

Guest Editors' Note

K. MEIRA GOLDBERG

FIT, SUNY

Foundation for Iberian Music, CUNY

ANTONI PIZÀ

Foundation for Iberian Music, CUNY

This issue presents a selection of papers presented at the conference PACO DE LUCÍA AND THE AMERICAS: An International Symposium held on March 7, 2024, at the Foundation for Iberian Music of the Graduate Center of The City University of New York.

The gathering joined musicians and scholars from around the world to honor and celebrate the remarkable artistry of Paco de Lucía. Marking the tenth anniversary of de Lucía's death, the conference explored the influence of the flamenco guitar virtuoso, composer, and producer on the Americas, as well as the Americas' influence on him. Paco de Lucía (1947-2014) was a giant guitar innovator, his music transcending and transforming genres. His unique fusion of Spanish musical idioms with North American, Caribbean, and Latin American genres continues to influence classical, flamenco, jazz, pop, and world music today. This conference investigated de Lucía's antecedents and honors his legacy.

The selected papers present several academic perspectives on Paco de Lucía's music and influence. For instance, "Entre dos aguas: An Examination of Paco de Lucía's musical connections to the Americas" by Benjamin Lapidus focuses on how Paco de Lucía incorporated musical innovations from the Americas into flamenco including the Peruvian cajón (a percussion instrument now essential in flamenco), in addition to jazz conventions and other Latin American elements. Lapidus highlights Paco de Lucía's collaborations with American and Latin American musicians such as Rubem Dantas (Brazil), Chick Corea (USA), and Al Di Meola (USA). The study uses interviews, recordings, and transcriptions to analyze these influences.

On the other hand, David Leiva Prados, the official transcriber of Paco de Lucía/IFB/Taller de Músics/UCM, and Paco Bethencourt Llobet, in their paper "America in Paco de Lucía's Compositions: An (Ethno)Musicological Approach" traces Paco de Lucía's relationship with American music back to early recordings and influences like flamenco songs adapted from American sources. The paper notes his exposure to bossa nova harmony in Madrid and collaborations with jazz artists and emphasizes that while de Lucía's biography has been widely studied, his compositional process—especially regarding Spanish American repertoire—has not been deeply analyzed. It also mentions fruitful collaborations with musicians such as Carles Benavent and Jorge Pardo.

"Pan-American contributions to flamenco – the role of Paco de Lucía" by John Moore examines Latin American popular music and North American flamenco traditions as key influences and explains how Mexican cinema and music shaped Spanish cuplé traditions. During post-Spanish

Civil War, North America became a hub for flamenco, influencing its theatrical style. Additionally, Paco de Lucía's U.S. tour with José Greco and the mentorship from Sabicas were pivotal. His later innovations included incorporating bossa nova chord voicings, introducing the cajón, and collaborations with jazz legends like John McLaughlin, leading to the "jazzification" of flamenco. "Paco de Lucía, made in the USA" by Juan José Téllez focuses on Paco's personal and professional experiences in New York, where he received advice from Sabicas to create original falsetas. A critical review in *The New York Times* pushed him to improve. It also chronicles his U.S. collaborations with Carlos Santana, Al Di Meola, and others. Téllez's examination mentions live recordings in New York and American authors who wrote influential biographies about him.

René Heredia's connection with Paco de Lucía is revealed through interviews by K. Meira Goldberg. They show their close friendship and René's vivid memories of their time together. The conversations also highlight René's deep flamenco heritage, shaped by his Gitano family and early performances with Carmen Amaya in the 1950s. By the early 1970s, when he met Paco, René was already an influential artist. He was especially admired for his mastery of Sabicas's virtuosic flamenco style.

In sum, these texts collectively argue that Paco de Lucía's artistry was deeply shaped by a two-way exchange between flamenco and American musical traditions—Latin and North American—through instruments, harmonies, collaborations, and cultural experiences.

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