

TALISMAN



A THEORY OF THE FLAMENCO SONG

OF THE SOUL AND MYSTERY OF ANDALUSIA

tercera edición

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FLAMENCO SONG**

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*To my wife, whose soul
is in her eyes, her heart
on her lips. In all the love
and romantic care of a
"soleá", '*

THE AUTHOR

**OF THE SOUL AND
MYSTERY OF ANDALUSIA**

INTRODUCTION TO FLAMENCO SONG

From Granada to the seven lyrical seas.
Andalusia and all of Andalusia in song. A
dark-haired lass, dreamy and moon-struck
in her window of verse. For here Dream
and Poetry, as the Word, were made flesh
and truth in our midst.

Where did Cante originate? What is the
origin of love, of pain, life and of death?

Could it have been sung by the founders
of primitive Tartesos, reaching the
Peninsula from the north of Africa?

Or by the feverish and melancholy arab of the deserts, who would also pass through Marocco, though centuries later, riding his winged steed to Andalusia?

Or by the gypsies once native to the legendary India of the Brahmins?

Yet Cante already existed as intuition and presentiment in the blood and minds of the earliest Andalusians, those famous Turdetanos of the days of Argantonio recorded in history as having written their laws in verse, and who knew farming, metalwork, the art of bullfighting and dance. Those who at the very dawn of a race made of Andalusia the most advanced center of civilization, commerce and wealth in the Western world.

And if Cante was to develop later, after Andalusia had taken notice of herself, certainly the melodic quality and traditional harmonic rhythm seem to come from milleniums of liturgic or funeral recitations, from mysterious and distant cults.

Remember too it is song of an interior night, of dark melancholy, said as a rite and

hardly contained by a verse. It is like a nameless pain that strikes the breast, like a gasped word in a prolonged fit of sobbing, like dark and weary water that drips into a deep black well, slowly, until reaching the brim. For it is not song of ease but of uneasiness, of suffocation, of "ay", of the last groan, sung to the point of dying, out of breath. And the one who sings it needs to be alone with his fever, and to close his eyes to feel it. He must enter a trance and sweat out the agony of the verse. It is something that never repeats itself but that happens anew, recreated at each singing.

At root song and dance, as all manifestations of art, has a holy, religious inspiration, the awe and terror-stricken appearance of man before Divinity, before the dark forces present in nature. Then the race, through its vicissitudes and encounters with invading peoples, newer cultures, conserves and remembers it, making it its own, the way to express its particular feeling and to define as well its philosophy of life.

Such was the birth and formation of Cante, Andalusian song par excellence,

arising as the necessary expression of a common lyricism, of transcendent emotion and sensations, of a pathetic and mysteriously vital experience, unique in the world. And although granted that its intonation is impregnated with arabic and gypsy elements, the musical and definitive shaping of Cante, its accent, its style and the spirit that gives it life, is absolutely and genuinely Andalusian, and of Andalusians who placed in it an immense and aching heart.

This is Cante, song that is heard not with the ears but with the soul, transported and suspended in mid air. A song in which hand claps and oles could not be from gaiety but from counterpointal harmony and dramatic rhythm. And the singer, as the bullfighter in the ring, doesn't know how much he will accomplish. Each region gives its own melody and weave, its interpretation, its particular style, and Cante is enriched by variations, by nuances, by tonalities, but always with respect to a basic outline. Since mastering all the styles is very difficult, each style had its own creative and interpretative specialists. First in Cadiz, Jerez, el Puerto and Seville; and in Seville,

the cafés of Triana, el Burrero, Marina, Silverio, San Agustín. It is sung by the initiated, by only the trained and professional artists. From there it passes to the "colmao" taverns, and then with the idea of universal message, to the theatres. Here its decadence begins: the inexperienced public imposes its tastes, eager for novelties, entertainment and the spectacular. And Cante, coming out of its seclusion, out of its robust and peasant inwardness, is contaminated by imported rhythms and ceases to be Cante in order to be fashionable ballad, folklore in revue, what is sung nowadays.

And now, sounding of alarms, heavy bells in the air, for pure Cante is dying! Bells, Andalusia. Might you lose your voice singing your "solea" and your sorrow!

In a widowed silence hushed guitars play your verses of tears. Nostalgia of the great Silverio, of el Nitri, of Manuel Torre, of Juan Breva and el Canario, of Chacon, Fosforito and of our own unforgettable Yerbabuena who carried with him to eternity all the emotion of his song.

But Andalusia will live on as long as it keeps us awake and astir with love, life and mystery. And it will go on being the magic word, the "open sesame" that gives us the secret of art and imagination, of emotion and fervor, of the human and the eternal. For Andalusia has the most serious and tragic character that the world could know, so serious that one must be on the edge of life or death to know and understand it.

THE MARTINETE

*“Andalusia thinks with her heart
and feels with her mind”.*



According to etymology. "Martinete comes from "martillo", hammer. Tenacious and primitive hammers on the forger's anvil. In the forge, darkness and flame where grunt and writhe the sprites of song and dance. In a man's hand, the power of destiny over life. The clink-clank of the hammer raises rhythm in the soul as the musical beat of its loneliness. And Andalusian song is born, to be a hidden flame of thirst and fever, its love and its suffering, to be the grief of darkness, the anguish of prison bars and the torture of crucifying nails. And the memory of distant hammers, haunting, will echo throughout its life, forging its outcry with the fire of delirium.

This is the "martinete", father of Cante, as crude and hard as iron, and which comes out in merely striking blows, increasingly louder, longer, of voice and lament. Dry weeping. grief without tears. whose passion is as coarse as a burlap cilice, in the soul and in the throat, and which demands experience and patience of strong and veteran Andalusian singers, to take nourishment with its feet on the ground and not to come out subdued by the trance.

* * *

The "martinete", lord and master of Cante, and the Debla, sister of the "martinete" and the song-goddess of the "deep" and lastly the "double martinete", a style for those with a taste for the old dregs, for that bitter wine, dark with a dramatic mystery, with lyric Andalusian sentimentality.

THE CARCELERA

*“For the Andalusian all is
tangible, intuition and sensation
rather than
logic and reasoning”.*

The "carcelera" is sung to the rhythm of "martinetes". It is in fact the martinete though left plain, without anvils and without hammers, to express a different lament, to introduce another aspect of man's existence.

If Art and Poetry is the universal and the human synthesized and made concrete, we can be sure that no people succeeded in describing with such perfection and in so few words, its dramatic idea of life and man. Here Cante pulls up the very roots of existence, for it takes its source not in anecdote nor legend but from a profound experience at subterranean depths of being, where man is alone with himself, hearing

and feeling his own pulse, his breathing, the sharpness of his pain and of his joy, to the extent of discovering that he was made, not for thinking but for sensation and emotion.

The “carcelera”, as all Cante, grows out of darkness, out of the heart of the soul, out of the anguish that sharpens the swords of lament and cries man touches his face in the dark and doesn’t recognize it, senses the blackness getting thicker in his eyes that look without seeing; all the while silence is drowning out his footsteps, his heartbeat. And it is as a blind bird anxious for light that he breaks out singing, to vent and hear his trials of being man, and to affirm his erect and immortal presence before the vacuum of nothingness.

*They pull me out of one colaboose
To put me in one more damned
Where you couldn’t detect
A finger on your very hand.*

THE SAETA

*“The Andalusian is born,
lives and prepares himself to take
on the superhuman
attitude of laughing at life and death”.*



Easter week. A tragic moon. Slow and deep rolling of drums in the night of an Andalusian spring, purple as a lily. Phantasmic trains of hooded figures with burning candles in hand, filling silently in an imposing Calvary all the dark streets of Andalucia. Some "floats" would stop at the prison doors. Tonight the prisoners are allowed to look out of the narrow windows into the street and one of them, by a traditional grant of a former Fraternity, will be freed. The cross, in the radiance of the candles, is projected shimmering, gigantic, onto the wall. The open arms of the Nazarene graze the bars. It is an inexpressible moment in which man forgets his own suffering, for it looks

miserably small before the horror of the Innocent's agony and of the Holy Mother cryins for her son and for him... and in the parched wasteland of his soul the flower of compassion and repentance blossoms miraculously; and the supreme gesture is repeated, the dialogue between the two symbolic crosses of Calvary.

The "carcelera", that confused and tearful wail of man, hopeless in his loneliness and obscurity, has turned to consider another anguish, another incomprehensible pain, one that purifies and saves; and it is transformed into light, prayer and supplication, into this shameless and pathetic lament of the saeta.

Here we are brought to the discovery of, above all, existential and metaphysical reasoning, of the meaning and content so profoundly Christian, mystic, and theological that shapes and gives life to the tragic sentiment in Andalusian song. And it goes in an ascending trajectory along its bitter way, from pain-and-passion, ununified, egocentric, accepted stoically as a fatal and unavoidable condition of life, to pain-and-

compassion, worn out with love and pity, opening, delivering in a crucified embrace, a message —redemption— for all human suffering. From the night within the soul, closed and inconsoleable to its own pain, from the “martinete”, the “carcelera”, the “siguiriya”, to the mysticism of passion and suffering, to the loftiness, luminant and vibrant, of the “saeta”, to the fervent offering of the heart. All Cante is repressed desire, of flight and the everlasting. It is a crying out, a flood, gushing of pain, the clamor of humanity that is bleeding to death in the loneliness of mystery and agony, wounded but forcing back the wall of silence with the cry of its horror of the unknown, to keep from being lost in a troubled sea of desperation; all to finally discover, in a cross raised between the limit of life and the threshold of the eternal, the enlightening revelation, the transcendental meaning, the “why” of all the unhappiness and suffering in the universe. But now life, that sinuous and darkened road of man’s travels, has been annointed with clarity, symbolism and mercy. And the saeta becomes the climax, the redeeming grace, the final mastery of a song that dragged

along a second calvary of obscurity and bitterness, the anguish and grief of its passion, making stops for pain and lament, leaving its trail and the memory of its itinerant discouragement and depression through all of Andalusia, until at last it disembarks in the divine.

THE CAÑA
AND THE POLO

*“Of all Spanish names,
Andalusia is the
most musical, the most fascinating,
the sweetest and the saddest”.*

Two styles, two sorts among the oldest and most difficult of Great Cante. The hammer still pounds out the song. But in the "caña", mother of the "polo" and the "soleá", another tone is assumed, one that isn't the dry and vertical complaint of the "martinete". The "caña" is a type of Cante that doubles back in order to come out more refined, repeating and purifying itself until it finds the exact mould in which to pour out its emotions. A song that cultivates different inflexions of the voice, always seeking the undulating feminine grace of the curved line.

* * *

And the "polo" as we said earlier, comes from the "caña" the same as soleá, and gathers its experience to let loose in a lyrical fantasy, unfolding a large variety of rhythms, and needing the melody of a guitar to accompany the voice in all its iridescent nuances of emotion. It is sung in three-eight time at a moderate tempo.

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THE SOLEA

*“Andalusia is pain, loneliness and sorrow,
of velvet and silk, that dresses
up in holidays and gaiety, finery of
riches, brilliance
and lights, so as not to be seen crying”.*

Soleá. No name suits you more, Andalusia. The solitude of your gloom and your gaiety, loneliness in your fanciful whims and your disillusion, loneliness in your gaze and your smile, loneliness in bitter sorrow and tears, of the heart broken by seven daggers, of your dark-haired Vicens, the night of Good Friday. Andalusia, cross and weeping. Virgin of the Soleá.

The song is sister to the "polo" and made in Triana. Perhaps of Arabic descent though its accent, vigour and insolence all suggest Andalusia. It is a day-dreaming woman, rhythmic, graceful and soft, who for all that has a certain something fatal in the black of her eyes, something mysterious

and profoundly melancholy. Three verses are all she needs to tell her sad tale, of a thorn in her heart: the more she tries to wrench it out, the deeper it is driven in. Handsome and reserved she shows off her gentility in cafés, in the “colmaos” of Seville, then goes off to the ports, Cadiz, the song of Enrique. The sea has lovetalk on its breath, Soleá where have you ben? Where are you bound, Soleá?

This is the song that symbolizes Andalusia, that is its true name and fate: Loneliness. As brief and deep as a sigh, it is sung in three-eight time and in a minor key, to a background of hand claps and guitar. And it is out in three or at the most four verses.

*For want of a solid foundation
The whole of Babylonia fell
Our love wouldn't fail should the very
Firmament crumble as well.*

* * * *

Among Soleares is the “soleá de cambio” or “apolá”. It is a combination of the two brother Cantes born to the “caña”, a kind

of variation between soleares and polos, hence named soleares “apolás”. No one sang them like Silverio Franconetti. Their interpretation is very difficult and demands a well tempered singer to give them the musical coloring and life they require.

THE SIGUIRIYA
OF THE GYPSIES

*“The Andalusian says
Yes to death and No to life”.*

8



With the attentive reader initiated in the mysteries of the “deep”, we shall now enter the sanctuary of this sonorous temple of song, of Andalusia’s sensitivity and distress. Silence. You are asked to remove your hat. For here is the key and secret to Cante, that bronze and shadowy God of song green-eyed with a bitter smile.

It is the night of the season when the evil spirits descend to earth and man has seen for the first time the hierarchical, implacable face of death. A vague anguish is growing inside him and an icy sweat runs down his body. He doesn’t know how to or can’t cry, his throat feels like a hurricane of ice and blood, and the rattle

of the last sad moment boldly rushes out, hair-raising. And it is then that anguish becomes art in Andalusian music and calls itself the "gypsy siguiriya".

Here is the model, the synthesis of all Great Cante, its intonation and its liturgy, the magic combination that enabled Tomas "el Nitri" to open the locks of all types of Cante. Later it was sung by Manuel Torre and "el Mellizo". But never must the ancient seguidilla be confused with the "siguiriya" of the gypsies. The seguidilla was first introduced into the central region of Spain and its principal musical forms were the manchegas and boleras, with danceable rhythms, the first lively and the second more reserved in its cadence and movements. But they have nothing to do with the gypsy "Siguiriya", slow and solemn, that asks neither expansion nor joy but retreat, imprisoned by four walls of darkness and pain in order to rise tragically and deluded from the soul's desolation, and to make silence vibrate, trembling, looking for its answer in the beyond. It is the bronchitis of Cante, in which the voice breaks into a shapeless cry, aimed at infinity.

Some find a clear similarity with the songs of Northeast India, a theory that would perhaps explain why the gypsies have always interpreted them best, and although its composition has been adapted to the characteristic sentiment and rhythm of all Andalusian song, the gypsies gave it a name and adopted it as their own, leaving the imprint of their personality, as happened with many types of popular Andalusian song and dance that today bear the name gypsy. The music is written in three-eight time and in a minor key, consisting of four verses, the first and third of seven syllables and free of rhyme, the second and fourth assonant, with five syllables, sometimes followed by a refrain of three verses.

Tomas el Nitri, Magus of the “seguriya” and of all the styles, the best among the greatest singers Andalusia has known, sang it to these words:

*Through that window yonder
Facing on the field
Through It I talked with my girl
whenever I wanted to*

and Manuel Torre after him:

*Let us kneel down and pray
for God has come'round
Going to take him in, my
ma, pride and joy of my heart*

THE CABAL
OR CABALES

*“Andalusia is the home of
penitence,
of banished angels”.*

As the lyrical genius of Andalusia continues forming Cante by the ritual canons, it improvises variations, looks for other, more flexible courses for the expression of its emotion, something that would give it a charm without disturbing the harmony of its frandiose and sober architecture. And it opens windows to the sea, to the fields, to the mountains, so as not to suffocate in the shadows. And the lyrics are fertilized, saturated with air, sun, sky and Andalusian scenery.

The cabal or cabales enters as a style of Cante Through the "siguiriyas" and is like a small more modest siguiriya with a certain special modulation that softens its essen-

tially primitive crudeness. It is a style for those initiated in the secrets of the “deep” and one expression more of Andalusian emotion that remained in the memory of the great masters.

THE SERRANA

Another old, traditional and rustic style that is born among the brambles and that goes along taking on distinction, growing, between a murmur of dry winds and steep steams of freezing water. It is a style that asks widened horizons and deepened abysses, to be cast to the wind from the nearest shepherd's path or smuggler's short-cut. Witness how the primitive rhythm, plain and a thousand years old, is poured into different moulds and comes out in a multitude of musical forms, melodic shapes interpreting the scenery and the soul of each part of Andalusia. The serrana, with its country aroma of lavender and thyme, is the wild woman of Andalusian song who comes to the county fair along with her

husband's nags. Voice of the mountains,
meadowlark of song.

*A taverness
is the flowers that perfumes
—is the flower that perfumes—
the whole mountain range
—the whole mountain range—*

*She's so very pretty
that the mountains call her
—that the mountains call her—
our little Madonna
—our little Madonna—*

THE FANDANGO

*“The Andalusian has always
been emperor of the fabulous”.*

Don Juan of Andalusian song, the most popular, scandalous and anarchistic of the styles. Huelva's contribution to Great Cante.

It was born in the fields and villages, dreamer and adventurer, determined and arrogant. In the city it becomes refined, learns to dress properly, to polish its style and personality, only then discovering its possibilities of opening unseen horizons to the old Cante.

From Alosno to geographically all of Andalusia, everywhere it is adopted and catered to like a guest of honor. It is the revolution of song and dance and in dance

its boldness reaches such a point that royal ordinance and ecclesiastical authority must intervene to clip the wings of this young dandy.

In its oldest form, such as that sung by Lucena and Valverde del Campo, it was in six-eight slow time and composed in minor keys with a major trio, though sometimes the whole piece would be in a major key. Later it was written in there-four time and as such has come down to us, continually renewed by the voice of each singer and by adaptations to the taste and style of the principal schools of Cante, in original creations such as that of Juan Breva who took the initiative to baptize a fandango with his name, and in the diversity of melodic and rhythmic inflexions with the typical air and accent of each region. And from it other modalities arose, born from love-affairs with the most beautiful verses in Andalusia, outstanding among which are "verdiales", already beginning the transition of Great Cante, appropriately said, to the smaller of flamenco.

Here, unlike in the other styles, the voice has no guidelines by which to enter or leave, and the guitar invariably stands out, choosing the note on which to start the song. The introduction is improvised, somewhat like a bull-fighting stunt, then the song goes by pattern, only to end in another flourish.

THE MALAGUEÑA

*“Andalusia has always
needed dark-tinted
mirrors to see her reflexion”.*

And Cante arrives in Malaga with the airs of a fandango, drunken with Andalusia, matured by experience, emotion and rhythm, and finds her in the blue miracle of evening, beautiful and sad, her eyes filled with dreamlike boats and distance, looking at herself in the sea...

And it falls in love with the lovely vision, in a whimsical love, a romantic dreaminess that harbors something fatal. It comes from the heart of the earth, from the depths of night, from a passion beyond comprehension, trying to find itself, and at her sight experiences a strange tenderness that cries and sings to her in its heart.

What are you pondering in the sea, girl
of skies? My love and my cares.

In the green water, your black shadow
and my white one...

Turn your eyes from the sea, girl of
moonlight.

And the Malagueña is born, passionate
and nostalgic, and it has a feeling like a
lacerating pain sharpened by thin impalpable
knives of love and sadness driven into
the soul. Its oldest musical form was the
Malagueña plucked out on the guitar. But
the malagueña as it is sung and danced
today is as a starry illumination in the sky
of Andalusian Cante, in unforgettable
voices: Juan Breva and el Canario, Perote
and el Niño de Pomares, la Trini, el Mellizo,
Fosforito who knew like no one else how
to sing the long malagueña— and Chacon,
Don Antonio if said solemnly without
nicknames, as os befitting an ambassador of
song.

This is the source of the spring that runs
off in three directions, the rondeña, the

murciana, and the "half-granaina", three styles, · three landscapes where music becomes fire, velvety breeze and crystal tears...

*Since the day we first met
My heart has wept blood
I wish I could die
For my pain is too great
And I can't live this way.*

THE PETENERA

*"An Andalusian is one who walks
(anda) in light (luz) but with
his soul clouded by
somber thoughts of love and death".*



The lyrics come from Paterna, a village in Almería. There it grew like a ball of fire, between a whitewashed and cloistered silence of stately old homes and half-shades of a harem with window blinds. Little does it know of the world yet it is pure presentiment and anxiety of love and suffering, wondering over the source and coming of life's Mysteries, the fragrance and thorn of a rose-bush. The torture of blooming and waiting passionately but resigned, for its time to be in the light or in the shade, its turn to taste the pleasure of feeling loved, to fill its life with other life, or to die slowly on a cross of loneliness and thirst.

This is the song of the Paternian maiden, fatalistic and profound, the song of destiny that Andalusia makes her own forever by naming it *petenera*. Eight verses for a love or a pain, and a soul-reaching sigh in the middle of the song. The first two verses are repeated at the end and the third, cut short by the sighed "girl of my heart", repeats itself in the fifth to begin the second stanza. It is sung in six-eight time, composed in alternating measures of three-four.

The *petenera* once went like this:

*He looked me up and down
and then he looked at you
I'm glad to see you
girl of my heart!
Glad enough to see you
but not overjoyed to see me
He looked me up and down
and then he looked at you.*

ALEGRIAS

Cadiz, over-looking sea and sky.
Smalltime Cante, to the rhythm of a boat,
waves and wind. Young figuring of
porcelaine, whistles and sailors' dreams.
Along the walls of Cadiz, while the moon
is bathing, a dazzle of morning stars. The
verse becomes a cabin boy. Love dresses
in white night... in velvet.

* * *

And "joyful" alegrías. Mirabras and
Caracoles, among the styles that were
made to be danced, those sung by Manuel
Cruz Macaca, the singer who made his
song the floorboard for the tapping of the
dance, or who entwined it like shivers in
the waists of the "gypsy" dancers.

TIENTOS

*“Andalusia is written with tears
and blood and sung with
a voice choked with feeling”.*

Here Cante is like a bull in the pastures—a bull pale white with love, a bull blind with anguish, a bull red with pain, a bull black with death— all for an impressive twiri of a cape.

The act in itself is neither important, painful nor glorious, but in it the singer deepens and reinforces his voice and style, puts his temperament and endurance to the test. A length of willow or steel that bends without breaking. Song that needs fortitude, experience and knowledge, that above all needs to be sung with great feeling. Andalusia in its whole being, Cante never has, nor could it have, existed in any place other than Andalusia.

And always, a good strong cigarette and a glass of Jerez wine or sherry. This is the time-honored ritual of singing Cante, respected by all the asters from the days of Tomas el Nitri and the geat Silverio to those of Don Antonio Chacon who, when called on to sing for a group of enthusiasts, would hand out a good brand of cigars and send out for a case of sherry, to add flavor and aroma to the mood before starting. For unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto Cante its own, so that it doesn't turn out "insipid". And let the scholars who expect to find a cat with only three feet, keep on looking.

THE SONG
OF THE MINES

*"The Andalusian knows that
the best way to master
life is by simply ignoring it".*

Tarantas and Tarantos. Linares. The sonorous river of Cante winds back to hear itself, its once and disguised sound, but now its song carries a moving nostalgia of all Andalusia.

Cante is done and it is the history of the philosophy and sensitivity of a people who through its passion and isolation knew how to discover in the poetical emotion of living, the key to its intimate reason for existing, its truth and its road to the eternal.

Tarantas is a deep and strong style, like a breath held for a long time that is let out for a moment only to become

inebriates with sunlight, air, fragrance, an abundance of blues, of fields and olive trees... The rough mineral song of men who work in the innards of the earth, meant to live with them their drama and their adventures.

THE GYPSY
ZAMBRAS



R. Sanderblat

Shall we now enter that unreal world of the gypsies in Granada, universally famous as Sacromonte. It is a gigantic altar of drama, bristling with aguave and prickly pear, that goes along ravines, footpaths and terraces, past the slope of the Olive-tree Ridge facing the Sun Hills, as far as the valley called Paradise, and from the highest of the ancient watchtowers that guarded the city, where now the Archangel St. Michael, navigator of the heavenly bodies, ignites the stars and sets them asail in the nocturnal air.

The white limestone caves that glitter with copperwares perforate the entire hillside. Here the mineral landscape, the

burning and thirsty desert, without trees nor water and naked to sun and storms, is identified and fused with the soul of this primal and enigmatic race of moon and fire, passion and lament, sadness and solitude, dreaming of love-affairs with the wind, to be able to raise a banner flowered with poppies and carry it in a procession, at dawn, along the hill-top paths.

On the road, the zambra festivities: wine, song, rhythmic hand claps and dancing. Higher up, the gypsy children of the vicinity, the "mop-haired" tots with nothing on but a hat. People who make baskets, others who shear lambs and clip dogs, those who fix umbrellas or patch and "truxs" sofa cushions, the tinsmiths, those who work iron and make fireshovels, tongs, nails, camp stoves, coal pans, the traders, the roving gypsies who brown in the sun while contemplating the horizon from a nearby rock. A staff for the men and a sash wound twenty times round to straighten the body; for the women, kerchiefs and bright-colored percales, bows and paper flowers in their hair.

These are the gypsies of Granada, perhaps descendants of those nomads and adventurers of centuries ago who trailed behind the armies of the Reconquest as far as Granada, as to a land long glimpsed in dreams, coming to appease their chimeric obsession, their atavistic restlessness for new skies and scenery, incorporating themselves— though without abandoning their centuries-old customs into the typical Granadian brotherhood, so rich in nuances and contrasts.

Attached to their legendary traditions, to their familiar and closed world, resistant to any attempts of social integration, they keep to themselves, unchanging, both distant and present, through civilizations and time, as if they had no other mission than to be impassive sphinxes on the dust of the centuries and human ambitions.

And it was in Andalusia, melting pot of East and West and scene of Spain's first appearance in world history, that the gypsies finally discovered, in the hint of a popular art saturated with ancestral reminiscences, the style and way in which to

express themselves, a revelation that raised from the dark of their souls, the echo of ancient voices, the consciousness and the profound and nameless emotion of beauty, until it becomes transformed, translated into their temperament, into something special and exclusive, all by the simple yet magical contact with their spirit. And so the most characteristic, original and spontaneous elements of Andalusian art, especially dance, have been fused with the gypsy and handed down from generation to generation: while true Cante, that of creators with genius such as the unsurpassable Tomas el Nitri and Manuel Torre, singers who have sung and felt in the most terrifying way, the mystery of death, loneliness and pain, that long and immensely sad "complaint" of Cante lyrics, has boasted few such followers.

As for the dances of Sacromonte, in their essential and primitive form they were like a recollection, in a gypsy version, of those "zambras" of odalisques who, at the sound of citherns, kettle-drums and flageolets, in the din of voice and hand claps, between pillars and under porticos of



filigree in gardens and marble courts, in pompous mansions, resplendent with opulence and color, entertained the Nazarite sultan in their leisure. Later, soon after the conquest of the city, these "zambbras" were incorporated into the festivities of Corpus, as a homage of the profane to the Eucharistic, and from here they passed very quickly to the domain of the gypsies, to be reborn later inside the caves, temples of their art and of their rites of love and life that carry us back to nebulous and distant times, to the awakening of man and woman to love and destiny.

It is dance that surges from the earth itself, needing such support to shape its rhythm into living sculpture, movement; for it is not a dance with leaps, lightness and twirls that need wide open space but interior like Cante, like a delirium, like a hidden insatiable flame that incites and sets fire to the blood, seeking escape and liberation in movement. It is the cosmic and elemental force of nature, held prisoner, locked up in the body, the contortion and torment of an inflamed

and supplicant passion that intoxicates and consumes itself in its own fire. And in the symbol of fire, besides the incarnation of red, the loneliness of Andalusia and the dreams of the gypsies.

GRANADA IN CANTE



Granada! Music and lyrics that no one has sung. Its melancholy is sky-blue, studded with an immense vision of white clouds, high towers, round moon, tall cypresses, distant stars...

And all alone it comes to view its loneliness and memories in the enchanted waters of the nameless sorrows.

And the pools become silent mirrors to reflect its image, while its secret lament sinks in the shade of the reservoirs where it sleeps as a prisoner and cries its passion to the river, to the fountains, singing its life's tale in verses of crystal-clear water. And all becomes mirage, hallucination, a

fleeting reality that is always running away from itself, and that is recreated new and distinct, in each light, in each moment.

Here Andalusia eddies in the gentle tranquillity of a lover, ecstatic, and shoots up vertically to infinity. And music becomes transparent like the air it breathes and the guitar has the trickling sound of water and evening bells. For that reason is the granadina a song of sighs and nostalgia, forever telling of a lover's longing. For here the scenery is draped in a delicate feminine mysteriousness and we see it through its bride or sultana's veil.

The whole is impregnated with an erotic and dreamy voluptuousness, mystic and sensual, of passionate melancholy. And one loves the scenery as an ideal woman, should she step out of a dream, for in no other way could it be conceived or understood. And it finds in what Andalusian sentiment reaches in Granada its most purified and beautiful expression.

The granadina is an old and popular song with a certain relish typically fan-

dango, a lively and danceable rhythm that nonetheless has special accent of resigned and disguised melancholy, an elegiac tone, that distinguishes it from the other styles, and whose origin probably goes back to the songs that used to be sung in the years after 1492 by the natives of that arabic Granada, now conquered by Castille, who sang to numb their grief, the bitter lament of their inconsolable pain. From the Albaicin opposite the towers of the Alhambra they would gaze —their eyes reddened with tears— at the marvellous city, that Islamic paradise, fantasy and feverish dream of kings and poet architects, reminded in mute reproach of their surrender.

And thus the “half-granainas”, the style created by Chacon and inspired by the malagueña, in which all the marine nostalgia of her sister song is collected and translated into a new and spiritual emotion that sharpens its lament until it resembles a pain, a long sigh of unrequited love.

The best interpretation of the Granadina was that of Frasquito Yerbabuena, nightin-

gale of Granada and Cante. In his voice the dread of being refused cried in secret. In his soul, the passion and anguish of the verse was like a wound, like a fatal disease, incurable. Always humble and natural in his wide and open love of humanity, generous and cordial, smothering, inebriated with his own emotion, treating everyone out of the pure enjoyment of giving, to the fulfillment of his destiny; while his body sheltered the miracle of his song, sensing that it carried in its heart something very serious and great: the cosmic vibration of Andalusia.

He expired one afternoon out of the blue, his smile vanished in its prime. And there was a long hold of silence that no one has broken since.

INDICE

<i>The Martinete</i>	19
<i>The Carcelera</i>	25
<i>The Saeta</i>	29
<i>The Caña and the Polo</i>	37
<i>The Soleá</i>	41
<i>The Siguriya of the Gypsies</i>	47
<i>The Cabal or Cabales</i>	53
<i>The Serrana</i>	57
<i>The Fandango</i>	61
<i>The Malagueña</i>	67
<i>The Petenera</i>	73
<i>Alegrias</i>	79
<i>Tientos</i>	83
<i>The Song of the Mines</i>	87
<i>The Gypsy Zambras</i>	91
<i>Granada in Cante</i>	103