



Pan-American Contributions to Flamenco – The Role of Paco de Lucía

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Abstract

This paper discusses two early American influences on Paco de Lucía's guitar playing. The first, from Paco's experiences while on tour in the United States in the early to mid 1960s, comes from a set of norms and practices that developed in the U.S. diasporic flamenco community. Through his work with José Greco's dance company and his mentorship from Sabicas and Mario Escudero, Paco adopted musical elements and practices that had been developed in the United States, largely by Spanish expatriates. In addition, Paco's solo guitar career is in the tradition of the solo flamenco guitar genre, also developed in the U.S. The second comes from Latin American musical traditions that exerted their influence on Spanish flamenco throughout the mid-20th century through the dissemination of pan-Latin popular music, often based on Latin American genres. Paco spent formative years as this tradition developed through the fusion work of Bambino and others. The chordal and harmonic elements from this contact indirectly influenced Paco's emerging personal style.

Keywords: Paco de Lucía, flamenco guitar, José Greco, Sabicas, Mario Escudero, Bambino

Resumen

Este artículo analiza dos influencias estadounidenses tempranas en la guitarra de Paco de Lucía. La primera, derivada de sus experiencias durante giras por Estados Unidos a principios y mediados de la década de 1960, proviene de un conjunto de normas y prácticas desarrolladas en la diáspora flamenca estadounidense. A través de su trabajo con la compañía de José Greco y su mentoría con Sabicas y Mario Escudero, Paco adoptó elementos y prácticas musicales desarrollados en Estados Unidos, principalmente por expatriados españoles. Además, su carrera como guitarrista solista se inscribe en la tradición de la guitarra flamenca solista, también desarrollada en Estados Unidos. La segunda influencia proviene de la tradición musical latinoamericana, que ejerció su influencia en el flamenco español a mediados del siglo XX mediante la difusión de la música popular panlatina, a menudo basada en géneros latinoamericanos. Paco vivió años formativos mientras que esta tradición se desarrolló a través de la fusión de Bambino y otros. Los elementos armónicos y de acordes de este contacto influyeron indirectamente en el estilo personal emergente de Paco.

Palabras clave: Paco de Lucía, guitarra flamenca, José Greco, Sabicas, Mario Escudero, Bambino

This paper will discuss two early American influences on Paco de Lucía's guitar playing. Both are a bit subtle, but were very much a part of Paco's training while he was in his teens.

The first, primarily from Paco's experiences while on tour in the United States in the early to mid 1960s, comes from a set of norms and practices that developed in the U.S. diasporic flamenco community. Through his work with José Greco's dance company and his mentorship from Sabicas and Mario Escudero, Paco adopted musical elements and practices that had been developed in the United States, largely by Spanish expatriates.

The second comes from Latin American musical traditions that exerted their influence on Spanish flamenco throughout the mid-20th century through the dissemination of pan-Latin popular music, often based on Latin American genres. Paco spent formative years as this tradition developed through the fusion work of Bambino and others. The chordal and harmonic elements from this contact indirectly influenced Paco's emerging personal style.

Flamenco in Diaspora

America, particularly New York City, has played a central role in the development of flamenco. This section will briefly discuss two aspects: the development of theatrical flamenco dance and the emergence of concert flamenco guitar. As we will see, both of these areas were influential in Paco de Lucía's early development.

Theater Flamenco

While Spanish dance has been presented in theatrical venues, at least since the mid-19th century (Bennahum 2013a), the work of Antonia Mercé, 'La Argentina' was pioneering in the way she brought the genre to world concert stages in the era of Spanish and French modernist movements (Bennahum 2014). While her work developed both in Spain and Paris, she toured extensively - with appearances in New York City in 1916 and again, each year between 1928 and 1935 - to great critical acclaim (Sevilla 1999; Bennahum and Goldberg 2013; Bennahum 2014). These latter performances included the full-length ballet of Manuel de Falla's *Amor Brujo* and introduced dancer Vicente Escudero to U.S. audiences (Bennahum 2014). The critical successes of these appearances did much to establish Spanish dance as a major dance genre in the U.S. and cultivate an audience and aficionado scene; this later led several U.S.-born dancers to become Spanish dance professionals (Bennahum 2013b; Bennahum and Goldberg 2013).

Encarnación López 'La Argentinita' Performed in New York City during 1938-1942 – following a difficult debut there in 1932. Represented by impresario Sol Hurok, her company included her sister, Pilar López, dancer Antonio Triana, and guitarist Carlos Montoya (Sevilla 1999). With the onset of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), several Spanish artists spent extended periods outside of Spain, particularly in Argentina and New York. Also, during this time, theatrical Spanish dance performances increasingly incorporated flamenco elements –necessitating the inclusion of guitarists and singers.

From the 1940s through the 1960s, the range of theatrical Spanish/flamenco dance companies increased throughout the U.S., with New York and Hollywood as important centers of activity. Artists included Carmen Amaya (Bois 1994; Goldberg 1995; Sevilla 1999), Antonio Ruíz Soler and Florence Pérez Padilla 'Rosario' (Beaumont 1952; Brunelleschi 1958; Fuentes-Guio 1990; Segarra Muñoz 2012), and Antonio Triana (de Triana 1993). Many companies were led by Spanish dancers – both those who toured in the U.S. but were based in Spain and Spanish expatriates in the U.S. – while several non-Spanish dancers launched U.S.-based companies (e.g., José Greco and Manolo Vargas). Impresario Sol Hurok was a major force behind this trend.

Because of the critical mass in the U.S. and the impoverished post-war period in Spain, a good deal of flamenco dance evolution – particularly in the theatrical genre – took place outside of Spain. In this way, the U.S. has played a fundamental role in the elaboration of the art form.

Concert Flamenco Guitar

As mentioned above, the increased inclusion of flamenco in theatrical performances necessitated the inclusion of flamenco guitarists. Several guitarists came to the U.S. with dance companies, and a few settled in the U.S., more or less permanently (Sevilla 1999). Carlos Montoya – Ramón Montoya’s nephew – toured with La Argentina, La Argentinita, Vicente Escudero, among others, settling permanently in the U.S. in 1939. Agustín Castellón ‘Sabicas’ left Spain for the Americas with Carmen Amaya in 1936 – first to Argentina and Mexico, then to the United States. He lived in New York City from 1955 until his death in 1990. Mario Escudero worked with Antonio and Rosario, Vicente Escudero, Carmen Amaya, Jose Greco, among others. He toured the Americas in 1950-1956, settling in New York in 1961.

Aside from participating in the theatrical evolution in the United States, these guitarists were instrumental in establishing the genre of concert flamenco guitar.

While solo flamenco guitar has been performed since the 19th century, it tended to be limited to solos interspersed between dance numbers or in small recitals. For example, guitarist Paco de Lucena gained notoriety for his guitar solos in the Málaga *café cantante* Bernardo (Rioja 1998). Ramón Montoya – considered the most influential guitarist of the early 20th century – primarily accompanied flamenco singing; however, he composed a large repertoire of innovative flamenco guitar solos, which he recorded, beginning in 1918 and throughout the 1920-30s (Blas Vega 1994). These are most likely the earliest examples of recorded flamenco guitar solos. Montoya’s work is often characterized as innovative and lyrical. He incorporated a number of classical guitar techniques and experimented with new keys and harmonies. Often, Montoya is compared with the slightly later guitarist Manuel Serrapí ‘El Niño Ricardo’ (Wilkes 1990), whose equally innovative approach was more driving, less clean, but often considered more ‘flamenco’ (Torres 2010); he also left a solo discography. By the mid-20th century, Ricardo’s influence in Spain largely supplanted that of Montoya.

While solo flamenco guitar played a secondary role in Spanish flamenco, it evolved into its own genre in the United States. Sevilla (1999) discusses how this emerged in New York City as an outgrowth of the theatric dance companies. Carlos Montoya was the first to take flamenco guitar to a large concert hall with his 1956 concert at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Sabicas and Mario Escudero followed suit, leading to solo concert careers, with accompanying discographies. These were later joined by Juan Serrano and Manitas de Plata. Thus, the tradition of a lone flamenco guitarist playing a full concert in a large hall developed in the United States.

The American traditions of theatrical flamenco dance and concert flamenco guitar led to a discrepancy between public perceptions of flamenco in the United States versus Spain. In the United States, most people – if at all aware of flamenco – will think of passionate dancers in exotic costumes or solo guitar (often encapsulated in Lecuona’s *Malagueña* – a classical piano piece transcribed for the guitar, see Clark 2016). In Spain, on the other hand, singing (*cante*) was – and remains – the most important aspect of the genre. A perusal of flamenco record offerings from the 1970s (when this author began buying flamenco) showed the primacy of solo guitar. Most common were records of guitar solos – either from live concerts or studio sessions - by Carlos Montoya, followed by Sabicas, Manitas de Plata, Juan Serrano, and Mario Escudero. Records with flamenco singing were rare – they often included dance and singing in ensembles - sometimes including Sabicas and/or Escudero,

or Manitas de Plata and his cousin José Reyes (father of some members of the Gypsy Kings). Carmen Amaya released recordings of her dance/singing performances, but these were rarely found in U.S. stores at this time.

Diasporic Flamenco

Because of the self-imposed exile that some Spanish artists experienced from the 1940s to the 1970s, as well as the divergent flamenco traditions between the United States and Spain, we might think of a diasporic variety of flamenco evolving outside of Spain.

Both music and language are culturally transmitted artifacts. Both are learned in a particular musical/language environment by successive generations. Both are subject to change, leading to variation. Diasporic communities follow a particular pattern whereby cultural aspects develop independently of the communities of origin. For example, the expulsion of Jews from Spain throughout the 16th century led to a diasporic community of Sephardic Jews, speaking a variety of Spanish (Judeo-Spanish or Ladino). However, because these communities were isolated from the language changes that happened in Spain in the late 16th and 17^h centuries, Ladino seems to be a frozen early-mid 16th century Andalusian variety. This is not to say that Ladino has not evolved on its own in diaspora; however, it does retain 16th century characteristics that have changed in the Spanish spoken in Spain and Latin America. This is apparent in the sibilant system. By the mid 16th century, Andalusian Spanish had reduced medieval Spanish's six sibilants to four; this is exactly what we find in Ladino (1), as opposed to modern *seseísta* (most Andalusian and Latin American) varieties, where there are now two reflexes of the original six, with the voicing distinction neutralized and the palato-alveolars shifting to a velar articulation (2)¹:

(1) Late 15th Century Andalusian Spanish and Ladino

	Alveolar	Palato-alveolar
Voiceless	<i>caça</i> 'hunt' /kása/	<i>caxa</i> 'box' /káša/
Voiced	<i>casa</i> 'house' /káza/	<i>viejo</i> 'old' /vjéžo/

(2) Modern *seseísta* Spanish

	Alveolar	Velar
Voiceless	<i>caza/casa</i> 'hunt/house' /kása/	<i>caja</i> 'box' /káxa/, <i>viejo</i> 'old' /byéxo/ ²

Similarly, Sabicas – firmly in the Ramón Montoya school – elaborated a style that remained true to the Montoya base. In particular, he was not greatly influenced by the innovations associated with Niño Ricardo and his followers in Spain (recall that Ricardo was the most influential flamenco

¹ Medieval Spanish had voiceless/voiced pairs of dental, alveolar, and palato-alveolar fricative phonemes ('sibilants'). Around the early-mid 16th century, Andalusian Spanish neutralized the dental-alveolar contrast, yielding the four phonemes in (1). In Northern Spain, the voiceless/voiced distinction was neutralized around the same time, yielding three phonemes. This voice merger made its way south and affected the Andalusian system around the late 16th century, yielding two phonemes. Later changes spread out the remaining phonemes in both varieties, so that Northern (and Central) Spanish had (and has) voiceless inter-dental, alveolar, and velar phonemes (/káθa/ 'hunt', /kása/ 'house', and /káxa/ 'box'). Because Andalusian Spanish had already lost the dental-alveolar contrast, only the palato-alveolar moved back to the velar point of articulation, yielding the system in (2) (Penny 1991:86-90).

² Spelling reform in the 18th century eliminated the ç and many uses of x; hence *caça* became *caza* and *caxa* became *caja*. These new spellings better reflected the changes described in footnote 1.

guitarist in Spain in the mid-20th century). Indeed, when singer Enrique Morente recorded with Sabicas in 1990, he felt that he had been transported back to the early 20th century Villa Rosa of Chacón and Montoya (Torres 2005).³

Paco and the American Tradition

Paco de Lucía grew up immersed in the Ricardo school of flamenco guitar. However, while Ricardo was known to play with variable accuracy (perhaps partly due to fingernail issues – see Torres 2005), Paco refined Ricardo’s music with a level of technical ability and cleanliness that was revolutionary.

In 1963-64, and again in 1965-66, Paco toured the United States with José Greco’s company. Thus, his early training was in the context of American theatrical flamenco, as had been the case with generations of Spanish guitarists before him. One of his first large public guitar solos took place in Hollywood’s Greek Theater, where he played Lecuona’s *Malagueña* (Sevilla 1995).

Aside from participating in this tradition, coming to the United States represented a watershed moment in Paco’s career, through his now legendary meeting with Sabicas in New York City. While Paco was likely familiar with Sabicas’ music through the album *Flamenco Puro* (1957, later available in Spain). He clearly began his career playing Ricardo’s material. Sabicas was astounded by Paco’s level of playing (and he was only in his mid-teens); however, Sabicas’ advice that Paco move on from Ricardo and begin playing his own music was hugely influential: “Muy bien, Paquito, pero un flamenco no debe tocar las cosas del otro, sino crear cosas propias.” ‘Very good Paquito, but a flamenco shouldn’t just play others’ material, but should create their own.’ (quoted in Téllez 2015:106). Paco:

No sé exactamente por qué me dijo aquello, pero lo que sí sé es que me influyó muchísimo. Me dijo que un guitarrista debía tocar su propia música, que no tenía que copiar a nadie. No sé si lo dijo realmente por ayudarme o un poco por soberbia, porque yo solo tocaba la música de Niño Ricardo. (quoted in Téllez 2015:106)

[‘I don’t exactly know why he said that to me, but I do know that it influenced me a lot. He told me that a guitarist should play their own music and shouldn’t copy anyone. I don’t know if he said it to help me or from a bit of arrogance, because I only played Niño Ricardo’s music.’]

In any event, Paco’s relationship with Sabicas, as well as Mario Escudero, opened up new horizons – both in their diasporic elements, as well as their advanced technique. Téllez (2015:113), again, quotes Paco:

Yo hasta que descubrí a Sabicas, pensaba que Dios era Niño Ricardo, y de alguna manera yo aprendí de su escuela y de su estilo, pero cuando conocí a Sabicas me di cuenta de que en la guitarra había algo más. Con Sabicas, descubrí una limpieza de sonido que yo nunca había oído, una velocidad que igualmente desconocía hasta ese momento y, en definitivo, una manera

³ The Villa Rosa – a flamenco establishment on Madrid’s Plaza de Santa Ana - was the most important center of flamenco activity in the early 20th century. It was often frequented by singer Antonio Chacón – perhaps the most important singer that bridged the 19th and 20th centuries - and Ramón Montoya. As a young man, Sabicas performed there. While the building has had its ups and downs, it remains as a flamenco club (*tablaó*).

diferente de tocar. A partir de aquí, no es que me olvidara de Ricardo, pero sí pude añadir a mi aprendizaje la manera de tocar de Sabicas y la transformé para hacerla mía.

[‘Until I discovered Sabicas, I thought that God was Niño Ricardo, and somehow, I learned that school and style, but when I met Sabicas I realized that there was more to the guitar. With Sabicas, I discovered a clean sound I had never heard before, a speed that I also was unaware of until then, definitely, a different way of playing. From then, I didn’t forget about Ricardo, but was able to add Sabicas’ way of playing to my apprenticeship and I transformed it make it my own.’]

Indeed, Sevilla 1995 discusses each of Paco’s recordings and notes the emerging influence of Sabicas in his debut 1967 album (*La fabulosa guitarra de Paco de Lucía*). This album also features Mario Escudero’s composition *Impetú*.

As the above suggests, Paco’s early solo career was significantly impacted by the diasporic tradition of American concert flamenco guitar. Paco also adopted the solo flamenco guitar concert format that was developed in the United States. For the first half of his career, he toured as a soloist in the world’s major concert halls, including Carnegie Hall, major European theaters, and notably – in 1975 – at Madrid’s Teatro Real. This last appearance was particularly controversial and impactful, as flamenco was not widely accepted in Spain as sufficiently highbrow to be featured in that venue. Paco did comment, wryly, that it was odd that his concert created such a stir, given that he had already performed in equivalent venues around the world for several years (Sevilla 1995:66). The concerts mainly consisted of Paco by himself on the stage; however, he did bring in a few other guitarists and a percussionist for the final number (*Entre do aguas*). The concert tours were accompanied by a significant discography – both studio recordings and the live performance at the Teatro Real. Again, this is very much in the same vein as we have seen in the American concert solo guitar tradition. Interestingly, Paco later moved to an inverted concert format, where only the first number was performed solo and the bulk of the concerts in ensemble.

Pan-Latin Popular Music

This section will look at what I call ‘pan-Latin popular music’ and discuss its influence on flamenco and then how it may have influenced Paco de Lucía’s music. Because a good deal of this music originates in Latin America, this is – potentially – an additional American influence on his career and artistry.

What I am calling pan-Latin popular music refers to popular songs that have been popular throughout Spain and Latin America. Primarily in Spanish (some in Brazilian Portuguese), these are often romantic ballads and boleros from a variety of sources:

- Spanish composers (many from Andalucía)
- Lyrics by Spanish poets
- Latin American composers and lyricists

A particular musical nexus comes from the Mexican *Cine de Oro*. This refers to a period of Mexican cinema between the 1930s and 1960s. Several sub-genres exist (Ayala Blanco 1993), most relevant here are films featuring music and dance. Major singer-actors such as Pedro Infante, Javier Solís, and Jorge Negrete have used film as a medium for showcasing their songs. Many of the songs

became international hits, known throughout the Spanish-speaking world. Other films showcase Afro-Caribbean dance and Cuban or Cuban-inspired orchestras (e.g., Dámaso Pérez Prado). Dance trends such as Mambo and Cha-cha-cha were often presented in these movies.

Another genre includes Andalusian *copla*. Evolving out of a 19th century music hall tradition (*cuplé*), this Spanish musical style emerged in the 1930-40s, with works by Antonio Quintero and Rafael de León, among others. It employs Spanish-themed melodies (often around the Andalusian cadence) and depicts marginalized communities in a rather stereotypical manner. Themes often involve fallen women and violent jealousies (Arredondo Pérez 2014). This genre also has a significant cinematic footprint. Major interpreters of *copla* include Concha Piquer, Juanita Reina, Lola Flores, Sara Montiel, Isabel Pantoja, María Jiménez, and Rocio Jurado, among many others.

Because this popular music had pan-Latin distribution, particularly those featured in Spanish language film, it is well-known throughout Spain and Latin America. Therefore, Spaniards, including Spanish flamenco aficionados, were likely to be consumers of this genre.

Flamenco Cuplé

While flamenco has evolved from a fusion of various Andalusian musical traditions, it gelled towards the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries with a dozen or so forms, built around the Andalusian cadence and major keys (in a few cases, minor keys). Therefore, flamenco is distinguished from other genres by participating in this structure of forms (*palos*), each with their signature keys, rhythms, melodies, and verses (Manuel 2023). Many aficionados maintain a sharp contrast between this tradition and popular music. Nonetheless, different genres exist side-by-side and are consumed by the same people, leading to a contact situation.

Again, parallels with language contact are relevant. When languages come into contact through bilingualism, there are inevitably mutual influences, including code-switching/mixing, where speakers switch between languages – sometimes in mid-sentence. There also tends to be widespread condemnation of this practice, despite the fact that it is essentially unavoidable. Similarly, contact between flamenco and popular musical traditions has led to what are now commonly called ‘*culpés*’: any popular song - not from the standard flamenco repertoire – sung with flamenco-style guitar accompaniment. Generally, these are embedded in a *rumba* or *bulerías* rhythm (less commonly *tangos*). Early examples include *Cielito Lindo* (La Niña de los Peines) and *María de la O* (Carmen Amaya); the practice has continued and *cuplés* are now ubiquitous in the flamenco repertoire.

As is the case with code-switching in language contact, some aficionados view *cuplés* as less pure and less flamenco, despite the fact that some of the most important exponents of traditional flamenco perform them.

Because *cuplés* are so common, they have transformed the musical landscape of flamenco guitar accompaniment. Whereas traditional flamenco melodies tends to center on a few predictable chord sequences, *cuplé* accompaniment requires knowing the structure of the particular popular songs in diverse keys and with a larger range of chordal accompaniments. This has expanded the harmonic possibilities of flamenco – this is the key aspect that is relevant to this paper.

Utrera and Morón

While *cuplés* now represent a standard aspect of flamenco, they have been particularly prevalent in the flamenco from Utrera (province of Sevilla). This is a center of some of the most important traditional flamenco, home to the sisters Fernanda and Bernarda de Utrera – the former considered the best interpreter of *soleares* in the 20th century. Their extended family – Los Pinini – boasts numerous *Gitano* artists from Utrera, Lebrija, and Jerez (Bryant 2015; Chinoy and Lagunas Arias 2022). Through their extensive discography, both sisters have recorded a mix of pure traditional flamenco and numerous *cuplés*, generally embedded in a *bulerías* rhythm. La Fernanda regularly performed *Que nos rompió el amor* (Manuel Alejandro), which is now a standard *cuplé* in the flamenco canon. A quote – albeit unattributed – suggests that La Bernarda was capable of singing the telephone book *por bulerías* (Estela Zantania, personal communication).

While the Utrera sisters were comfortable in both traditional and popular genres, another *Gitano* from the same extended family, Miguel Vargas Jiménez ‘Bambino’, made a career of singing pan-Latin popular songs to driving flamenco guitar accompaniment (sometimes incorporating bongos and other instruments), embedded in *rumba* and *bulerías* rhythms. He came up through the Madrid flamenco scene in clubs (*tablaos*) in the 1960-70s, and became a major recording artist (González Sacristán 2003). His material drew on exactly the type of pan-Latin popular music described here – from both Spanish and Latin American composers. The following indicate the authors and of some of his better-known recordings, along with their nationalities:

- Juan Solano and Rafael de León – Spain (*Tengo miedo*)
- José Antonio Ochaito and Juan Solano – Spain (*No me des guerra*)
- Manuel Alejandro and Ana Magdalena – Spain (*Te estoy queriendo tanto*)
- José Ruiz Venegas and Alfonso Santisteban – Spain (*No puede ser*)
- Salvador Távola and Alfonso Santisteban – Spain (*Desde que te fuiste*)
- Armando Manzanero – Mexico (*Adoro*)
- Fernando Zenaldo Maldonado - Mexico (*Payaso*)
- Marco Antonio Muñoz – Mexico (*Arrepentida*)
- Luis Demetrio – Mexico (*Voy*)
- Bobby Collazo - Cuba (*La última noche*)
- Roberto Anglero – Puerto Rico (*La pared*)
- Mario de Jesús – Dominican Republic (*Infierno*)
- Dino Ramos – Argentina (*El poeta lloró, La nave del olvido*)
- Luiz Bonfá and Antonio María – Brazil (*Canción de Orfeu*)

Several of these appear in film – for example, the 1965 Mexican film *Los diablos del cielo* features Javier Solís singing the Mexican bolero *Voy* in a bar scene, accompanying himself on the guitar.

There has been a long-standing connection between the guitar tradition from Morón de la Frontera (Sevilla) and singers from Utrera. Morón guitarist Diego Amaya Flores ‘Diego del Gastor’, noted for his unique approach, often accompanied the Utrera sisters, Perrate, and others, as did his nephews, particularly Francisco Gómez Amaya ‘Paco del Gastor’. Paco del Gastor also spent an extended period accompanying Bambino. Indeed, Paco del Gastor was one of several hard-driving flamenco guitarists who contributed to Bambino’s unique sound. Others include Paco del Gastor’s

brother Juan del Gastor, Granada guitarist Juan Santiago Maya ‘Marote’, Jerez guitarist Francisco López-Cepero García ‘Paco Cepero’ and Francisco Márquez y Méndez ‘Paco de Antequera’, among others. Given the range of popular songs in Bambino’s repertoire, these guitarists had to learn new chord progressions and new, Latin American harmonies, which they merged with their traditional hard-driving flamenco rhythms. Indeed, Paco del Gastor notes that he learned chord progressions (‘tonos’) from working with Bambino (Soler Díaz 2019).

Paco de Lucía moved to Madrid in 1964, where he met Paco del Gastor at a performance at the historic Los Gabrieles.⁴ Paco had come from Morón to accompany singer Manolito de la María. The two Pacos formed a friendship; Paco de Lucía was very impressed by Paco del Gastor’s approach to *bulerías*. The two toured together in the late 1960s with the *Festival Flamenco Gitano*, which featured artists who went on to become major stars: Paco Cepero, Camarón de la Isla, La Singla, La Tati, El Farruco, Juan Maya Marote, Juan el Lebrijano among others. Biographies of Paco de Lucía (Pohren 1992; Sevilla 1995; and Téllez 2015) converge on the meeting of the two Pacos in Los Gabrieles and their ensuing friendship. According to Sevilla 1995:22, some of Paco del Gastor’s *bulerías* material is incorporated into Paco de Lucía’s first solo album (*La fabulosa guitarra de Paco de Lucía*). Téllez (2015:125-26) quotes Paco de Lucía, speaking about Paco del Gastor:

Hemos pasado noches enteras tocando por bulerías. A mí me gusta mucho como toca. Paco tiene un aire flamenco y muy personal. Humanamente también es una gran persona. Cuando nos íbamos de gira, yo estaba loco porque se emborrachara, porque Paco, con dos copas, es la persona más graciosa del mundo.

[‘We’ve spent entire nights playing *bulerías*. I like his playing a lot. Paco has a flamenco sound that is very distinctive. As a person, he is great. When we went on tour, I was crazy for him to get drunk, because Paco, after a few drinks, is the funniest person on earth.’]

Because Paco de Lucía’s move to Madrid coincided with Bambino’s rise in the Madrid *tablaos*, Paco was part of the same guitarist circles that accompanied him. In fact, Paco recorded with Bambino in 1965 (with Paco Cepero) and with Paco del Gastor in 1968 and 1973.

Paco and Pan-Latin Music

The American (in this case, Latin American) influence on Paco de Lucía’s playing is, in this case indirect, but nevertheless, significant. We have seen how pan-Latin popular music, including Latin American boleros, rancheras, and bossa nova, expanded the chordal and harmonic palate of flamenco. Paco was in the middle of this mix in the 1960-70s; it clearly influenced his music.

More directly, and demonstrating an intimate familiarity with the Latin American genre, Paco and his brother Ramón de Algeciras, recorded two albums of Latin favorites in 1967: *Dos guitarras flamencas en América Latina* and *Paco de Lucía y Ramón de Algeciras en Hispanoamérica* (See Lapidus 2026 for a discussion of these recordings).

⁴ Los Gabrieles, like Villa Rosa, was once an important center of flamenco activity in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. However, due to a dispute with singer Antonio Chacón, the center of the Madrid scene shifted to Villa Rosa, leading to the decline of Los Gabrieles. In the 1960s, American flamenco aficionado and writer Donn Pohren rented its basement for informal recitals. Los Gabrieles limped along until the 1980s and closed thereafter. Its signature tile murals were destroyed in renovations.

New harmonies, many with of Latin American origin, have been a hallmark of Paco's revolutionary approach to the guitar. This becomes apparent in the 1972 *Recital de Guitarra de Paco de Lucía*, where his *bulerías Plazuela* manifests his emerging new sound, with counterpoint and counter time, *tirando* ('pulled') chords throughout. By the 1970s, Paco had marshalled all of his influences – Ricardo, Sabicas, Escudero, and new harmonies - into a distinctive and unmistakable personal style.

Conclusion

Flamenco was born from the melding of musical traditions and, despite some purist attitudes, has never existed in a vacuum. Flamenco forms denoted as *ida y vuelta* ('roundtrip') acknowledge a Latin American influence. Usually these are associated with late 19th to early 20th century influences, but the end of Spanish American colonies did not end cultural transmission. This paper has investigated some of this in the area of pan-Latin popular music and its impact on flamenco towards the mid-20th century. In addition, the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War led to an expatriate community in the United States that developed its own version of flamenco – somewhat independently from contemporaneous developments in Spain.

Paco de Lucia experienced both of these influences during his formative period; I argue that these were fundamental aspects of what was to become his distinctive and revolutionary approach to the flamenco guitar. Later in his career he participated very directly in American genres, through his collaborations with jazz musicians, but the seeds had already been planted from the beginning.

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