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Entre dos aguas: An Examination of Paco de Lucía's Musical Connections to the Americas

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Abstract
Throughout his illustrious career, Paco de Lucía made a number of innovations to flamenco performance practice. Many of these innovations came from outside of Spain, and several originated directly in the Americas, such as the incorporation of the Peruvian cajón as well as jazz. Additionally, several musicians from across the Americas performed with Paco de Lucía in his ensembles and/or collaborated on his recordings. Some of these musicians included Rubem Dantas (Brazil), Rafael Rabello (Brazil), Djavan (Brazil), Chick Corea (USA), Alain Pérez (Cuba), Oscar D'León (Venezuela), Jerry González (Puerto Rico/USA), and Al Di Meola (USA). By analyzing interviews, recordings, and performance videos, this article looks at concepts and individuals from the Americas that connect the region and its music to Paco de Lucía.

Keywords: flamenco, performance practice, peruvian cajón, jazz,

Resumen
A lo largo de su ilustre carrera, Paco de Lucía añadió una serie de innovaciones musicales a la práctica interpretativa del flamenco. Muchos de estos conceptos vinieron de afuera de España y varios de ellos vinieron directamente de las Américas, como la incorporación del cajón peruano, las convenciones del jazz y otros elementos musicales. Además, varios músicos de todas las Américas actuaron junto a Paco de Lucía en sus agrupaciones y/o colaboraron en sus grabaciones. Algunos de estos músicos incluyen a Rubem Dantas (Brasil), Rafael Rabello (Brasil), Djavan (Brasil), Chick Corea (EE.UU.), Alain Pérez (Cuba), Oscar D'Leon (Venezuela), Jerry González (Puerto Rico/Estados Unidos), Al Dimeola (Estados Unidos) y otros. A través de un análisis de entrevistas, grabaciones, videos de presentaciones y reflexiones sobre la música, este artículo explora conceptos musicales particulares e individuos de las Américas que conectan la región y su música con Paco de Lucía.

Palabras clave: práctica interpretative, flamenco, cajón peruano, jazz

Born Francisco Sánchez Gómez in 1947, Paco de Lucía also performed under the stage name *Algeciras* which means the green island or peninsula in Gibraltár. The word *algeciras* is taken from the Arabic *al-Jazīrah al-Khaḍrāʾ*. de Lucía was born and raised on this piece of land between two waters and in various interviews he had expressed that this is what the phrase *entre dos aguas* (between two waters) meant to him personally. He also contended that he needed to be near the sea and near the water for his own mental and spiritual well-being. This could also explain his personal impetus for visiting many countries in Latin America, connecting with the local culture, and even spending long periods of time in México and Cuba toward the end of his life. Here in the Americas, and in particular the Spanish-speaking Americas, the term *dos aguas* implies the connection between the old world and the new world, Spain and the Americas as well as Africa and the Americas. Thus, the term *Dos*

aguas implies more than just two geographic or cultural sources. Although Paco de Lucía was born in Spain and forged his technique there, the Americas literally and figuratively shaped his musical vision throughout his entire career.

Built into the iconic 1973 recording of Paco de Lucía's song "*Entre dos aguas*" from the album *Fuente y caudal*, we can find a lot of connections to the Americas that would manifest throughout the musician's long and illustrious career. In this short essay, I will only focus on two aspects of this connection: First, the incorporation of musical elements from the Americas in Paco de Lucía's music; second, Paco de Luciá's engagement with musicians from the Americas.

As a scholar and musician who studies New York City's influence on Spanish-Caribbean music and other musical scenes, I am aware of the force our city exerts on both its musical visitors and residents. For example, the tango master Astor Piazzola spent his formative years in New York and this profoundly affected his work in terms of its dialogue with jazz and Spanish-Caribbean musical influences.[1] The same can be said of the Puerto Rican composer and musician Rafael Hernández around WW1 and for countless others. Therefore, I suggest that while music of the Spanish-speaking Americas was heard in Spain, it was more likely that Paco de Lucía would have encountered much more Spanish-Caribbean and Latin American music during his early travels to New York City as a teenager in the 1960s, simply due to its ubiquity. Additionally, Paco de Lucía returned to New York to perform regularly throughout his career. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, all kinds of Latin American music experienced a global commercial boom. A number of hit records were made by New York City-based artists such as Eydie Gorme (who collaborated with Trio Los Panchos), Tito Puente, Abbe Lane, Tito Rodríguez, and many others. In addition to international radio success, these stars performed their music all over the world.

Early Engagement with the United States of America and Music of the Americas

For de Lucía, the physical connection to the Americas began in his teenage years. In 1962, at the age of 14, he began touring throughout the United States with his brother as part of José Greco's New York City-based group. Greco's group traveled internationally spending considerable time in New York and young Paco instructed his family to send all of his mail to New York even when he was on tour (Téllez 2015:154). On this first trip, Paco de Lucía performed with José Greco on the Ed Sullivan show in New York (The Ed Sullivan Show 2021). He would also connect with the legendary flamenco guitarist Agustín Castellón Campos, better known as "Sabicas" at the Granados restaurant on 125 MacDougal Street in the West Village.[2]

Paco de Lucía expressed that he felt comfortable with English and in a letter to his family, he described how watching television helped him improve his language skills while on tour and when staying in New York (Téllez 2015:166). Spanish Caribbean musicians performed on both English and Spanish-language television during this era and it is not far-fetched to think that de Lucía would have also come into contact with these performers through radio and television. During this period, de

[1] Piazzola's 1959 album, *Take Me Dancing,* made with Latino musicians in New York City proves the point and indicates what would come in the future; Astor Piazzola and His Quintet, *Take Me Dancing!* Tico Records 1066. LP. 1956.

[2] For photos of Granados and its menu see: https://espanyu.org/nyu-and-environs-2/restaurants/granados-cafe-125-macdougal-street/.

Lucía also traveled to perform in a number of American cities including Birmingham, Chicago, Tampa, Jacksonville, San Francisco, and Saint Louis. While performing in Las Vegas, the young musician and his brother Ramón met the original Hollywood rat pack including the chairman of the board himself, Frank Sinatra (Téllez 2015:159). Paco de Lucía also performed in México and other Latin American countries with José Greco which no doubt further deepened his exposure to a wide variety of Latin American music at an early age.

Paco de Lucía's First Recording of Latin American and Caribbean Music

In 1965, Paco de Lucía recorded the album *12 éxitos para 2 guitarras flamencas* with Ricardo Mondrego. The choice of material shows a modest interaction with music from Cuba and Venezuela mixed in with Spanish repertoire. The first track on this album is "Malagueña" by the Cuban composer Ernesto Lecuona and the arrangement includes rattles, although no one is credited with playing them. The third piece on this record is "Maria de La O," which was written by a Spanish composer, but it was actually first recorded by the Cuban zarzuela singer Pilar Arcos in 1935. This version also features uncredited hand claps and bells. The fourth track is the unofficial anthem of Venezuela, "Moliendo café" composed in 1958 by José Manso or his nephew Hugo Blanco, depending on whose story you believe. This version of "Moliendo café" also has handclaps and castanets. In 1966, Paco de Lucía joined Antonio Gades' flamenco dance company for a tour of the Americas and during the group's trip to Brazil that year. According to Juan José Téllez Rubio, once in Brazil, Paco de Lucía encountered, "the bossa nova, which helped him bring a new air and new harmonies to flamenco" (Téllez 2015:229).

Paco de Lucía's Second Recording of Latin American and Caribbean Music

In 1967, Mondrego and de Lucía recorded a follow-up album to *12 éxitos para 2 guitarras flamencas* titled *Dos guitarras flamencas en America Latina*. This album featured music from Argentina, México, Cuba, Brazil, and Peru. Side one starts with "*Cielito Lindo*" from Mexico and continues with "Alma llanera" by the Venezuelan composer Pedro Gutiérrez. The third track is Luis Bonfa's "*Manha de Carnaval*" and the fourth track is another Mexican song, "*El jarabe tapatío*." Track five is "*La flor de la canela*" written by Chabuca Granda in 1950 and it is arguably one of the most well-known songs from Peru. According to Granda it was inspired by a woman in the Barranco neighborhood of Lima, and from 1953 through 2017 it has since been recorded by many artists throughout the Americas and Spain including Bola de Nieve, Caetano Veloso, Julio Iglesias, Yma Sumac, La Lupe, and Rubén Blades, among others (*Planas* 2013). De Lucía's real interest in the Afro-Peruvian cajón came from his introduction to this piece of music, when he saw Chabuca perform with the cajón at the Spanish Embassy in Peru.[3] Another track, "A pesar de todo" features a Cuban bongó that plays a number of standard rhythmic patterns associated with Cuban music such as *el martillo* and *a caballo* in addition to non-Cuban musical ideas that fit de Lucía and Mondrego's "flamenco" phrasing.

Side two of the album starts with the Cuban composer Ernesto Lecuona's "*Siboney*." Track two is the 1932 song "*Granada*" by the Mexican composer Augustín Lara which many artists recorded, including Frank Sinatra, who released his own version as a single in 1961. The third track is another Chabuca Granda song called "*Fina estampa*," that she wrote in 1956. Track 5, "*Malagueña salerosa*" is from the regional genre of Northeastern Mexico known as *son juasteco* or *huapango* and was written by Elpidio Ramírez and Pedro Galindo in 1947. This song has since been recorded by over 200 artists in the ensuing years. The last track on the album is the 1931 tango song "*Tomo y obligo*" by the legendary team of Carlos Gardel and Manuel Romero. It is notable that this entire album includes uncredited bongó and rattles throughout. All of these songs and their composers are national and regional icons and thus the album can be viewed as a musical map of Pan-America.

Paco de Lucía's Third Recording of Latin American and Caribbean Music

In 1969, Paco de Lucía and his brother Ramón recorded the album, *Paco de Lucía y Ramón de Algeciras en Hispanoamérica*. This album includes the Cuban bongó on a number of tracks playing the standard *martillo* pattern associated with Cuban son, but the *bongocero* is once again not identified. Other percussion instruments such as the *maracas* are used to accompany the duo on some tracks.

[3] Interestingly, "*La flor de la canela*" had already been recorded in Spain by María Dolores Pradera in 1961.

The first track, "*Amapola*" was written by José Maria Lacalle in 1920 and it was first recorded in Cuba in 1923. Track two is, "*Pájaro chogüí*," a Paraguayan polka by the Argentine composer Guillermo Breer and it features multiple percussionists. Track three is "*Yo vendo unos ojos negros*," a well-known song from Chilean folk music that is classified as a *tonada* which was first written down in 1913, but only recorded in 1940. Track four is Pepe Guizar's emblematic Mexican song "*Guadalajara*." Track 5 is "*Limeña*" by the Peruvian composer Augusto Armando Polo Campos. Track 6 is "*Las mañanitas*," a traditional Mexican sung at birthdays and other celebrations. Side 2 begins with "*Alma, corazón y vida*," another Peruvian hit from the composer Adrían Flores Albán. This is followed by "*Quizás, quizás, quizás*" written by the Cuban composer Osvaldo Farrés. The next track is the 1917 hit "*Tico Tico*" by the Brazilian composer Zequinha de Abreu. Rafael Hernández's "*Lamento borincano*" dating back to 1929 comes next. The penultimate track is "*A media luz*," a 1925 tango by Edgardo Donato and Carlos César Lenzi. The album ends portentously with "La paloma" by the Basque composer Sebastian Iradier which he wrote in 1860 after a visit to Cuba. This album offers the listener yet another musical map of Pan-America.

According to an interview with Juan José Téllez, Ramón Algeciras claimed that these recordings were all made at the demand of the record company because they featured well-known commercial songs that guaranteed sales and familiarity. Algeciras looked back on these recordings positively, but his brother Paco de Lucía did not and was in fact embarrassed by them according to Téllez. No matter what, these recordings demonstrate familiarity and facility with Latin American and Spanish Caribbean repertoire. In a 2013 interview with Enrique Planas, de Lucía explained that "prior to using the [Peruvian] cajón "he had used the Cuban conga and bongó, but that [to him] it sounded more Caribbean and did not sound like flamenco" (*Planas* 2013). Thus, these early recordings collectively demonstrate the evolution of his approach to incorporating percussion and how he would change Flamenco.

The Origins of "*Entre dos aguas*"

We have established that Paco de Lucía was conversant with Latin American and Spanish Caribbean composers in the early 1960s. It would make absolute sense that Paco de Lucía would also know popular North American music of the 1960s since he spent so much time as a teenager touring in the United States. This is significant if we consider the musical material and conception of the song "Entre dos aguas." According to José Luis Marín Anula, the melody and chords for "Entre dos aguas" were actually taken from the Bart Howard (née Howard Gustafson) song, "Fly Me to the Moon" which was written in 1954 and was recorded for the first time that same year by Kaye Ballard. The Frank Sinatra and Count Basie version of "Fly Me to the Moon" was released in 1964, but there were many other commercially successful versions prior to that (La Vanguardia 2015). "Entre dos aguas" definitely makes use of the melodic material from Bart Howard's song but de Lucía adds notes from the phrygian mode at the end of the melodic phrase to make it sound more flamenco.

In his biography, *El hijo de la portuguesa*, Juan José Téllez suggests that de Luciá knew and liked the song "Fly Me To The Moon" and that de Lucía and his musicians used the song as a spontaneous improvisation that was recorded in the studio**.** Others have posited that some of the source material for "Entre dos aguas" was actually taken from the 1973 single, "*Te estoy amando locamente*" by Las Grecas or another song called "*Caramba carambita*" by Los Marismeños. However, Paco de Lucía is actually credited as coauthor on "*Caramba carambita*" and the connection to "*Te estoy amando locamente*" is through de Lucía's friend Felipe Campuzano.

"Entre dos aguas" featured de Lucía's brother Ramón on second guitar, the bassist Eduardo Gracias, and the percussionist Pepe Ébano on the Cuban bongó. Born José Luis Ganoza Barrionuevo (1935-2022), Pepe Ébano was an Afro-Peruvian percussionist who had been residing in Spain since the mid-1950s and who came from the same Afro-Peruvian neighborhood of Barranco where Chabuca Grande was inspired to write "*La flor de la canela*." Ébano can be heard playing on other recordings from the era, particularly on "*Te estoy amando locamente*" by Las Grecas, along with Tito Duarte on drums, who was the son of Cuban composer Ernesto Duarte. It is possible that Ébano is the bongocero on the aforementioned Algeciras brothers' recordings of the 1960s.

Further Musical Engagement with the Americas

The commercial success of "Entre dos aguas" definitely led Paco de Lucía to further experiment with many other musicians, instruments, and concepts from the Americas including collaborations with Carlos Santana and Al Di Meola in the 1970s, as well as a trio with Larry Coryell and John McLaughlin and later Al Di Meola**.** In the early 1980s, de Lucía formed a sextet with like-minded musicians such as the Brazilian percussionist Rubem Dantas, who played the Peruvian cajón. Performances and recordings with Chick Corea also occupied a number of years of de Lucía's career (Zagalaz 2010). Additional collaborations with musicians in the Americas included Paco de Lucía playing a solo on the Djavan song, "Oceano," originally released on the 1989 album, *Djavan* (Djavan 2014). The Brazilian guitar virtuoso Rafael Rabello also featured de Lucía on the Antonio Carlos Jobim song, "*Samba do aviao*," on the 1992 album, *Todo os tons*. In 1990, the two appeared together on Brazilian TV, expressing their mutual admiration.[4]

By the end of the 1990s and into the 2000s, de Lucía was spending extended periods of time in México. At the same time, around 2000, the Nuyorican Latin jazz trumpeter and percussionist Jerry González had firmly established himself in Madrid. After finishing their gigs, local musicians would hang out at the Café Berlin and jam with González and his band. It is clear that Jerry González's influence on the contemporary flamenco jazz scene was immense, as many flamenco-jazz groups now feature trumpet. Paco de Lucía first heard a number of musicians who played in Jerry González's flamenco-jazz groups such as Los piratas de jazz and El comando de la clave while he was hanging out at the Café Berlin. De Lucía subsequently hired some of these musicians for his own band including El Niño Josele, José Fernández Torres "Tomatito," Alaín Pérez, and Israel Suárez "Piraña." In 2003, de Lucía recorded a rumba called "Casa Bernardo" that features both Jerry González on trumpet and Alaín Pérez on bass and vocals. Paco de Lucía's 2014 album, *Canción Andaluza* featured the Venezuelan superstar vocalist Oscar D'León as well as Alaín Pérez on the track "Señorita."[5]

Conclusion

Toward the very end of his life Paco de Lucía spent 3 months living in Cuba, in the Siboney neighborhood of La Habana, and even sent his children to attend school at the Liceo Francés (Luque 2024). During this time, he attended concerts by various Cuban groups like Los Van Van. It is notable that de Lucía also traveled to Manaca Iznaga, a small town near Trinidad where his Cuban bassist Alaín Pérez was born and raised. He did so without telling Pérez or anyone else, because he was

[4] See "Paco de lucia e Raphael Rabello-ENCONTRO RARO!!!.parte 3," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FgKIb1GnWF4.

[5] The *montuno* section of the song features Alaín Pérez's coro along with Oscar D'León's *soneos* (vocal improvisations).

curious and wanted to know what life was like where his young collaborator came from.[6] Pérez was humbled and only learned of the trip after the fact from de Lucía's widow, Gabriela. This final act of curiosity and the openness to further explore the connections between Spain and the Americas demonstrates Paco de Lucía's continual and profound search for new experiences and knowledge of self and of others while personifying the concept of being "*entre dos aguas*" and making music that embodied this broad vision of the Americas, Spain, and beyond.

The aforementioned musical experiences and recordings not only show how one man's lifelong musical project can flourish and thrive in distinct geographical and musical settings, but also how de Lucía's entire musical output ultimately embraced these differences to form a unique and coherent personal vision. This enduring personal vision was likely unbeknownst to him and initially not specifically articulated, but looking back on the totality of his career it is now quite obvious. In his hands and through his music, the guitar, became the vehicle to connect Spain and flamenco with the Americas and the very thing that allowed him, and us as listeners, to be transported simultaneously across multiple waters and disparate musical situations. All of this was achieved while maintaining a solid connection to where it all began for him in Spain and with Flamenco.

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