



دار الأوبرا السلطانية مسقط  
ROYAL OPERA HOUSE MUSCAT

# THE ART OF FLAMENCO, SYMPOSIUM



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November 19th, 2014

7:00 pm

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What is Flamenco? Where does it come from? Is it folklore or is it popular art? What are the disciplines and what is the history of this intriguing art form? Introduction to Flamenco Days - shows and concerts at the Royal Opera House Muscat:

Paco Peña Flamenco Dance Company: "Quimeras"

Estrella Morente

Miguel Vargas Flamenco Dance Theatre: "Rhythms with Soul"

Tomatito

An overview to the art of flamenco and the discussion will be led by flamenco scholar, Mr. Jaime Trancoso, Ph.D., accompanied by the flamenco legend, Mr. Paco Peña.

## JAIME TRANCOSO, PH.D.

Jaime Trancoso's career has been a perfect balance between academic and practical experiences, drawing on his skills as a highly qualified and knowledgeable arts manager. He earned his PhD (summa cum laude) in Flamenco Music from the University of Seville and was granted the Best Doctoral Thesis Award of Seville in 2012. Jaime received a Masters in Arts Administration and Management from the University of London, and was named a Musicologist by the Universidad Autonoma de Madrid. He is also a music teacher and pianist certified by the Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music.

As a manager, agent and producer, as well as the director and founder of Flamenco Agency, Dr. Trancoso has placed flamenco artists & Spanish flamenco ballet companies in the most important festivals and theatres of the world, such as the European Festival Association (EFA-AEF), the Ljubljana Festival, and opera houses such as Teatro Campoamor.

He was associated with the USA-London Flamenco Festival at Carnegie Hall in New York and at the Sadler's Wells of London, and with artist agencies in London. He was also the coordinator of the Spanish Music Festival of Cadiz. In addition, Dr. Trancoso is frequently invited to hold conferences at the Maestranza Theatre opera house, Universidad Autonoma de Madrid and flamenco cultural centres.

[www.jaimetrancoso.com](http://www.jaimetrancoso.com)

## PACO PEÑA

Paco Peña embodies both authenticity and innovation in flamenco. As guitarist, composer, dramatist, producer and artistic mentor he has transformed perceptions of this archetypal Spanish art form.

Born in the Andalusian city of Córdoba, Paco Peña began learning guitar from his brother at the age of six and made his first professional appearance at the age of 12. In the late 1960s, he left Spain for London, where his recitals of flamenco music captured the public imagination. Venues for his solo performances have included the intimate Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club and the monumental Royal Albert Hall in London, New York's Carnegie Hall and the Concertgebouw, in Amsterdam. He has shared the stage with fellow guitarists, singers and instrumental groups, bridging diverse musical genres, including classical, jazz, blues, country and Latin American.

In 1995, The New York Times declared that "Mr Peña is a virtuoso, capable of dazzling an audience beyond the frets of mortal man. He combines rapid-fire flourishes with a colourist's sense of shading; this listener cannot recall hearing any guitarist with a more assured mastery of his instrument." It should come as no surprise that readers of America's Guitar magazine judged Paco Peña as best flamenco guitarist of the year for five consecutive years.

In 1981, he founded the Centro Flamenco Paco Peña in Cordoba, later becoming artistic director of the Córdoba International Guitar Festival. Plans are underway for a new educational initiative in Peña's hometown, complementing his work as the world's first Professor of Flamenco Guitar, a role established in 1985 at Rotterdam Conservatory in the Netherlands.

Since 1970 Paco Peña has performed regularly with his own hand-picked company of dancers, guitarists and singers in a succession of groundbreaking shows. The Paco Peña Flamenco Dance Company has taken flamenco into the realm of music-theatre, with regular seasons in London (Royal Festival Hall, Sadler's Wells Theatre and Barbican) and festival appearances in Edinburgh, Adelaide, Amsterdam, Athens, Israel, Istanbul, Singapore and Hong Kong. 1999 brought a most ambitious production: Musa Gitana. Peña based the piece on the life and work of another artist from Córdoba, the painter Julio Romero de Torres. Its seven-week season at the Peacock Theatre in London's West End stands as the longest ever run of a flamenco show and a further London season followed in Spring 2001.

Another landmark was Misa Flamenca, a 1991 setting of the Mass that juxtaposed Peña's company with a classical choir. Its premiere at London's Royal Festival Hall, given with the Choir of the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields, was followed by a staging at the 1992 EXPO in Seville. Misa Flamenca has also been seen in Australia, New Zealand, Poland, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and the USA.

In 2002, Paco Peña enjoyed the collaboration of the renowned theatre director Jude Kelly in what proved to be the spectacular show Voces y Ecos, which took the audience on a kind of journey through the history of flamenco and the most significant moments in its development – the show was hailed as the best flamenco show in years.

Other ambitious projects followed with Jude Kelly's collaboration A Compás! was aimed at transmitting vividly to audiences the compelling nature of a range of flamenco rhythms; Flamenco sin Fronteras took a look at a group of flamenco forms that emerged at the turn of the 20th century as a result of Spanish musicians, singers and dancers arriving in South America to conduct tours of their shows and discovering a rich folklore that at times reminded them very strongly of their own musical traditions. This new group of styles was called 'Cantes de Ida y Vuelta', and the show sets out to combine the best of flamenco and its environment with Latin America and the great variety of music that exists there. After a very successful run of the show, we were delighted to have been invited back to Sadler's Wells for another run in June/July of the following year.

The present production, Quimeras, also directed by Jude Kelly, is Paco's most recent dance work which was commissioned by the Edinburgh International Festival for the Arts, 2010 edition. Exploring the dream of a better life, Quimeras tells the story of a group of people arriving in Spain from Africa in search of work. It presents a marriage of both traditional Spanish and African music and dance, creating a spectacle of virtuoso performances and intimate storytelling which was described as "breathtakingly beautiful" (Daily Telegraph) after its world premiere. In 1997, Paco Peña was proud to be named Oficial de la Cruz de la Orden del Mérito Civil, and in May of 2012, he was thrilled to be awarded the Gold Medal in the Arts by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington - these honours were both bestowed by King Juan Carlos of Spain.

<http://www.pacopena.com>



Jaime Trancoso



Paco Peña