

# Paco Peña

FLAMENCO DANCE COMPANY

presents

## **A Compás !**

### **CAST**

#### **Guitars**

Paco Peña  
Paco Arriaga  
Rafael Montilla

#### **Dancers**

Angel Muñoz  
Ramón Martínez  
Charo Espino

#### **Singer**

Miguel Ortega

#### **Percussionist**

Nacho López

#### **Lighting**

Elena Peña

#### **Management**

MPM London

**Tour Direction**

Gary Lindsey Artist Services, San Francisco  
www.LindseyArtists.com 1-800-949-2745

**PROGRAM**

Alboreá  
La Guitarra Solista  
Palillos Rítmicos  
Guitarra en Ensemble

Martinete  
La Caña  
Alegrías

Compañía  
Paco Peña  
Paco Peña, Charo Espino  
Paco Peña, Charo Espino, Paco Arriaga,  
Rafael Montilla  
*Palmas* Nacho López, Ramón Martínez  
Angel Muñoz  
Charo Espino, Angel Muñoz  
Ramón Martínez

*Pausa*

Suite, Baile y Guitarra  
  
Cantiñas  
Soleá  
Explorando el Compás  
Ritmo Nuevo

Paco Peña, Angel Muñoz, Ramón Martínez,  
Paco Arriaga, Rafael Montilla, Nacho López  
Charo Espino  
Angel Muñoz  
Compañía  
Compañía

## Biographies

### **PACO PEÑA**

#### *Guitarist*

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 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 the most ambitious production yet: *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.

Paco Peña's latest works include *Flamenco Requiem* and *A Compás! Flamenco Requiem* again marries flamenco with forms of classical music. Including his composition *Requiem for the Earth*, the piece remains true to orthodox traditions while giving it a different treatment imbued with social commentary at the same time. The new presentation, *A Compás!* transmits to the audience the compelling nature of a range of flamenco rhythms, from almost tribal to razor-sharp complexity. The show aims to isolate each artist at some moment, to throw him or her onto the naked reality of a given rhythmic structure (or compás) and, there,

having to deal with it in their own personal way. Or, put in different words, they must try and get everybody “into the rhythm”, inducing the feeling of “a compás” into the whole experience.

Paco Peña is based in London, but still spends a significant part of the year in his native Andalucía. In 1997 he was proud to be named Oficial de la Cruz de la Orden del Merito Civil, an honor bestowed by King Juan Carlos of Spain.

## **ÁNGEL MUÑOZ**

*Dancer*

Born in Córdoba in 1973, Ángel Muñoz started his dance training with maestro Inmaculada Luque for eight years. He then studied at the Dance Conservatory and later became a member of the Ziryab Dance Company, under the direction of Javier Latorre. Ángel Muñoz performed as a soloist in *La Fuerza del Destino*, which toured around Europe. He appeared in operas *La Traviata* and *La del Soto del Parral*, and on television series, before obtaining La Mejorana Prize in 1994 in Córdoba’s National Flamenco Art Contest.

He was lead dancer of Jose Antonio Dance Company and of Paco Peña Flamenco Dance Company, with whom he has traveled all over the world. He also appeared in the show *Universo Flamenco*, backed by guitarist Mario Cortés.

He was regularly invited to perform as principle guest artist in María Pagés Company and danced in many productions including *La Tirana*, which premiered at Seville’s Bienal in 1998, and *Flamenco Republic*, which was presented in New York in 2001.

More recently, he was invited to dance in *Sueños de Ida y Vuelta* by guitarist Victor Monge; in *Serranito*, in which his wife Charo Espino also danced. Ángel Muñoz founded his own company with bailaoras Charo Espino, Maribel Espino and Inmaculada Ortega; guitarists Jorge Rodríguez and Manuel Pérez, cantaores Miguel Ortega and José Ángel Carmona; and percussionist Nacho López. In December 2003 he premiered his show *Robándole al Alma* in South Africa. He also works as a flamenco dance instructor.

## **MIGUEL ORTEGA**

*Singer*

Miguel’s artistic career began at the young age of four, when he performed in the Peña Flamenca *Juan Breva* in Málaga. He went on to perform at schools and in local festivals such as the Festival Flamenco in Camas, Seville, and later in the Festival de la Fragua in Bellavista, Seville.

At the age of 11, Miguel traveled to Italy with a cultural program funded by the Junta de Andalucía, and won third prize in the Venencia Flamenca contest. In the same year he participated in the flamenco festival *Joaquín el de la Paula* in Seville and in 1990 he appeared on television as part of the Christmas season’s broadcasts.

In 1993, Miguel danced in *La Caracola Lebrijana* and won first prize in the Concurso de Jóvenes Aficionados al Flamenco in Huelva. Other prizes include first place in the Jóvenes Flamencos contest in Seville (1998), second prize in the Venencia Flamenca de Los Palacios (1998), first prize for Soleá in La Unión in Murcia and finalist in the Bienal de Arte Flamenco in Seville.

Miguel has performed in *La Tirana* alongside the dancer María Pagés, and toured with the dancer El Mistela to Japan and Europe. He has also collaborated with renowned artists Javier Latorre, Javier Barón, Fernando Romero and Isabel Bayón.

## **NACHO LÓPEZ**

*Percussionist*

Nacho López has collaborated with many artists across Spain and the world as a flamenco percussionist. In 2001 he spent eight months in Venezuela performing in the *Tablao L'Albufera*. The following year he returned to Spain and joined the *Compania Flamenca de Maria Serrano*, which toured around Europe. That same year he collaborated with Isabel Bayón and Fernando Romero in the world-renowned *Bienal de Flamenco de Sevilla*. In 2003, he went on to join Miguel Poveda on a tour through Spain, Mexico and Germany, and later collaborated with him on recording projects with Enric Palomar.

Nacho's more recent collaborations include working in the companies of Ginesa Ortega and Jeronimo Maya, which also toured internationally, and a recording project with Galician pianist Sergio Monroy. He has also taught in the Flamenco Schools of Adrian Galia in Osaka and Tokyo, Japan.

Nacho joined the Paco Peña Flamenco Dance Company in 2001, with which he has toured and continues to tour to major venues throughout the world.

## **PACO ARRIAGA**

*Guitarist*

The young flamenco guitarist Paco Arriaga was born in Seville, in the heart of Andalusia. He started playing the guitar at the age of 13 accompanying flamenco singers.

At the age of 17, he joined the Academy of Matilde Coral and composed various works for her dance shows. His career took off when Cristina Hoyos invited him to create the music for her last four shows. He also wrote a piece for her company for the 1992 Barcelona Olympics.

He has written music for María Pagés Company and the dancer Isabel Bayon as well as two parts for Ballet Nacional de España for their version of the opera *Carmen*. He has collaborated with dancer Fernando Romero for many years and together they have created many important, ground-breaking works for the flamenco repertoire.

Last October, he worked with Romero and joined Paco Peña Flamenco Dance Company in his critically acclaimed London West End production *Voces y Ecos*.

Paco Arriaga is now considered one of the top exponents of the modern trend in flamenco guitar composition.

## **RAFAEL MONTILLA**

*Guitarist*

Rafael's love of flamenco music was inspired by his father, the singer El Chaparro, to whom he used to listen since he was three. He soon began taking an interest in the flamenco guitar, and by the age of six he was training with the guitarist Antonio Murillo from the *Zoco Tablao*. He continued his studies a year later under the guidance of Paco Serrano. He

continued to play with Serrano both as a student and fellow performer, and later trained at the Conservatorio Superior de Música de Córdoba.

Montilla has performed in a significant number of renowned festivals and theatres around Spain and Europe. In Spain these include the Festival Flamenca de la Unión, the Teatro Albéniz in Madrid, the Teatro Apolo in Barcelona, the Teatro Arriaga in Bilbao and the Festival Internacional de la Guitarra in Córdoba. He has performed in theatres across major cities of Europe including Estonia, Amsterdam, Zurich, London, Copenhagen, Lisbon, Paris, Rome, Milan (Teatro Scala) and Florence (Teatro Verdi). Montilla's performances have been televised on several major European channels.

Rafael has taught as a professor of flamenco guitar in various institutions, including the Festival Internacional de la Guitarra, Córdoba, the Festival de Música Folk in Zurich and as a guest professor in the Rotterdam Conservatory.

More recently, Montilla has undertaken the role of musical director and first guitarist in Antonio Márquez Flamenco Company, and composed the music for Márquez's last production *Después de Carmen*, which toured in major theatres around the world. He has also directed the Orchestra of Brasilia in the opera *Carmen* and performed in a U.S. tour with the world renowned folk musician Carlos Núñez.

## **RAMÓN MARTÍNEZ**

*Dancer*

Born in Málaga, Ramón studied at the Conservatorio Superior de Malaga where he graduated with honors. He studied with renowned teachers Manolete, Matilde Coral, Manolo Marín and Eva Yerbabuena.

After performing at the flamenco tablao of Pepe Marchena, Ramón took part in the Mario Maya *Requiem y de lo Flamenco* from 1994 to 1995. He appeared in *Movimiento Perpetuo* choreographed by José Granero in 1995.

He rejoined Mario Maya for the Winter Games of Sierra Nevada in 1996 with fragments of a Requiem. He then went on to perform in Maria Pagés' *El Perro Andaluz*, and Manolo Marín's *Suite Iberia* in 1997.

In 1996, Ramón also appeared in the Bienal de Flamenco in Seville with choreographer Javier Latorre in *Lances del Arenal*. And then in 1997 he appeared in *Jaleos* by María Pagés and Fernando Romero.

Ramón participated in Eva Yerbabuena's *5 Mujeres 5* and in 2000 returned to the Bienal de Flamenco in Seville in Javier Barón's *Baile de Hierro, Baile de Bronce*.

In 2001 he appeared with Cristina Hoyos in her production *Al Compas del Tiempo* and more recently was invited to perform in the tablao *El Flamenco* in Tokyo with his own group. He joined Paco Peña Flamenco Dance Company for the production *Voces y Ecos*.

## **CHARO ESPINO**

*Dancer*

Teachers like Caracolillo, Manolo Marín, Ciro, Paco Romero and Paco Fernández, put the foundations of dance on Charo Espino. The professional activity of the Sevillian dancer started at the end of the eighties, taking part as the principle dancer with the companies Ballet

Teatro Español de Rafael Aguilar, Compañía de Teatro de Danza Española de Luisillo, Ballet Danzarte de Joaquín Ruiz, Ballet Español de Miguel Ángel, and Paco Peña Flamenco Dance Company. In 1988 she participated for the first time in the Bienal de Flamenco de Sevilla and one year later in Italy she already obtained the award of dance 'Navicella', re-broadcast by the national television station RAI. Also in Italy, Charo worked as the first dancer of the opera *La Traviata* by Luigi Pizzi and José Carreras in 1990.

In 1993 Charo acted as an artistic partner of the dancer Cristóbal Reyes and took part in the Festival of Caracalla, sharing company with Manolete and Juana Amaya. During the same period she danced in Madrid Flamenco and in Festival Roma Europa as an invited artist. Since 1994, she began to be a part of the Paco Peña Flamenco Dance Company, a role that keeps on developing at present in the major theaters of the world. At the same time, she has collaborated in such projects as *Federico*, released in Granada in 1997, along with Carlota Santana and Juan Andrés Maya. One year later, she relocated to Japan, where she was employed at Tablao Flamenco of Tokyo, sharing stage with Ángel Muñoz and Carmelilla Montoya. Meanwhile she also performed for the principal Spanish theatres, including Zambra, Venta del Gato, Casa Patas and Café de Chinitas.

Charos's international activity continued. In 1999 she danced as the first ballerina of the Ángel Muñoz Company in the South African cities of Port Elizabeth and Stellevosch. In 2000 she worked again as the first ballerina of the company of Rafael Aguilar, in tour throughout Germany. She also danced in Japan with Miguel Ángel Ballet Español. She continued to tour Japan with the guitarist Víctor Monge 'Serranito', with whom she also toured Morocco. Then she danced in La Arena de Verona in the Italian opera *Il Trovatore*, under the guidance of El Camborio and Lucía del Real.

As the principle dancer, she also appeared in the movie *Callas Forever*, directed by Franco Zeffirelli. In 2002 she returned to Japan to tour with the company Miguel Ángel Ballet Español. The same year, Paco Peña released *Voices and Echoes*, and the Company toured to premier venues in countries such as Holland and England. At the end of the 2003, Charo took part as the first dancer in the premiere of *Robándole al Alma* by the Ángel Muñoz Company. Since 2004, Charo keeps on being employed as the premier dancer in the international tours of Paco Peña and the show *Sueños de Ida y Vuelta* by Serranito.

## **PROGRAM NOTES**

### *A Compás !* *'Primal Pulse'*

From the early days in which Paco Peña decided to launch his now world famous company, he set out to bring onto the stage a true rendition of what the Art of Flamenco represents: a spontaneous collaboration between artists of different disciplines, i.e. musicians, dancers and singers who inspire one-another to reach as far as possible into their artistic endeavors so as to create a unique and unrepeatable experience every time; a performance that is new and surprising to themselves as much as it is to any audience present.

Flamenco is not written down, but passed on from generation to generation, so it continues to allow for new ideas to come into it. It holds an intense appeal that is timeless and not easy to identify. Both the tragic cry of the “seguriya” in the lone voice of the flamenco singer and the explosion of happiness of the “bulería” rhythm find mysterious paths into people’s sensitivities all over the world; as do the sensuality and passion of the dance and the unique texture of the flamenco guitar sound.

Over the years, Paco Peña’s shows have dealt with various challenging concepts, from the deceptively simple notion of highlighting the essential significance of the flamenco song, (not given due recognition for many previous years), as was the case with his *Flamenco Puro* show, to the ground-breaking drama *Musa Gitana* which told the story of the legendary, turn-of-the 20th. Century artist from Córdoba, Julio Romero de Torres, with his complex observation of life and society and his personal, traumatic passions.

More recently, 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 new presentation, *A Compás !* wants to transmit to the audience the compelling nature of a range of flamenco rhythms, from the almost “tribal”, trance-inducing quality of the “alboreá” to the razor - sharp complexity of the “bulería”. At the same time, the show aims to isolate each artist at some moment, to throw (as it were) him or her onto the naked reality of a given rhythmic structure (or compás) and, there, having to deal with it in their own personal way, immersing themselves deeply into the feeling of the rhythm and contributing their own creative input, they must end up projecting an unstoppable pulse that every one can feel and identify with. Or, put in different words, they must try and get everybody “into the rhythm”, induce the feeling of “a compás” into the whole experience.

Flamenco rhythms are vital; the “compás” is like a primal pulse, like the rhythm of the earth... and everyone must get to feel it!