of God to rid Russia of Putin and become a feminist. Katia Semutsevich, a member of the band, explains,

Our performance without the patriarch's blessing combined an Orthodox mass with the culture of protest. We made intelligent people recognize that Orthodox culture doesn't only belong to the Church, the Patriarch and Putin. It can also be used to promote an uprising of the opposition. The massive impact of our media invasion of the Cathedral took the government by surprise. They tried to present our performance as a prank pulled by heartless, militant atheists. They miscalculated (Lerner 2013).

Semutsevich's comments reveal that, like Flo6x8, Pussy Riot is engaged in a fight over the ownership, functions and symbolic meanings of cultural practices as well as public

spaces and institutions. This struggle is highly reflective of issues regarding community access, including performative, spatial and narrative marginalization. The band's performance of "Punk Prayer" at the Cathedral asserted ownership over the religious space, including its attendant sacred practices and figures. In the video recording from this performance, band members are seen crossing and prostrating themselves in between bouts of kicking and screaming, "Even the Virgin Mary is joining the protest!" Although this performance lasted less than two minutes, it sent shock waves through the press and, as a result, Russian society. The video was effectively banned on the Internet in Russia through the application of a law against extremism that was created in order to suppress the expression of hate groups, including neo-Nazis. Ironically, such responses further substantiate the group's primary messages, including claims that Russia is an authoritarian state.

The confluence of highly patriarchal religious and political forces and institutions in Russia prompted Pussy Riot to begin performing publicly as a method of creative resistance. The group had previously performed in public spaces in the Russian capital that included a metro station as well as Red Square. In a video interview from the 2013 film *Pussy Riot: A Punk Prayer*, one of the group's masked members explained, "Anybody can take on this image. Masks, dresses, musical instruments, lyrics. It's not too hard. Write a song, some music and think of a good place to perform" (Lerner 2013). Like Flo6x8, Pussy Riot stages seemingly impromptu performances that are intended to both shock and provoke thought among onlookers and video viewers. Moreover, both

groups imbue females with an unbridled power that is threatening in its defiance and unpredictability.



**Figure 4.7 Masked members of Flo6x8 pose in chains, calling for the release of Pussy Riot from prison (Courtesy of Flo6x8)**

Another lesser-known example of the risks associated with performative occupation is that of a prominent New York City performance artist and activist known as Reverend Billy. Together with his Church of Stop Shopping, Bill Talen has preached against rampant consumerism for over a decade. In September 2013, Reverend Billy and his choir marched into the lobby of a JP Morgan Chase bank in Manhattan and performed a fifteen-minute sermon and song about the catastrophic effects of climate change. Dressed as Central American golden toads, a species that was rendered extinct as a result of climate change, the choir joined Talen in condemning Chase's commitment to financing some of the world's most concentrated fossil-fuel industrial programs. Billy

commanded customers to “protect the earth” and “rise up against the corporations that are poisoning the atmosphere.” Talen and choir director Nehemiah Luckett were later arrested and charged with riot, menacing, unlawful assembly and disorderly conduct. Both men faced up to a year in prison for what one New York prosecutor referred to as a “criminal stunt” until the more serious charges were dropped and lesser offenses reduced in December of 2013 (Vidal 2013). In a telling in-studio interview with Democracy Now journalists Amy Goodman and Nermeen Sheikh, Talen explained the cause for the initial charges:

It was a different action for us. Going back across the years, all of our performances inside banks, UBS, Deutsche Bank, World Bank of Scotland, HSBC, Bank of America and many Chase banks, this one was unusual in that we [purposely] chose an uptown Manhattan bank that we knew to be frequented by people from Wall Street, wealthy people. It’s called a wealth management bank (Talen 2013).

By targeting an upscale bank, Reverend Billy, like Pussy Riot, illustrates how in the search for high profile performance sites, the potential for both media exposure and punitive action increase dramatically. When the narratives and lines of reasoning that direct human action within prominent cultural and financial spaces are outwardly resisted or questioned, there are often immediate and dire consequences.

Since Flo6x8’s own evaluation of success is contingent upon challenging and eliciting strong reactions from physical bystanders and virtual viewers, they have frequently considered moving their dynamic protests into more visible, and therefore more heavily guarded, financial establishments.

The most prominent bank that they have performed in to date was the Santander branch on Avenida de la Constitución, located in Seville’s busiest shopping and tourist

district. The action that they performed at this location, labeled on YouTube as “Flashmob Rumba Rave ‘Banquero,’” was notable for several reasons. First, the group brought in pre-recorded music that was played on a portable stereo. This feature enabled Flo to use the same high-quality sound recording during post-production of the video. Second, one of the greatest challenges that Flo6x8 faces is not only to produce a stirring performance, but also to effectively capture that action in an antagonistic environment. Cifuentes explains,

When someone goes into a bank and they dance, how can you direct that? You can have guidelines, people can try and stick to a script, but you cannot foresee what’s going to happen and you have only got one chance at doing it (Cifuentes 2012).

Therefore, the pressure to execute and capture a compelling performance is enhanced considerably. By utilizing pre-recorded music, Flo frees its camera operators up to focus exclusively on the visual and kinesthetic aspects of performance. Pussy Riot uses this technique in nearly all of their videos, including their lip-synced performances in Red Square and inside the Christ the Saviour Cathedral.

Third, the music featured in the “Rumba Rave” video is a *rumba flamenca*, entitled “Banquero” (or “Banker”), with lyrics that tell the story of the economic crises from two vantage points: that of a working-class person, who is represented by the voice of a flamenco singer, and that of a banker. The song alternates between the flamenco singer’s melodic laments and an uncensored monologue spoken by the sinister *banquero*:

*Cantaor:*      *Banquero, banquero, banquero*  
                    *Tu tienes billetes, y yo tengo florero*  
                    *Banquero, banquero, banquero*  
                    *Tu tienes cartera, no tengo dinero*  
                    *Banquero, banquero, banquero*

*Tu tienes billetes y yo un agujero  
Banquero, banquero, banquero  
Tu tienes cartera y yo un paraguero*

Singer: *Banker, banker, banker  
You have dough and I have a vase  
Banker, banker, banker  
You have a purse and I have no money  
Banker, banker, banker  
You have dough and I have a hole  
Banker, banker, banker  
You have a purse and I have an umbrella stand*

Banquero: *Mejor que el maharajá, el yate en Marbella  
Y los maletines llevan los billetes de quinientos  
Los maletines se los llevan  
La vergüenza ha pasado a la historia  
¡Estos señores de miradas torvas,  
De corazones fríos y bolsillos calientes!  
Pero todo es igual, no pensar  
Trabajar, consumir y pagar, por supuesto*

Banker: *Better than the maharajah, the yacht in Marbella<sup>12</sup>  
Briefcases stuffed with cash  
The 500 euro notes, they just vanish  
Shame is a thing of the past  
These gentlemen with grim gazes,  
Cold hearts and hot pockets!  
But it's all the same, don't think  
Work, consume and pay, of course*

As you can see, the lyrics are marked equally by satire and absurdity, as well as a serious critique of the injustices of the economic system. The text pits the suffering of the singer, and by extension the masses of people enduring the economic disaster in Spain, against the powerful, deceitful and evil banker.

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<sup>12</sup> Marbella is a coastal city in south-central Andalusia that houses many luxury resorts and yachts. It is a popular destination for tourists from Northern Europe, and also for celebrities, aristocrats and wealthy people from around the world.





**Figure 4.8 Flo6x8 dancers take over Santander bank during the “Rumba Rave” action**

While this lyrical dialogue is taking place, a group of nearly twenty men and women (and one man dressed in a cow costume) move in sync to a choreographed dance in which they point at onlookers and pull out their empty pockets. The rhythm that they dance to is an up-tempo *rumba*, a song form of “*ida y vuelta*,” or “departure and return,” that traveled back to Spain from Cuba and began to be incorporated into the flamenco repertoire in the twentieth century. The *rumba* has long been the most accessible flamenco song form for non-aficionados both inside and outside Spain. Set in 4/4 time, the *rumba flamenca*’s danceable and catchy rhythms have become emblematic of flamenco in the popular sphere. Flo’s intelligent and convincing use of the *rumba* in this action made it immediately available for popular consumption and amusement online.

At the same time, the “Rumba Rave” was a unique performance by Flo6x8 because it featured a collection of mostly untrained dancers reveling joyfully in protest.

While their performances are always striking, many of Flo's actions could be considered intense and sorrowful. Such emotions undeniably create solidarity by representing and connecting with the misery that people are feeling across Andalusia and Spain, but they can also prove to be overwhelming. El Moody's shed light on this topic, saying

The left tends to miserabilize the mention of oppression. This is a shame because they can utilize the image of pleasure [as well]. That is also something that Flo tries to express. In fact, Flo6x8's best-known video, the collective 'Rumba Rave,' is not about suffering, but pleasure—a pleasure that is completely antagonistic to power. It is the pleasure of the body—a body that laughs, a body that enjoys, a body that reveals itself. (interview, 1/13/12)

Projecting self-assuredness, humor and pleasure in the face of domination is, in and of itself, a display of strength. Thus, the "Rumba Rave" performance resonated with viewers more powerfully than other actions because it was a boisterous and exuberant exhibition of defiance. When El Moody's mentions "a body that reveals itself," he is referring to the communicative power of the (flamenco) body that transcends language and creates bonds between performers and spectators. Such power is at the heart of Flo6x8's cultural work because it constitutes the core strategy for galvanizing community members and bringing attention to their common struggle.

As I mentioned above, the "Rumba Rave" video was also highly successful because it projected a sense of togetherness by featuring a number of individuals that do not normally dance flamenco. This speaks to the importance of advocating participation through performance. The "Rumba Rave" was a performative announcement, which declared to online viewers that anybody could engage in expressive and active resistance to the widespread corruption in Spain's economic system.

In addition, Flo6x8 used the term “flashmob” in both the title and description of the “Rumba Rave” video in order to situate their performance within a larger popular cultural movement. Added to the *Oxford English Dictionary* in 2004, the phrase “flash mob” is defined as “a large public gathering at which people perform an unusual or seemingly random act and then disperse, typically organized by means of the Internet or social media” (“Flash mob” n.d.). The flash mob constituted an opportunity for members of virtual communities to convene physically and publically in prescribed locations, with directions to carry out specific nonsensical actions.

The first flash mobs appeared prior to the emergence, popularization and concentration of social networking sites, including MySpace and Facebook. In June of 2003, Bill Wasik, a former senior editor from *Harper’s* magazine, organized the first known gathering to be described as a flash mob in New York City. He planned subsequent assemblies for short intervals of time and in highly centralized locations in order to make them practical for working people to attend. Most of these flash mobs occurred in popular clothing and department stores across the city. Wasik originally conceived of the flash mob simply as “a stunt that would satirize scenester-y gatherings” and “New York insiderness” (Heaney 2005). As it happened, however, such performances gained favor and momentum very quickly in other large cities across the United States.

While many flash mob participants do not consider these gatherings to be political acts, such actions become politicized by the ways in which authorities respond to them. Since numerous flash mobs took place in leading business spaces and did not involve

commercial dealings, they were immediately regarded as disruptive by local security guards and agencies. Although these meetings were not anti-consumerist by definition, they became labeled as such due to their penchant for garnering attention together with their clear indifference to the merchandise offered for sale. Wasik explains the politicization of flash mobs in this way:

Commercial space is quasi-public space. You're welcome to come in so long as you are considering buying something... Once you try to express yourself in a way that indicates that you're not interested in buying anything, you're suddenly a trespasser. And so, when you think in those terms, the idea that all these people who seem to be shoppers show up at a Toys 'R' Us and do something completely out of their minds... Like worshipping a dinosaur – there [is] a big political component to that, even though the literal statement that was made didn't have one (Heaney 2005).

As a non-consumerist enterprise, the flash mob *becomes* anti-consumerist in a commercial setting. In places where large-scale financial productivity is paramount, any behavior that impedes, or even appears to interfere with, corresponding practices will be confronted and removed. The flash mob must be staged in a place where it can be easily identified as a collective action of non-conformism or else it will be indistinguishable from a regular crowd.

A flash mob is born out of the potential for interfering with the social logic of spaces, including conventional behavior patterns. Therefore, flash mobs, by definition, highlight the constructedness of conventional behaviors and reveal new possibilities for social conduct. Such features make the flash mob ripe for political interpretation and implementation because they not only serve as a spectacle for onlookers and video viewers, but they also generate a scenario for collective action, resistance and the formation and dissemination of alternate narratives.

Although Flo6x8's performances, including the "Flashmob Rumba Rave 'Banquero,'" do not conform to the dictionary definition of "flash mob," they do apply the ethos of this popular urban phenomenon by descending upon semi-public commercial spaces unannounced and performing in a loose group format. Flo's actions definitely qualify as "unusual," but they cannot be described as either "seemingly random" or "pointless."<sup>13</sup> The latter designations are what distinguish apolitical flash mobs from political ones.

Part of Flo6x8's appeal is that they partake in flash mob culture without having it dictate the limits of their messages. The group benefits from identifying the "Rumba Rave" as a flash mob because it invites Internet viewers to witness an unpredictable and spectacular performance. Much of the viewership on YouTube is driven by the desire to see and experience incidents that are out of the ordinary. By presenting their work as a form of online entertainment and comic theater, Flo6x8 capitalizes on this obsession with encountering the spectacular. In this way, the group attracts a great deal of attention from people located outside of their immediate circles, including communities involving the *Indignados* movement, flamenco, Andalusia and Spain, without having to compromise or reduce the impact of their messages.

Not surprisingly, many corporations have turned the flash mob into a vehicle for attaining commercial notoriety as well. Such businesses have realized that the flash mob constitutes a demonstration of populism that does not need to be subversive in order to

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<sup>13</sup> An earlier definition of "flash mob" from *Oxford English Dictionary* used the term "pointless" instead of "seemingly random" so that it read thus: "a public gathering of complete strangers, organized via the Internet or mobile phone, who perform a pointless act and then disperse again." For more discussion of this definition, see Molnár 2013: 2.

attract attention. It is a scenario that thrives upon the apparent democratic takeover of utilitarian spaces so as to introduce a presentation or idea to a greater public.

The flash mob has become an extremely popular form of online representation and entertainment. At the same time, this phenomenon comprises and develops the convergence of offline and online social worlds in a variety of ways. Sociologist Virág Molnár argues that flash mobs “follow a distinct online–offline choreography providing insight into how digital media interacts with physical space” (2013: 2). Both the construction and transmission of flash mob performances have the ability to bridge virtual and physical worlds. All of these developments and insights are extremely useful to companies committed to capturing and directing social trends and actions. Finally, as I mentioned before, the unpredictability of this type of performance generates a great deal of attention, interest and excitement—all of which appeal to retailers and media conglomerates. In order to further demonstrate the extensive utility of this phenomenon, I will now explore how commercial entities have co-opted the flash mob by focusing on two popular advertisements that utilize “spontaneous” group performances of dance and music to represent their brands.

In January 2009, T-Mobile, one of the world’s largest mobile phone service providers, launched its “Life’s for Sharing” campaign with an advertisement that featured a flash mob of 350 dancers in London’s Liverpool Street metro station. The performance began with a cover version of the Isley Brothers’s “Shout” blaring through the station speakers. A lone “commuter” began dancing to this tune and as the music quickly segued into another sequence, more and more dancers joined a tightly choreographed

presentation. Cameras alternately focused on the large collection of dancers moving in unison and the responses of individual travelers as they proceed to smile, dance and, naturally, call friends and record the event with their mobile phones. Ashley Wallen, one of Britain's leading choreographers, organized this presentation, which lasted two minutes and twelve seconds. The advertisement itself won the award for the TV commercial of the year at the British Television Advertising Awards in March 2010.

In another popular commercial, Sabadell Bank staged a flash mob featuring a local symphony orchestra and several choirs to celebrate the 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the bank's founding and to pay homage to the institution's birthplace. At 6 p.m. on May 19, 2012, in the Plaça de Sant Roc, located in the Catalanian city of Sabadell, a little girl dropped a coin into a black top hat lying before an upright bassist in a tuxedo. As soon as the coin falls into the hat, the man begins to bow the instrument with precision and calm as the plaza slowly fills with curious and eager onlookers and listeners of all ages. The girl maintains her spot just behind the top hat, marveling at the sounds coming from the man's fingers, as a female cellist promptly takes her place next to the other musician. The two commence playing Beethoven's familiar hymn "Ode to Joy" as several other orchestra members ready themselves for performance and bystanders appear perplexed. As the orchestra grows, so too does the listening audience. The musicians conspicuously exit the doors of a neighboring Sabadell Bank in order to make their way to the sidewalk performance space. As in the T-Mobile promotion, cameras in the Plaça de Sant Roc move between images of the performers and individual audience members that look on with awe and smile with joy. Babies dance, little children imitate the conductor and

several people record the event with their mobile devices as the gathering slowly rises with the music in an emotional crescendo. At the end of this ad, the image of a baby girl being lifted into the sky fades into block letters that spell “*Som Sabadell*,” “We are Sabadell.”

One of the most important facets of these ad campaigns is that they emphasize the role of the flash mob as a mode of public service. Such advertisements bring attention to the deliberate and spontaneous generation of compassion and unity among strangers in quotidian circumstances. These flash-mob performances allow for a change of routine in everyday spaces that warms the hearts of bystanders and video viewers alike. Many bloggers and YouTube viewers stated that the Sabadell commercial brought them to tears. Moreover, the apparent spontaneity of these performances imbues them with a certain level of innocence or emotional purity that enables online viewers to believe that they are witnessing genuine, unscripted reactions from audience members. In fact, the T-Mobile promotion featured employees of the company scattered throughout the Liverpool metro station. For eyewitnesses at both events, it appears that the performers have completely altruistic motives. Herein lies the greatest allure of these commercials: nothing appears to be for sale. The logos of both companies only appear after the crowds applaud and disperse. Thus, while these acts can easily be characterized as “unusual,” they are not *oppositional* to the social orders of their surroundings. Rather, such performances are officially and institutionally sanctioned, and this is revealed to witnesses by the fact that the Liverpool Street station speakers were blasting music for the dancers, and that the Sabadell Bank branch housed orchestra and choir members prior to their rousing



performance. These are the marks that ensure viewers that the foul play associated with flash mobs will not materialize. The irreverence of the flash mob is clearly replaced by a didactic dimension that is intended to uplift communities through ostensible goodwill.

Unlike the officially authorized performances featured in the T-Mobile and Sabadell commercials, Flo6x8's "Rumba Rave" flash mob had to defend itself from an on-site security guard that scolded and chased group members. According to a letter of notification sent from YouTube administrators to Flo6x8's email, Santander Bank filed a privacy complaint with the media giant asking the group to black out the guard's face in the "Rumba Rave 'Banquero' Flashmob" video. Flo uploaded the recording to YouTube on December 16, 2010, and two days later they received a warning from officials reading,

Please edit or remove the material reported by the individual within 48 hours from today's date. If no action is taken, the video will then come in for review by the YouTube staff and be prohibited from being uploaded again (Art Situacions: 2014).

In just four days the video had racked up a total of 46,070 views. In an online world where visits and views constitute a form of currency and democratically prescribed authority, this sum represents an interest and momentum that Flo6x8 had worked assiduously to achieve. For reasons of which I am unaware, Flo failed to edit the cited material within two days and the video was taken off YouTube. When viewers accessed the video's web address after December 20, 2010 they were met with a blank screen that read: "This video has been removed because its content violated YouTube's Terms of Service. Sorry about that." As a result, the views that the action generated were wiped away, thereby halting any momentum online. Pepe Cifuentes commented on the video's removal saying,

It took only two days for the Banco Santander to become aware of the ‘threat’ and complain to YouTube, and for the latter to send us the warning of closure of the video. Record time and immaculate diligence (Art Situacions: 2014).

The swiftness with which both corporate parties operated belies the innocuousness of the violation in question. Needless to say, there are many video recordings on YouTube featuring individuals that do not consent to appearing online. The actions taken by Santander Bank and YouTube reflect a pointed antagonism towards the rebellious nature of Flo6x8’s performance.

In the days that followed the removal of Flo’s “Rumba Rave” video, the news of YouTube’s course of actions spread quickly across the Internet. Several individuals had already downloaded the original video in the short time that it was available and, upon hearing about its suppression, they uploaded and circulated the recording on other video channels and platforms. Cifuentes recalled,

While here at flo6x8 we were still wondering whether to upload it again ourselves with the staff’s faces [pixelated] out (which finally we did), the news of the censorship was already spreading like wildfire [on the] Internet and the new links to the copies of the video were beginning to circulate on blogs and a little later on the [news] media (Art Situacions: 2014).

Corporate attempts to block the “Rumba Rave” video online failed due to the collective power that individuals and communities of Internet users wielded in response. Today, at least four copies of the “Rumba Rave” video remain on YouTube channels that are unaffiliated with Flo6x8. The preeminent version, which was uploaded two days after the original was removed, is located on the channel “wifigratis” and has garnered nearly 814,000 views.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> This video can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wv5dh8v7mDs>

The magnitude of the online reaction to the video's removal constitutes an example of what has come to be identified as the "Streisand effect." This phrase refers to the phenomenon in which efforts to conceal, remove or censor information or materials result in an inadvertent increase in the circulation and publication of said subjects. The name originates from an incident in which Barbra Streisand sued the California Coastal Records Project in 2003 for posting a photographic archive online of nearly the entire California coastline, which included a picture of the actress's home in Malibu. The photograph in question was downloaded a total of six times (including twice by Streisand's attorneys) prior to the filing of the lawsuit. The legal actions taken by Streisand sparked a public awareness and interest in the picture that she had hoped to avoid and contain. The "Streisand effect" demonstrates how the Internet not only accelerates our ability to access information, but also extends each individual's potential to participate in larger processes of media regulation and circulation that were previously confined to publishers and media production companies.

The suppression of Flo6x8's "Rumba Rave" video spawned an incredible backlash that catapulted the group into the media spotlight. Several days after their video was removed, the group was featured in a nationally televised news segment with clips from their videos and an explanation of their mission. News anchor Helena Rosano announced,

*Tacones y flamenco contra el capitalismo. Es la propuesta de un grupo de activistas Sevillanos de izquierdas que aparecen repentinamente en sucursales bancarias de cualquier punto de España y se ponen a bailar y a cantar. Algunos creen que es un atraco hasta que sacan las castañuelas.*

Stamping heels and flamenco against capitalism, this is the proposal of a group of left-wing activists from Seville. They appear suddenly in bank offices all over Spain in order to dance and sing. Some people think that it is a robbery until the castanets appear (YouTube: “Flo6x8 in the news La Sexta,” posted February 11, 2011).<sup>15</sup>

This broadcast marked a departure for Flo in which they became nationally and, soon afterwards, internationally known. While YouTube remains the largest platform for presenting flash mob activity, Flo6x8 has also continued to utilize more traditional media, including news broadcasts on both radio and television in Spain and the United Kingdom, to circulate their messages. The group has been featured in segments produced by broadcasters that include the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Cuatro, La Sexta, and Televisión Española (La 2) as well as news stories in major periodicals including *The Nation*, *Time*, *El País* and *El Diario*. All of this exposure has turned Flo6x8 into a popular artistic torchbearer for local grassroots movements that are calling for major changes in Spain’s economic and political systems.

By bringing the protest movement inside the banks, Flo publicly holds corporate firms accountable for their roles in Spain’s economic collapse and shaming them for their corrupt practices. Many Spaniards are feeling a great deal of frustration and powerlessness not only because of their own limited opportunities and dire economic circumstances, but also because of the complete lack of accountability and apparent legal immunity of corrupt bankers, politicians and corporations. The individuals and institutions responsible for the economic collapse in Spain have gone unpunished and, in many cases, they have been awarded massive pay increases. Flo commits a powerful

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<sup>15</sup> This translation comes from the subtitles offered in the video.

form of symbolic violence against the banks that announces their role in the disintegration of the Spanish economy. By doing so, Flo has further galvanized community members in Seville, enabling them to refocus their energy and attention onto specific commercial culprits.

### ***Challenging the Crisis Narrative***

On the night of November 30, 2011, I was walking on Calle Feria en route to the Peña Torres Macarena when I spotted a large group of people covering the local Santander bank in graffiti. Armed with indelible markers and construction paper, members of this crowd explained that they met once a week to publicly denounce and deface banks around Seville. It is important to note that these individuals were not wearing any ski masks or unusual clothing to conceal their identities. Rather, it was a collection of about twenty-five ordinarily dressed people meeting to graphically condemn the banks and discuss the impact of political and financial news on their local communities. One of the inscriptions called for the imprisonment of the bank's directors and another announced in big bubble letters, "ESTO NO ES UNA CRISIS, SINO UNA ESTAFA" ("THIS ISN'T A CRISIS, THIS IS FRAUD").

While use of the expression "*la crisis*" is ubiquitous in Andalusia, the vast majority of citizens do not accept the official narratives of crisis set forth by politicians and news organizations. Such accounts describe the disastrous situation as unforeseeable and conveniently devoid of any culpable parties.



**Figure 4.9** A protester reads messages scrawled on the exterior of a Santander bank, contemplating what he can add to the collection of inscriptions.

In *Anti-Crisis*, anthropologist Janet Roitman explores how the term “crisis” directs the construction of modern narratives in ways that forestall discussions of culpability and causality. She asks, “What narratives are precluded by the crisis narrative, or the post hoc judgment of deviation, of failure?” (2014: 41). In relation to the recent economic collapse, the term “crisis” is based on an assumption that the financial system generally functions differently and thrives under the right set of conditions. As Roitner effectively illustrates, this implies that the stewards of the economy were conducting work based on “failed,” as opposed to “effective,” knowledge (2014: 55). Naturally, this means that things would have turned out differently if financial workers knew then what they know now.

The label of crisis attributes the current outcome to unforeseen circumstances, as opposed to the result of a host of deliberate actions carried out day after day by financial “experts.” The systems of determining and measuring value, which were based on expansive speculation and conjured capital (especially in housing markets), were acceptable as long as they were profitable (Roitman 2014: 46). Until the “crisis” hit, for example, the creation and sale of debt as credit was an extremely lucrative enterprise and, according to Roitman, “the most remarkable growth industry of the past decade, or more” (2014: 45). With the onset of the market crash, however, such credit (formerly an asset) became once more referred to as debt (and, thus, a toxic asset) (Roitman 2014: 48). In this example we can clearly see how the past is oftentimes entirely contingent on the present (Trouillot 1995: 15). Since historical actors also function as narrators of history, it is important to critically analyze how truth claims are framed in relation to the promotion and protection of self-interests (ibid: 2). As Roitner eloquently asserts in relation to the economy, “The proverbial problem is to apprehend these systems or deeper structures from a vantage point that is not itself determined by them” (2014: 93).

In February of 2012, Flo6x8 traveled to Barcelona to attend a screening of their movie, entitled *Flo6x8: Cuerpo contra Capital. Un Musical Flamenco contra el sistema financiero* (*Flo6x8: Body against Capital. A Flamenco Musical against the financial system*), at a local film festival where they received an award for Art Situacions (or “Situational Art”) from the Greens Foundation. While they were in the Catalonian capital, Flo took the opportunity to stage an action in a branch of La Caixa, a Barcelona-based financial institution. With three guitarists and singers, and a collection of dancers,

the group performed an original *rumba Catalana* (or “Catalan rumba”) entitled “*Esto no es crisis, se llama capitalismo*” (“This isn’t a crisis, this is capitalism”). The lyrics recount the story of financial demise in Spain, beginning with recklessness and corruption on the part of bankers that leads to institutional insolvency, mass evictions and an immense debt that falls onto the shoulders of taxpayers. With bank employees’ faces conspicuously obscured in the video, the singers begin to recite the first verse:

<i>Ya mi amigo el Banco España</i>	<i>I had a friend, and the Bank of Spain</i>
<i>Le pagaron su salario</i>	<i>Paid his salary</i>
<i>Sin pensarlo dos veces</i>	<i>Without thinking twice</i>
<i>Salió para malgastarlo</i>	<i>He went out to waste it</i>
<i>Unos años de derroche</i>	<i>There were some years of excess</i>
<i>Y ahorita que pague el pueblo</i>	<i>And now the nation pays</i>
<i>Como no pagues tu casa, primo</i>	<i>And if you don’t pay for your house, man</i>
<i>Te quedas sin techo</i>	<i>You’ll be left out on the street</i>

Suddenly, rhythms and voices converge as the intensity mounts while the group chants the chorus in unison:

<i>Yes que aquí no hay crisis, no, no (3x)</i>	<i>There is no crisis here, no, no (3x)</i>
<i>Que aquí lo que hay es mucha jeta</i>	<i>What we have here is a lot of nerve</i>
<i>Yes que aquí no hay crisis, no, no (3x)</i>	<i>There is no crisis here, no, no (3x)</i>
<i>Chévere, chévere, chévere</i>	<i>Good, good, good</i>

Lyrics from the chorus declare pointedly that the term “crisis” does not adequately explain Spain’s financial situation. The next two verses explain the rise and fall of Spain’s economy, and its implications for the Spanish society at large.

<i>Pero al cabo de unos años</i>	<i>But after a few years</i>
<i>de hacerse los enrollaos</i>	<i>Of [the banks] making themselves important</i>
<i>Créditos e hipotecas</i>	<i>Credits and mortgages</i>
<i>Ya no daban sin cuidado</i>	<i>Were no longer awarded so easily</i>
<i>La banca esta jodida</i>	<i>The bank is screwed</i>
<i>Por haber exagerao,</i>	<i>For having been excessive</i>
<i>Pero no perdonan deudas</i>	<i>But they don’t forgive debts</i>
<i>Ni currelas ni a paraos</i>	<i>Whether you are employed or not</i>



<i>Pero un día se destapó</i>	<i>But one day, they exposed</i>
<i>El falso sueño español</i>	<i>The false Spanish dream</i>
<i>Basao en cemento y mentiras</i>	<i>Grounded in cement and lies</i>
<i>Deudas y especulación</i>	<i>Debts and speculation</i>
<i>El lío que se formó</i>	<i>The mess that they created</i>
<i>Eso sí que es puro cuento</i>	<i>It is only hearsay</i>
<i>Que lo quieren arreglar</i>	<i>Now they want to fix it</i>
<i>Con recortes y con impuestos</i>	<i>With spending cuts<sup>16</sup> and taxes</i>

*Que esto no es crisis, se llama capitalismo (4x)*

*This is not crisis, it is called capitalism (4x)*

This piece of music is evidence of Flo’s goal to not only protest financial and governmental corruption but also to establish straightforward narratives that publicize such wrongdoing. Perpetual crisis is an oxymoron because it refers to an ongoing moment of historical transformation (Roitman 2014: 66). Unfortunately, the current economic disorder in Spain is not merely a temporary condition, but an unmistakable outcome with terrible implications for the nation’s present and future. Still, crisis remains a popular term for everyday discussions regarding the economy because it denotes an acute powerlessness that people feel for obvious reasons—including a lack of money, food, housing and other social services.

It is not enough to place blame upon the capitalist system and, for this reason, it is important that Flo brings attention to particular figures and banks through their lyrics and performance sites. Rather than staging this action with bitterness or anger, the members of Flo6x8 communicate a joyful, yet oppositional, strength that is akin to the energy they transmitted in the “Rumba Rave” performance. In a particularly striking moment during

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<sup>16</sup> I mention the nature of these cutbacks on pages ten and eleven of this chapter.

the action in La Caixa, a videographer films from directly behind the back, and thus from the vantage point, of one of the bank officials. A dancer is positioned right in front of the official, staring defiantly into his face and basking in *his* indignation as she challenges him to react with every twist and turn of her body.<sup>17</sup>



**Figure 4.10** One of the dancers from Flo6x8 moves rebelliously while staring into a bank official's face during an action at a La Caixa branch in Barcelona.

While there were certainly stirring moments in this video, however, there were also many problems regarding the quality of the recording. This action is a great example of how difficult it is to convert an inspired bank performance into a rousing and well-crafted video recording. First of all, the singers' voices and the percussive sounds of dancers proved to be too loud for the camera microphones in such a small space. As a result, these elements sounded muffled and distorted in the video. There were also several glaring mistakes that included guitars that were out of tune (presumably due to the change in temperature from outdoors to inside the bank) and a few rhythmic miscues.

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<sup>17</sup> This interaction occurs at 1:34 into the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zpgr9Ysa7AE>

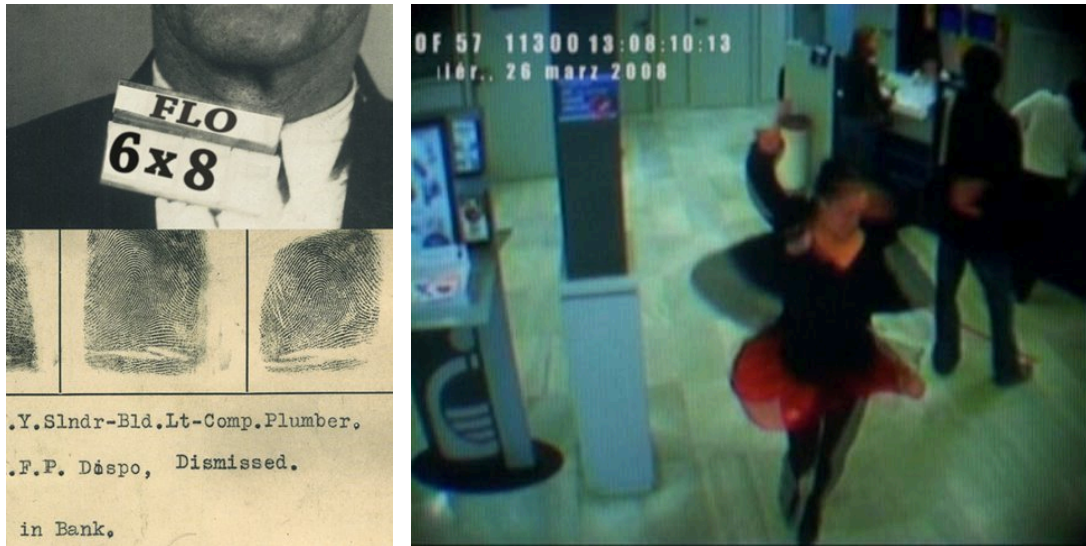
Moreover, with such little room to work with, the videographers never seemed to capture the entire group in performance. At times, the camera seems fated to collide with Flo's participants. This is a product of the improvisatory nature of Flo's work, but also a conscious decision made by the group to frame their work using both undercover and DIY (or do-it-yourself) aesthetics.

One of the through lines in Flo6x8's visual representation is a rough aesthetic in which the group is portrayed as outlaws. The graphic artists working in Flo consistently utilize heavily pixelated and tattered fonts that convey an illegal and criminal sensibility. In addition, many portraits of Flo that appeared on the group's now defunct webpage were produced in a cyberpunk style that gives the impression of a hacktivist outfit. For example, Flo6x8 uploaded and disseminated photos from security cameras inside ATMs and banks.<sup>18</sup> These modes of self-representation advance the notion that Flo is both unpredictable and capable of striking at will.

On the other hand, the group favors a DIY aesthetic for recording video footage. This style depicts a risky, exciting and embedded experience but also represents a commitment to inspire protesters and potential activists by demonstrating how simple it is to generate social and political impact through performance. This is not to say that Flo6x8's performances are uncomplicated or unprofessional in any way but, rather, to illustrate how their work is consistently characterized by a communal sensibility and a dedication to inspiring further action among viewers.

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<sup>18</sup> I inquired about these pictures to several group members, all of whom were unwilling to disclose their methods for obtaining such photos and footage.



**Figures 4.11 and 4.12 Flo6x8's mug shot and fingerprints and a photograph taken from security camera footage (Courtesy of Flo6x8)**

This is especially impressive because it requires extended participation among non-professional dancers, as well as precise execution from the group as a whole. DIY culture and art signify a populist impulse in which anyone can participate in the creation and re-creation of communities and their representation.

One prominent example of this is the emergence of citizen journalists during the Occupy Movement in the United States. Much like the citizens who produced updated news reports via Twitter during the Egyptian Revolution of 2011, protesters in major Occupy encampments across the country live-streamed coverage of the demonstrations, including clashes with police, from their cell phones. These cases prove that individuals with access to mobile technologies, social media and the Internet have the potential to wield incredible amounts of power in the public sphere.

Guerrilla media production creates excitement for viewers because it gives them a chance to virtually witness risky activities as they appear on the ground. Moreover, this

style is often considered to be authentic among audiences due to the improvised nature and rough quality of the final product. Experienced videographers in Flo6x8 purposely utilize moving shots that are often close to the ground in order to present an account of the action that is energetic and forceful.

Flo's actions create a reception that is twofold and includes the reactions of immediate bystanders, including bank personnel and customers, and the responses of online viewers to the totality of this presentation. Therefore, the performance itself comes to include all of the responses of physical witnesses that are captured on film. This highlights the performers' responsibility to elicit strong reactions, whether body language, facial expressions or otherwise, from people inside the bank. However, much of this happens naturally due to the ways in which Flo's performances rupture the social order inside banks.

Due to the requisite elements of surprise and organization, each action is carefully planned well in advance. Also, since so much preparation goes into each action, there is a great deal of pressure for dancers and singers to excel each time that they are called upon to perform. La Niña Ninja explains, "It's like a film shoot but with the tension and challenge of knowing that it is real. Of knowing that you are confronting the person you are singing to" (Lucas 2013). I asked Paca La Monea to explain how she felt when she began performing in Flo6x8:

[I felt] a wonderful fear, but also later, apart from this fear, I began to feel adrenaline. Being in a bank at ten in the morning as if I was about to pay my bill and, in a moment, beginning to dance. Inside there with all these people looking at you. It was a bit startling, you know. And the people stayed, but many hid. There were many different ways of receiving this [act]. (interview, 2/21/12)

Later, Paca described to me how she conceptualized these performances, especially in relation to witnesses in the banks:

For my self, in truth, it was my way of demonstrating. So it didn't matter to me what people thought. I couldn't think about it. For me it was a demonstration of trying to speak, to say the things that I would have wanted to say with my words to everybody [in the bank] that morning.

Many of Flo's early actions, including the ones described here by Paca La Monea, consisted of improvised individual performances as opposed to group choreography.

Unlike the flash mob, such presentations highlight the individual in an extremely personal act of expression.

As a highly improvisational art form, flamenco calls for dancers to spontaneously manipulate their bodies in ways that are often aggressive, joyful, pained and introspective. Much like jazz musicians, flamenco artists are trained to constantly react to their surroundings and collaborators. Thus, a grounding in flamenco performance not only prepares one to express herself meaningfully through extemporization, but also to perform in ways that *seem* improvised. Although several members of Flo have stated that flamenco, in the context of performance protest, is a vehicle that can be effectively replaced by other art forms, it is clear that the art of flamenco is very well suited to situational productions. Many of the performers in Flo6x8 are extremely adept at imbuing their performances with a spontaneous and improvised quality—even when they have rehearsed their choreographies over and over for days, or even weeks, on end.

### ***The Bankia Action***

In 2010, Spain's federal government created the financial conglomerate Bankia by combining a host of problem-ridden regional savings banks, known as *cajas*. In spite of these risks, Bankia officially became the third-largest banking institution in Spain in terms of assets. Government officials and regulators believed that this merger would be large enough to withstand any and all of the defects that it contained. Soon it became clear, however, that Bankia was in serious trouble when company bankers were unable to generate any foreign interest or investment.

Bankia soon plummeted in net worth, but not before chief executive Rodrigo de Rato and company shifted the target of their sales pitch from experienced international businessmen to Spaniards with limited options. According to *The Wall Street Journal*,

Mr. Rato and top Spanish government officials worked the phones with wealthy individuals and business leaders [in Spain], urging them to buy shares personally and on behalf of their companies. If Bankia's offering failed, they warned, it could drag down the entire Spanish financial system (Schaefer Muñoz 2012).

By early May 2012, Bankia was clearly failing and Rato was forced to resign under government pressure. When Spain's finance ministry investigated Bankia they discovered a host of falsified records that exaggerated values and concealed low-grade real-estate loans.

It was around this time that Flo decided to stage a performance protest that addressed the Bankia debacle. On this occasion, I was asked to participate in the action as a bystander and videographer. Two days prior to the performance, I met with all of the participants in a large warehouse where we reviewed a blueprint of the space inside the bank and discussed each of our individual roles. Every last detail was considered,

including individual entrances and exits, and we were instructed on how to react if anyone outside of the group, including a security guard, intervened. The normally jovial atmosphere that defined my gatherings with friends from Flo6x8 was replaced by an acute intensity. The illegality and disruptive nature of our work hung over us as we sat determined and focused on the task that lay ahead.

On the morning of Thursday, May 17, I made my way across town to meet and rehearse with the group at a private location in Seville's San Pablo district. When I arrived, everyone was running around with nervous energy preparing and throwing on their outfits for the impending action. Four of the dancers donned black dresses, shoes and shades while the rest wore skirts and heels in a variety of colors and patterns. The latter part of the group dressed this way in order to blend in as customers before being called upon to participate in the action.

After about a quarter of an hour, things began to settle down and the performers took their places for one last rehearsal. The *cantaor*, *palmeros*, and *bailaoras* staged a final practice run with the rest of us watching intently and providing spirited support with a steady stream of *jaleo*. During this time, the *bailoras* were still working out some issues regarding their entrances into the performance.

When the run-through was complete, El Moody's asked for everyone's attention. He wanted us to watch a video on his computer. This seemed like an odd request considering that there were more than twenty of us in all, and the screen on his laptop was relatively small. All of us jammed together to watch a top ten video featuring the famous French prankster, Remi Gaillard. This self-described "imposter" independently



produces and stars in videos that exemplify his motto, “L’est en faisant n’importe quoi qu’on devient n’importe qui,” which means, “It is by doing whatever that one becomes whoever.”

Remi, as he is known among followers, is an anti-authoritarian meddler whose videos point to the constructed nature of social relations and power in a wide variety of quotidian settings. He commits disruptive and often illegal acts in both public and private spaces that include shopping malls, highways, construction sites, golf courses and butcher shops. By contesting and subverting the social order, he reshapes popular notions of these spaces and how they relate to our conceptions of ownership and authority as well as appropriate action and creative license.

After the video, which provoked a great deal of laughter among the group, El Moody’s explained that he wanted us to enter this action with the same fearlessness and rebellious spirit that Remi displayed in each of his productions. “We only have one chance to do this, so let’s do it right,” Moody’s declared. Afterwards, La Niña Ninja gave a short motivational speech in which she further explained the urgency of our performance. These talks inspired all of us to action and, over the next ten minutes or so, we left the rehearsal space one by one without acknowledging one another as we slowly fanned out into the streets.



**Figure 4.13 Members of Flo6x8 listen intently to La Niña Ninja (located outside of the frame) before the Bankia action**

Walking the quarter-mile to the bank, I was bursting with nervous excitement. I felt like someone in on a big secret that everyone else in Seville would find out about sooner or later. When I entered the Caja Madrid and Bankia branch on Luis Montoto Street, I saw the familiar faces of other disguised bystanders all waiting for the performance as eagerly as myself. I was quite disappointed, however, with the low turnout of audience members, or real customers, in the bank. This was one of the many variables that remain outside of Flo6x8's control.

After several minutes of chatting with other bystanders both real and fake, the fantastic *cantaor*, known in this setting as Pincho de Leche, began to sing a mournful *fandango* from atop the steps inside the entranceway:

<i>El carácter y la voluntad</i>	<i>The nature of character and money</i>
<i>Has cambiaito amigo mío</i>	<i>Has changed, my friend</i>
<i>El carácter y la voluntad</i>	<i>The nature of character and money</i>

<i>Ay, desde que tienes dinero</i>	<i>Ay, ever since you got money</i>
<i>No se te puede aguantar</i>	<i>We can't endure you</i>
<i>Son cosas de rico nuevo</i>	<i>These are the ways of the rich today</i>

I began to record with my camera, doing my best to pretend that I was a bewildered tourist. Many of the employees and “real” customers in the bank were smiling, and the bank manager ran to the phone, presumably to notify the police.<sup>19</sup>

A moment after Pincho de Leche finished singing, Paca La Monea emerged from the pack of pseudo-customers establishing a steady *bulerías* rhythm with *palmas sordas*. At this point, several members of Flo laughed loudly and nervously, no doubt because they were enjoying the absurdity of the spectacle that they had worked to create. As the *palmeros* surrounding Pincho de Leche maintained the infectious beat, Paca began to slowly move as the *cantaor* commenced singing *por bulerías*:

<i>Tú me has bajaíto el sueldo</i>	<i>You've lowered my salary</i>
<i>Me lo subisteis toíto</i>	<i>And raised the price of everything else</i>
<i>Para poder defenderme</i>	<i>In order to get by</i>
<i>Hasta el loro he empeñaíto</i>	<i>I've even pawned my radio</i>
<i>Hasta mi casa, yo he vendío</i>	<i>I've even sold my house</i>
<i>No me trajines más Rodrigo</i>	<i>Don't screw me anymore Rodrigo<sup>20</sup></i>
<i>Que por tu mala cabecilla</i>	<i>Because of your bad head</i>
<i>Acabaremos furtivos</i>	<i>We will all end up as devious as you</i>

After the end of this verse, the other three dancers in black moved slowly towards Paca in the middle of the newly minted “dance floor.” They marked time by stomping on the floor in unison before promptly executing a *remate* with their arms raised high over their heads. They carried the choreography flawlessly as Pincho de Leche resumed singing:

<i>Me busqué dos curriyos</i>	<i>I looked for two jobs</i>
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<sup>19</sup> By this time, Flo6x8 was fairly well known in Seville and undoubtedly notorious among bank personnel. For this reason, none of the customers or employees reacted with any apparent fear during the performance.

<sup>20</sup> Rodrigo de Rato, executive chairman of Bankia who resigned on May 7, 2012.

<i>Pa la hipoteca</i>	<i>In order to pay the mortgage</i>
<i>Pa la hipoteca</i>	<i>For the mortgage</i>
<i>Tú te metes en líos</i>	<i>You got into trouble</i>
<i>Me echas a la calle</i>	<i>You put me out on the street</i>
<i>Porque no hay manteca</i>	<i>Because there is no dough</i>
<i>Me busqué dos curriyos</i>	<i>I looked for two jobs</i>
<i>Pa la hipoteca</i>	<i>In order to pay the mortgage</i>

Following this verse, the four dancers performed another short interlude that ended in a *remate* in which they invited all of the other dancers to the floor. This is perhaps the most thrilling part of the entire performance because a dozen more dancers seem to spontaneously join the *bailaoras* in black. At this moment, the tension that had been carried by the performers in anticipation of dancing together was released all at once. In a rousing finale, Pincho de Leche sang the closing lines in a festive style while all of the dancers interpreted his words through physical movement:

<i>Ay Bankia, Bankia, Bankia</i>	<i>Ay Bankia, Bankia, Bankia</i>
<i>Pa ti seis pulmones</i>	<i>For you six lungs</i>
<i>Pa mi ni unas branquias</i>	<i>Not even a gill for me</i>
<i>Ay Bankia, Bankia, Bankia</i>	<i>Ay Bankia, Bankia, Bankia</i>
<i>Pa ti seis pulmones</i>	<i>For you six lungs</i>
<i>Pa mi ni unas branquias</i>	<i>Not even a gill for me</i>
<i>No te voy a querer</i>	<i>I won't love you</i>
<i>Yo no te voy a querer</i>	<i>I'm not going to want you</i>
<i>Aunque me quitarás el interés (2x)</i>	<i>Even if you stop charging me interest (2x)</i>
<i>Que yo no te quiero, Bankia</i>	<i>I don't want you, Bankia</i>
<i>No te quiero, Bankia</i>	<i>I don't want you, Bankia</i>
<i>Ay Bankia, Bankia, Bankia</i>	<i>Ay Bankia, Bankia, Bankia</i>
<i>Pa ti seis pulmones</i>	<i>For you six lungs</i>
<i>Pa mi ni unas branquias</i>	<i>Not even a gill for me</i>
<i>Ay Bankia, Bankia, Bankia</i>	<i>Ay Bankia, Bankia, Bankia</i>
<i>Pa ti seis pulmones</i>	<i>For you six lungs</i>
<i>Pa mi ni unas branquias</i>	<i>Not even a gill for me</i>

The Bankia action was extremely successful, and it has garnered over 1.1 million views in the twenty months since it was uploaded on May 24, 2012. On the following day, Bankia requested nineteen billion euros (the equivalent of about 24 billion dollars) in aid from the Spanish government. As a result of the confluence of these events, the video became a touchstone for popular responses to the Bankia fiasco and was featured in major news periodicals both inside and outside of Spain. Much of the success of this action can also be attributed to the expanding nature of Flo6x8's flash mob performance. On two occasions plain clothed dancers joined the growing group of *bailaoras*, thereby indicating to viewers that they were energized by the previous performance. The group executed their choreography to perfection and the size of the group, including members that were inserted into the crowd, made up for the shortage of actual bank customers. Finally, this action was somewhat "topical," because it addressed a particular corporation (Bankia) and culprit (Rodrigo de Rato) in spatial and lyrical terms. In the same way that "topical" folk songs in the U.S. American folk movement reported news events to listeners, the Bankia action communicated an oppositional narrative of current events through the lens of flamenco song and dance.

**Sin Luz, sin agua, sin miedo: *Flo6x8 and the Battle for La Corrala Utopía***

In the group's most recent action to date, a group of about twenty people performed a similarly topical production in support of the Corrala Utopía housing collective.<sup>21</sup> Since May of 2012 dozens of poor families have occupied this building at

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<sup>21</sup> The Spanish word "corrala" refers to a building with several floors of small apartments around a central courtyard.

the northern end of Seville. After remaining completely vacant for several years due to the economic depression, numerous families were moved into the Corrala with the support of activists from the 15-M movement. Since then, it has become one of the leading symbols of resistance to eviction policies in Spain.

The occupants of Corrala Utopía have been living in a state of legal limbo since moving in because the bank that owns the property, Ibercaja, is fighting to have them evicted. Additionally, the city council of Seville recently cut the building's electricity and water supply. This is a public fight over the fundamental rights of citizens to decent living quarters in spite of the privileges delegated to corporate banks across Andalusia and the entire Spanish nation.

In October of 2013, Flo collaborated with people from the Corrala Utopía collective as well as 15M in an action that was staged inside an Ibercaja branch bank. A large amateur dance troupe led by La Niña Ninja removed their sweaters to reveal t-shirts emblazoned with a fist and the words “La Corrala no se rinde” (“The Corrala will not surrender”) and “Luchando por la Utopía” (“Fighting for Utopia”). In a *tangos* entitled “Cuatro Palabritas Claras,” or “Four clear little words,” El Calderilla (meaning “The Little Boiler”) declared:

*Corrala, corrala*  
*Que ya está aquí la corrala*  
*Que hemos venio a deciros*  
*Cuatro palabritas claras*

*Corrala, corrala*  
*The corrala is here*  
*We have come to tell you all*  
*Four clear little words*

He goes on to address the directors of Ibercaja:

*Directivo de Ibercaja,*  
*Que mala hiena*  
*Que me quieres quitar*

*Executive from Ibercaja*  
*You foul hyena*  
*You want to steal from me*

<i>Donde yo duerma</i>	<i>The place where I sleep</i>
<i>Pero que mira,</i>	<i>But look,</i>
<i>¿Que motivo te he hecho yo?</i>	<i>What have I done to you</i>
<i>Pa que me tires la ropita a la calle</i>	<i>For you to throw my clothes on the street</i>
<i>Igual que si fuera un ladrón</i>	<i>As if I were a thief?</i>
<i>Y si quieres saber los pasos que doy</i>	<i>And if you want to know the steps I take</i>
<i>Vente tras de mí, pa mi casa voy</i>	<i>Come right behind me, to my home I go</i>
<i>La sangre se me envenena</i>	<i>My blood boils</i>
<i>Cuando me pongo a pensar</i>	<i>When I start thinking</i>
<i>Que unos tienen de tó</i>	<i>That some people have everything</i>
<i>Y otros no tienen de ná</i>	<i>And others have nothing at all</i>
<i>Amado Franco<sup>22</sup> me miras</i>	<i>Amado Franco you look at me</i>
<i>Amado Franco no sabes</i>	<i>Amado Franco you don't know</i>
<i>Lo que puede esta vecina</i>	<i>What this neighbor is capable of doing</i>
<i>Dejarme vivir tranquila</i>	<i>Let me live in peace</i>
<i>Que me duele el corazón</i>	<i>My heart is aching so much</i>
<i>Y me va a costar la vida</i>	<i>And I'll end up paying with my life</i>
<i>Aquí viene la Corrala</i>	<i>Here comes the Corrala</i>
<i>Pa cantaros las cuarenta</i>	<i>To tell you a thing or two</i>
<i>Y a partiros toa la...</i>	<i>And to slap you in the...</i>
<i>Aquí viene la Corrala</i>	<i>Here comes the Corrala</i>
<i>A cantaros las cuarenta</i>	<i>To tell you a thing or two</i>
<i>Y aquí seguirán estando</i>	<i>And they will still be here</i>
<i>Sin luz, sin agua, sin miedo.</i>	<i>Without electricity, water or fear</i>

The “four clear little words” are “without electricity, water (or) fear.” This is the battle cry of the people at the Corrala Utopía. Residents of neighboring buildings have posted signs of support on their balconies that announce, “Queremos ser libres, no presos de los banco[s]” (“We want to be free, not prisoners of the banks”).

Ibercaja’s president, Amado Franco, asserted that the company should secure whatever contracts they could at the Corrala Utopía stating,

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<sup>22</sup> Amado Franco is the current president of Ibercaja bank. He was elected to this position in 2004.

It is utopic to think that those apartments are going to be sold within four or five years. It is better to have those apartments being lived in, paying a monthly rent of 100 euros than to have them vacant (Bueno and Nierga 2013).

Unbelievably, these are the terms that residents of the Corrala Utopía have been calling for all along, and yet Ibercaja has consistently responded to these demands by calling for mass evictions of the building's occupants. In a letter addressed to Franco, all of the inhabitants at the Corrala Utopía asked for the basic rights and justice that public institutions have long denied them. Such entitlements, including a “dignified quality of life,” are outlined in the Spanish Constitution of 1978 (La Moncloa 1978: Preamble).

While conditions worsen across Andalusia and all of Spain, battles for adequate housing, sustenance, education and health care continue to escalate. Fundamental questions regarding the benefits of citizenship and the meanings of democracy become more critical with each passing day. These questions include: Should we provide impoverished citizens with heating for their homes and water or continue to illuminate cathedrals and major government buildings at night? Should we cut funds used for public festivals and church upkeep in order to feed hungry children and support our nation's elderly population? Age-old conditions in Andalusia, including widespread indentured servitude, extreme poverty and the intense concentration of wealth and power have returned with a vengeance, albeit in different, and especially neoliberal, formations. As the region plunges further and further into economic depression, many people are beginning to wonder if these vast inequalities were ever resolved in the first place. The current situation is an unpleasant and ongoing reminder of the way things were for so



many years under the dictatorship of Francisco Franco and the exploitative oligarchies that preceded it in the nineteenth century.

### ***Conclusion***

In this chapter, I have outlined the ways in which Flo6x8 creatively asserts itself politically through flamenco song and dance. This group pushes the boundaries of what expressions of protest and flamenco look and sound like and where they should take place. By physically assaulting banks through performance, Flo demonstrates that, as Washabaugh claimed, the political utility of flamenco expression extends well beyond *letras* and language and comes to include the performers' bodies of sonic resonance and kinesthetic execution. While the auditory facets of flamenco performance are essential, the visual and corporeal components can be equally important because, together, they constitute a force that is posed spatially (whether in banks or otherwise).

Following the example of Remi Gaillard, Flo6x8 shows that not only can flamenco and political protests be orchestrated and realized *wherever*, but also that by doing so there is an added value *whenever* such work is undertaken. The explicit politicization of flamenco bodies outside of accepted flamenco venues happens more easily because, unlike the flash mobs staged in commercials, such performances are unauthorized by authorities. Moreover, the enactment of a public, physically derived and non-sexualized power by females is an affront to patriarchal conventions and a statement regarding gender equality in Andalusia and Spain.

Flo6x8 also manages to draw from protest, flash mob and online video cultures without letting these mediums determine either the content or scope of their productions.

They implement methods from YouTube viewing culture that emphasize spectacular and unpredictable performative elements, even while simultaneously drawing upon the symbolic associations and cultural capital of flamenco proper in Andalusia. While both flash mob and flamenco performance are predicated upon a “mobile,” “participatory” and “polymorphous” character, Flo harnesses a subversive format that carries many potential risks (Gore 2010: 128). Similarly, the group exists within the local 15M movement in Seville and collaborates with grassroots organizers but also operates separately as a motivating force and a platform for education and entertainment.

Flo6x8 has carved out a place for situational performance that exposes the symbolic vulnerability of banks. They have revealed that banks are accessible targets where seemingly spontaneous performances are quite capable of disturbing the order that is the foundation for the maintenance of current relations of power. As such, they set an example that instructs others on how to undertake such important political work.

## Conclusion

In this study, I have explored a number of different examples that point to the ways in which flamenco is a contested cultural terrain in Andalusia and Spain at large. I traced international interest in flamenco from the middle of the twentieth century up through to the present day. In doing so, I look at how performance spaces make up a fundamental part of how this music is conceptualized and enacted. By outlining the trajectory of specific traditions and practices, I identify how flamenco accumulates new meanings and forms of execution in transnational contexts. Although flamenco is commonly envisioned in terms of purity, whether racial, spatial or otherwise, I contend that this vibrant cultural form is best understood in relation to how intimacy is emphasized, valorized and modeled publicly through performance.

The U.S. American presence in Morón led to the creation, preservation and diffusion of sound recordings that altered the ways in which Diego del Gastor's *toque* was received. While sound recordings eliminate the physicality that is crucial to artistic expression and awareness in flamenco, they also highlight the sonic elements that represent performative reciprocity and intimacy. Moreover, they present *aficionados* with new ways to "attend" *fiestas* and commemorate artists.

At the same time, the influence of American counterculture on flamenco and popular music in Andalusia and Spain at large was tremendous. New musical forms, including *rock Andaluz*, emerged as the soundtrack to rebellion against the Franco dictatorship and its visions of a monolithic Spanish nation. As Spain transitioned from dictatorship to democracy, ideologies of isolationism were replaced by intense

expressions of cosmopolitanism as well as social, political, intellectual, sexual, religious and artistic freedom. The work of Son de la Frontera was marked by an acute tension between local and international, including transnational, sounds and sensibilities. The group entered into global commercial realms that challenged its ideas about heritage, locality and purity. As flamenco artists continue to tour farther from home, they will be forced to decide on how to reconcile freedom and demonstrations of cosmopolitanism with a commitment to traditional practices and articulations of purity.

In the last seven years, UNESCO and the governments of Spain and Andalusia have championed flamenco art and culture in a variety of ways. On Friday, February 15, 2013, however, the Junta de Andalucía announced that nearly all of the funding destined for *peñas* in the region would be cut indefinitely. While grandiose functions and glossy periodicals continue to be subsidized by the government, the communities that they purportedly represent are becoming increasingly fragmented. Today, despite promises from these agencies to protect flamenco, both Peña Pies Plomo and Peña Torres Macarena remain closed to the public. The former venue was besieged by noise complaints that led to financial penalties from the government, and ultimately succumbed to economic struggles stemming from the crisis and rental disputes in 2012.

In March of 2013, Torres Macarena staged a benefit concert at a local theatre in order to raise funds for soundproofing the interior of the *peña*. The *peña* enlisted the help of over twenty artists, including Manuel Molina, El Chozas, Carmen Ledesma and Mary Peña, to raise close to 9,000 euros (the equivalent of roughly \$12,000) (Carmelo 2014). In spite of attempts by the directorate to comply with local laws and complaints, Peña

Torres Macarena was forced to close at the end of February 2014. Since that time, members of the *peña* have staged a number of performances by Seville's city hall in order to garner attention and support for their cause. *Socios* have also created an online petition and Facebook group to unite community members in the face of opposition from the local government. These challenges have galvanized the local flamenco community and converted Torres Macarena's gray-haired *socios* into a group of anti-authoritarian activists. As of August 2014, Torres Macarena remains closed indefinitely.

The closures of Pies Plomo and Torres Macarena are indicative of how privatization efforts on the part of government agencies represent claims to ownership that are based on the accumulation of capital. While artists and community members articulate ownership claims based on participation through listening as well as sonic and corporeal performance, neoliberal and multinational interests announce proprietorship primarily through the deployment and distribution of financial resources. In Andalusia, flamenco is used to bridge public and private realms in powerful ways. Therefore, despite its cooptation by commercial and institutional forces, it remains a compass that assists individuals and communities in sustaining local, including familial, identities and navigating their social, including political and spiritual, worlds.

## Appendix I

### Glossary of Spanish and Flamenco Terms

***afición*** – related to the term “*aficionado*” and used to refer to one’s respect, dedication and deep affection for flamenco

***aficionado*** – a term of distinction in Andalusian flamenco communities that refers to a person that is a knowledgeable and unofficial authority on flamenco

***aire*** – feeling or stylishness

***Andaluz (pl. Andaluces)*** – Andalusian (plural Andalusians)

***apoyado (or apoyando)*** – rest-stroke on the guitar in which the player’s finger will come to rest on the string below (with thumb) or above (with *picado*) the one that is played

***arte*** – art or artistry (often utilized as a mark of praise)

***artista*** – artist (often used as a compliment)

***baile*** – flamenco dance

***bailaor/a*** – flamenco dancer

***bulerías*** – a fast and showy song form that originates from Jerez and is one of the most commonly played *palos*; it is almost always performed during *fin de fiestas*, most likely due to the influence of the famous singer Camarón de la Isla in the 1970s and 1980s

***cabal*** – an expert *aficionado* of the highest order

***cal*** – limestone that is converted into a traditional form of white paint (also known as *cal*) that covers a vast number of homes in Andalusia. It also acts as a potent symbol of domestic life in Morón and Andalusia.

***cantaor/a*** – flamenco singer

***cante*** – refers to flamenco song, one’s style of singing, or even the song form that one is singing in (and, therefore, acts as a synonym for *palo* in the context of vocal performance)

***cante jondo*** – literally “deep song”; refers to a set of *cantes* and *palos* that are widely considered to be the oldest, the most profound and the most *Gitano*

***cante pa' lante*** – literally means “singing in front”; singing done when there are no dancers performing

***cante pa' trás*** – literally means “singing in back”; singing while a dancer (or several dancers) perform

***compás*** – the meter or beat of the music; in the context of flamenco, this word refers to the rhythmic cycles and the beats that are accentuated within these cycles; this concept is often referred to as the backbone of flamenco song and dance

***copla*** – refers literally to a lyrical “verse” in a song or poem; also denotes a type of Spanish popular song akin to the ballad that flourished from the 1940s through to the early 1960s

***cuadro*** – a group that performs flamenco together; this term usually refers to a group with at least one singer, dancer and guitar player

***duende*** – a transcendent feeling of ecstasy that arrives when the music touches a person at their core.

***escuela*** – school; refers to a style of players, as in the *escuela* from Jerez

***estilo*** – style; often used in reference to a specific style, or even school, of singing, dancing or playing the guitar. For example, the Morón *toque* can also be referred to as the *estilo* from Morón.

***extranjero*** – foreigner

***falseta*** – a melodic statement on the guitar; an instrumental composition will consist of many *falsetas*, whereas during a performance of *cante*, an accompanist will only play one or two *falsetas* during breaks between *letras*

***festero*** – a flamenco artist whose style of performance is derived from *fiesta* settings; Such artists both sing and dance in an upbeat manner. Today, the art of the *festero* is less prevalent, but there are some remarkable artists of this ilk that include Juan del Gastor, Luis Peña and Javier Heredia.

***fiesta*** – literally means “party” but typically refers to an exclusive and informal gathering in which everyone participates in flamenco music-making and dancing. These events often involve a communal feast, as well as a great deal of alcohol consumption.

***fin de fiesta*** – a concert finale in which artists enact a *fiesta* in a public venue and context

**finca** – farm; often used as a shorthand by members of the Morón flamenco community to refer to Donn Pohren’s ranch house located just outside of the town

**flamenco por derecho** – refers to “flamenco by right,” as in one’s authority or license to perform that is based on birthright, including familial, geographical or collective heritage

**frontera** – border; featured in the names of many towns, including Morón de la Frontera and Jerez de la Frontera, because during the Catholic “reconquest” of Spain, the nation’s southern border expanded southward over several centuries until the Moors of Granada were expelled in 1492.

**gachó (pl. gachés)** – Caló (*Gitano* language) word for non-Gypsy

**Gastoreño** – although this term literally refers to residents of the town of El Gastor (located sixty miles southeast of Seville and nineteen miles northwest of Ronda), in flamenco circles it is used to describe a descendant of Diego del Gastor

**Gitano/a** – Andalusian Gypsy; can refer to the racial affiliation, an individual or even the race as a whole; often used as an adjective and term of admiration in *jaleo*, as in “¡Que Gitano!” which means “How Gypsy!” or “What a Gypsy!”

**guiri** – foreigner (often used derogatorily, i.e. when pointing out a non-Spaniard’s inability to understand or perform something up to local standards)

**jaleo** – loud shouts of encouragement that are an essential part of flamenco performance, especially in *fiestas* and small gatherings (Common examples of *jaleo* include: “¡Eso es!,” “¡Arsa!,” “¡Toma que toma!,” and “¡Vamos allá!”); It is important that *jaleo* be delivered in *compás*, or rhythm

**juerga** – an informal gathering where flamenco is performed

**letra** – lyric or verse

**Mairenismo** – an ideology based on the work of Antonio Mairena, especially *Mundo y Formas del Cante Flamenco* (1963), which asserts that “true” flamenco is based exclusively on *Gitano* creations, performance practices and rituals

**Nuevo flamenco** – new flamenco; Refers to modern flamenco music that is usually fused with other styles including jazz and Latin American forms. This style often features the use of extended chords and harmonies and was sparked by the innovations of Paco de Lucía and Camarón in the 1970s.

**palmas** – denotes the handclapping of *compás* in flamenco performance



**palmero** – one who provides *palmas* and *jaleo* in a group setting

**palo** – flamenco song form, whether sung, danced or played on the guitar; each *palo* has a distinct meter, as well as a corresponding set of sung melodies, rhythmic emphases, guitar *falsestas* and modes of (harmonic) accompaniment

**payo** – means “non-Gypsy” and is often used by *Gitanos* disparagingly

**pelao (from pelado)** – literally means “bare” or “bare bones” and is often used to describe the Morón *toque* because of its relative simplicity

**peña** – a community venue and social club where both formal and informal flamenco gatherings are held

**picado** – a technique in which the guitarist plucks one string at a time with alternating rest strokes played by the index and middle fingers; passages that involve this method are often used to showcase speed and technical virtuosity

**pueblo** – a village or small town; can also refer to a town’s inhabitants or

**pureza** – purity; used as an approbative term of authenticity and quality that is often linked with *Gitanos* and members of the lower class in flamenco performance

**rasgueado** – refers to a variety of strumming patterns that are performed with the right hand;

**remate** – a cadential phrase that connotes the end of a section or piece

**rumba** – a more modern flamenco song form (not to be confused with the Cuban musical form) that became popular for *fin de fiestas* in the 1960s and 1970s; The Gypsy Kings, among others, have popularized this form to the extent that flamenco stereotypes in world music circles and popular culture almost always rely upon the catchy, Latin-infused rhythms of *rumba*.

**sello propio** – literally means one’s “own stamp”; refers to an original and distinct style of performance

**señorito** – a member of the upper class who contracted flamenco artists to perform in private parties and gatherings (often used in a derogatory fashion)

**soleá (also soleares)** – a solemn *cante* whose name originates from the word “*soledad*,” which means “solitude” or “loneliness”; Fernanda de Utrera is considered one of the greatest interpreters of this song form

**socio/a** – a member of a *peña* or other organization

**soniquete** – the quality of rhythmic inventiveness; often used to compliment an individual's rhythmic creativity (as in “*Ella tiene soniquete.*” or “She has *soniquete.*”)

**tertulia** – social gathering, regular informal gathering

**tirando** – free-stroke on the guitar in which the player's finger will pluck the string without resting on either the string below (with thumb) or above (with *picado*) the one that is played

**tocaor/a** (from *tocador/a*) – guitar player; you almost never hear the word “*tocaora*” because there are so few female guitarists in flamenco

**toque** – guitar playing; can refer to a guitar school or style, as in the Morón *toque*

**transmitir** – to transmit profound feeling; This faculty is emphasized in the Morón school.

**zapateo** – the component of flamenco dance in which the *bailaor/a* stomps their feet on the floor, thereby creating percussive sounds that contribute to the overall rhythmic texture of a piece

## Appendix II - Decalogue for the Aficionado of Flamenco Song

### Decálogo para El Aficionado Al Cante Flamenco

Por **Manuel Centeno Fernández**, Presidente de la Peña Torres Macarena año de 1980

I RESPETARAS Y AMARAS EL CANTE FLAMENCO, por ser expresión espiritual del Pueblo Andaluz que, por su profundidad y riqueza, lo convirtió en un ARTE tan sublime como solemne y tan singular como bello. No olvidarás que es un tesoro maravilloso que heredaste de tus mayores, por lo que estás obligado a cuidarlo con amor inmenso y, por ser un patrimonio recibido transitoriamente, tienes también el deber de conservarlo con todo rigor, para entregárselo a las generaciones venideras, al menos, en las mismas condiciones que lo heredaste.

II AMARAS EL CANTE POR EL CANTE y deberás saber no existen “cantes malos”, puesto que sólo existen “cantes buenos y mejores”.

III DEBERAS SABER, y no olvidar jamás, que el cante flamenco, por su “jondura<sup>1</sup> y seriedad”, no es cosa de borrachos. Aunque a veces, y sobre todo en ocasiones limites, produzca grandes borracheras.

IV TIENES EL INELUDIBLE DEBER de velar por su grandeza, de respetarlo y hacerlo respetar, porque su razón es tu razón, y su alma tu alma.

V CUANDO DUDES SOBRE EL ORIGEN DE UN CANTE, o sobre cualquier matiz de orden técnico, no sientas vergüenza en consultar a un profesional, únicos que están técnicamente preparados para sacarte de dudas. Ten presente que la única forma de explicarlos es cantándolo.

VI VALORARAS EN SU JUSTA MEDIDA la voz del cantaor, en razón de ser una calidad, timbre o intensidad innata; su sonido no es una facultad que se pueda adquirir voluntariamente, fonética que, a veces, por su gran riqueza, es un don que Dios concede.

VII EL MEJOR AFICIONADO no es aquel que más entiende, sino aquel que mejor sabe escuchar.

VIII EL SABER ESCUCHAR es el “arte del silencio” y, el saber guardar silencio, es un signo ostensible de buena educación artística. El silencio sólo se debe romper cuando se vibra de emoción y, ello, a compás, porque expresar esos “olés” que rubrican nuestras

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<sup>1</sup> *Jondura* is usually spelled *hondura* and comes from the word “*hondo*.” This term is related to the expression “*cante jondo*,” which means “deep song” and refers to the most intense singing forms in flamenco, including *siguiriyas*, *soleá* and *martinetes*. This set of *palos* is associated exclusively with *Gitanos* – both in terms of its cultural origins and leading interpreters.

emociones a destiempo es la única forma de demostrar, el aficionado, que se va “atravesao”.

IX POR ESTAS RAZONES, valorando que el respeto engendra respeto, a ningún aficionado, por muy enterado que esté, le asiste el derecho de querer imponer a otros aficionados el cantaor de sus preferencias, máxime cuando entendemos que si cada cantaor es un mundo de expresión aparte, cada aficionado es un mundo receptivo aparte.

X EL AFICIONADO que reúne las condiciones de “saber estar”, “saber escuchar” y “saber digerir” lo que escucha, merece el **TITULO DE CABAL**.

### **Decalogue for the Aficionado of Flamenco Song**

*By Manuel Centeno Fernández, Presidente of the Peña Torres Macarena in 1980*

I YOU WILL LOVE AND RESPECT THE *CANTE*, for being a spiritual expression of the Andalusian people that, due to its depth and richness, was converted into an ART that is as sublime as it is solemn, and as singular as it is beautiful. Do not forget that it is a wonderful treasure that you inherited from your elders, which is why you are obligated to care for it with immense love. Since the *cante* is also a transitorily received patrimony, you must also work rigorously to conserve it so that it may be passed on to future generations, at least in the same conditions from which you inherited it.

II YOU WILL LOVE THE *CANTE* FOR WHAT IT IS and must understand that no “bad *cantes*” exist, rather there are only “good *cantes* and better *cantes*.”

III YOU SHOULD KNOW, and never forget, that *cante flamenco*, with its “depth and seriousness,” is not the stuff of drunks. Nevertheless, there are times, and particularly on special occasions, that it produces wonderful intoxication and revelry.

IV YOU HAVE AN UNAVOIDABLE OBLIGATION to take care of [the *cante*] in all of its splendor, to respect it and earn it respect, because its purpose is your purpose, and its soul your soul.

V WHEN YOU DOUBT THE ORIGIN OF A *CANTE*, or the nuance of a technique, do not be embarrassed to consult with a professional because they are the only ones that are capable of answering your questions. Bear in mind that the only means of explanation happens through the act of singing.

VI YOU WILL VALUE the voice of the *cantaor*, whether for its quality, timbre or innate intensity; their sound is not a faculty that they can acquire voluntarily, phonetics that, sometimes, for their great richness, are gifts granted by God.

VII THE BEST AFICIONADO is not the one who knows most, but the one who listens best.

VIII KNOWING HOW TO LISTEN is the “art of silence” and, knowing how to observe silence, is an obvious sign of a good artistic education. Silence should only be broken when one is moved with emotion and done in *compás*, because expressing those “*olés*” that mark our emotions at the wrong time is the aficionado’s own form of interfering.

IX FOR THESE REASONS, appreciating that respect breeds respect, no *aficionado*, as knowledgeable as they may be, has the right to impose upon other *aficionados* the *cantaor* of their preference, especially when we understand that if each *cantaor* is a world of expression apart, so too each and every *aficionado* receives that world differently.

X THE *AFICIONADO* that combines the qualities of “knowing how to be,” “knowing how to listen,” and “knowing how to absorb” what they hear, deserves the “**TITLE OF CABAL.**”

## Appendix III Judgment in the Case of Moreno Gómez v. Spain

### EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

572  
16.11.2004

Press release issued by the Registrar

#### CHAMBER JUDGMENT IN THE CASE OF MORENO GÓMEZ v. SPAIN

The European Court of Human Rights has today notified in writing a judgment<sup>2</sup> in the case of *Moreno Gómez v. Spain* (application no. 4143/02). The Court held unanimously that there had been a **violation** of Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (right to respect for private life and the home).

Under Article 41 (just satisfaction) of the Convention, the Court awarded the applicant 3,884 euros (EUR) for pecuniary and non-pecuniary damage and EUR 4,500 for costs and expenses.

(The judgment is available in English and in French.)

#### 1. Principal facts

The applicant, Pilar Moreno Gómez, is a Spanish national who was born in 1948. She has lived in a flat in a residential quarter of Valencia since 1970.

Since 1974 the Valencia City Council has allowed bars, pubs and discotheques to open in the vicinity of her home, making it impossible for local residents to sleep. In view of the problems caused by the noise, the City Council commissioned a report by an expert who found that the noise levels were unacceptable and exceeded permitted levels, reaching 115 dB after 3.30 a.m. on Saturday mornings. An independent police report to the City Council indicated that the local residents' complaints were founded and that nightclubs and discotheques in the sector did not systematically close on time.

In 1996 the City Council designated the area an acoustically saturated zone, thereby

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<sup>2</sup> Under Article 43 of the European Convention on Human Rights, within three months from the date of a Chamber judgment, any party to the case may, in exceptional cases, request that the case be referred to the 17-member Grand Chamber of the Court. In that event, a panel of five judges considers whether the case raises a serious question affecting the interpretation or application of the Convention or its protocols, or a serious issue of general importance, in which case the Grand Chamber will deliver a final judgment. If no such question or issue arises, the panel will reject the request, at which point the judgment becomes final. Otherwise Chamber judgments become final on the expiry of the three-month period or earlier if the parties declare that they do not intend to make a request to refer.

imposing a ban on new activities, such as opening a nightclub, that led to acoustic saturation. Despite the ban, the City Council granted a licence a month later for a discotheque to be opened in the building in which the applicant lived. The licence was subsequently declared invalid by the court in October 2001.

In August 1997 the applicant lodged a preliminary claim with the Valencia City Council. Having received no reply from the authorities, she followed it up with an application for judicial review to the Valencia High Court of Justice, which was dismissed in a judgment of 21 July 1998.

The applicant then lodged an *amparo* appeal which the Constitutional Court declared admissible. However, by a judgment of 29 May 2001, it dismissed her appeal, holding that she had not proved the existence of a direct link between the noise and the alleged damage or the existence of a nuisance in her home amounting to a violation of the Constitution.

## **2. Procedure and composition of the Court**

The application was lodged on 22 November 2001 and declared admissible on 29 June 2004.

Judgment was given by a Chamber of 7 judges, composed as follows:

Nicolas **Bratza** (British), *President*,  
Matti **Pellonpää** (Finnish),  
Josep **Casadevall** (Andorran),  
Stanislav **Pavlovschi** (Moldovan),  
Javier **Borrego Borrego** (Spanish),  
Elisabet **Fura-Sandström** (Swedish),  
Ljiljana **Mijovic** (citizen of Bosnia and Herzegovina), *judges*,  
and also Michael **O'Boyle**, *Section Registrar*.

## **3. Summary of the judgment<sup>3</sup>**

### **Complaint**

The applicant complained of noise and of being disturbed at night by nightclubs near her home. She alleged that the Spanish authorities were responsible and that the resulting noise pollution constituted a violation of her right to respect for her home, as guaranteed by Article 8 of the Convention.

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<sup>3</sup> This summary by the Registry does not bind the Court.

## **Decision of the Court**

The Court noted that the applicant lived in an area that was indisputably subject to night-time disturbances that clearly unsettled her as she went about her daily life, particularly at weekends. The existence of the disturbances had been noted on a number of occasions. In the circumstances, there appeared to be no need to require, as the Spanish authorities had done, a person from an acoustically saturated zone to adduce evidence of a fact of which the municipal authority was already officially aware.

In view of the volume of the noise, at night and beyond permitted levels, and the fact that it had continued over a number of years, the Court found that there had been a breach of the rights protected by Article 8. Although the City Council had adopted measures intended to secure respect for the rights guaranteed by the Convention, it had tolerated, and thus contributed to, the repeated flouting of the rules which it itself had established.

The Court found that the applicant had suffered a serious infringement of her right to respect for her home as a result of the authorities' failure to take action to deal with the night-time disturbances and held that the respondent State had failed to discharge its obligation to guarantee her right to respect for her home and her private life, in breach of Article 8 of the Convention.

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The Court's judgments are accessible on its Internet site (<http://www.echr.coe.int>).

### **Registry of the European Court of Human Rights**

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*The European Court of Human Rights was set up in Strasbourg by the Council of Europe Member States in 1959 to deal with alleged violations of the 1950 European Convention on Human Rights. Since 1 November 1998 it has sat as a full-time Court composed of an equal number of judges to that of the States party to the Convention. The Court examines the admissibility and merits of applications submitted to it. It sits in Chambers of 7 judges or, in exceptional cases, as a Grand Chamber of 17 judges. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe supervises the execution of the Court's judgments. More detailed information about the Court and its activities can be found on its Internet site.*



## Appendix IV – Letter to Flo6x8 from YouTube

Dear flo6x8,

This is to notify you that we have received a privacy complaint from an individual regarding your content:

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Video URLs:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKJ0md9M8og>

The information reported as violating privacy is at 1:57, 2:01, 2:06, 2:11, 2:20, 2:25, 2:26, 2:40, 3:17.

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Regards,

The YouTube Team

## Appendix V – Timeline

- 1922** The Concurso de Cante Jondo (or “Competition for Deep Song”) is held in Granada and championed by Manuel de Falla and Federico García Lorca
- 1931** The Second Spanish Republic begins
- 1936** The Spanish Civil War begins in the middle of July with the Nationalists staging a military coup led by Francisco Franco
- 1939** The Spanish Civil War ends with the surrender of the Republican side. Franco assumes control of the nation, thus ending the reign of the Second Spanish Republic.
- 1949** The first flamenco *peña*, known as La Platería, opens in Granada
- 1951** The Spanish Ministry of Information and Tourism is established, marking the Franco regime’s first efforts to expand the nation’s tourist industry
- 1953** The United States and Spain sign the Pact of Madrid, resulting in the swift establishment of an American air base in Morón and a naval station in Rota
- 1957** The first flamenco festival, known as the Potaje de Utrera, is held on May 15
- 1962** Donn Pohren releases the first book in his flamenco trilogy, entitled *The Art of Flamenco*
- 1963** Antonio Mairena and Ricardo Molina publish *Mundo y Formas del Cante Flamenco*
- 1966** Pohren purchases a farmhouse in Morón de la Frontera that later became known as the Finca Espartero
- 1973** Diego Del Gastor dies on July 7
- 1975** Spanish dictator Francisco Franco dies on November 20, after which Juan Carlos I is proclaimed the King of Spain
- 1978** A new Spanish Constitution is drafted and ratified
- Peña Torres Macarena is established on Torres street in Seville

- 1993** Peña Pies Plomo is established on Dársena street in Seville
- 1994** The first annual *Encuentro* conference between son Cubano and flamenco takes place in Andalusia
- 1998** Raúl Rodríguez assembles a group to accompany his mother, Martirio, on a tour of the U.S. and Latin America. This ensemble later becomes known as Son de la Frontera.
- 2002** The euro currency is introduced into the Spanish economy
- 2003** Son de la Frontera releases their self-titled debut album
- 2004** The Spanish government suffers a rebuke at the hands of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) for not adequately protecting the rights of citizens in Valencia from noise pollution. ECHR cites the case of Moreno Gómez v. Spain (see appendices for the chamber judgment in this case).
- 2006** Son de la Frontera releases their second album, *Cal*
- 2007** The Andalusian Statute of Autonomy lists the conservation of flamenco as a guiding principle in public policy
- The performance collective Flo6x8 begins performing in banks across Seville
- 2008** Son de la Frontera disbands shortly after winning the “Best in Europe” BBC World Music Award.
- By the end of the year, the Spanish economy begins to crumble.
- 2010** In November, flamenco is inscribed onto UNESCO’s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.
- 2011** The 15M Movement begins on May 15 when tens of thousands of protesters gather in Madrid’s central square, known as the Puerta del Sol
- 2012** Peña Pies Plomo folds after being open for close to nineteen years
- 2013** In February, the Junta de Andalucía announced that nearly all of the funding destined for peñas in the region would be cut indefinitely

**2014**

Peña Torres Macarena is forced to close at the end of February due to noise complaints from neighboring residents

On June 18, King Juan Carlos I abdicates the throne in favor of his son, Felipe VI, after being linked to a number of scandalous incidents that shocked and angered the Spanish people.

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