

GAZPACHO DE GUILLERMO

FLAMENCO ON THE RADIO IN SPAIN

Have you ever heard flamenco on the radio here in the United States? There is a local station that plays flamenco occasionally here in Denver. Wouldn't it be nice to turn on the radio at any time of the day and find out what new recordings were coming out, and hear live performances by many different artists! Well, this is now possible in Spain! It took so many years, but finally there is at least one solid flamenco station to listen to. The following report will examine four different stations.

Upon arriving in Madrid, a quick search of both the AM and FM dials proved futile. Could this be true? To come all the way from Colorado with a bulky radio-cassette and find that all they're playing is Stevie Wonder, José Feliciano, Barbara Streisand, Julio Iglesias, Lani Hall, Camilo Sesto, and other Spanish, British, and American pop artists. I have all the respect in the world for these fine artists, don't get me wrong, but I came looking for flamenco.

After about five attempts there it was, flamenco on the radio, one half-hour program of all flamenco. The station's name is "Radio Popular de Madrid" and it is found at approximately 1000 on the AM dial. The program is called "El Mundo del Flamenco" and begins around 8:25 at night or 8:30, when programming goes on schedule. The announcer is Pedro Sáenz and he interviews different artists live, spins their albums, and even does commercial messages to the compás of flamenco records. The program is quite interesting; too bad it's only half an hour long. However, there is a program on the same station beginning at 8:00 pm which plays all Spanish music, and some flamenco may be heard at this time also.

Here's a rundown of the typical program format of "El Mundo del Flamenco": The program begins with some commercials, after which Pedro Sáenz makes a few flamenco announcements; then the guitar of Parilla de Jerez begins to play bulerías, and soon Pansequito breaks in with his cante interpretation; after the recorded version is finished, Pedro does a fancy introduction for Pansequito who is standing by live at the studio of "Radio Popular de Madrid"; Pedro welcomes him to the station and the interview begins. After a little chat the tough questions start to come out: "Could you be considered king of the bulerías?" "No, there are many fine cantaores of bulerías." "Are you a supporter of innovation in the cante flamenco?" "I am a supporter of innovation in the cante, of course..."

The program then changes pace as two guitarists named José Manuel Montoya and Juan de Madrid play a colombiana live at the studio, a few more commercials, Pansequito returns to chat a little more, Pepe Caballero sings a soleá live, and the program comes to an abrupt end.

Although this program is good, there are three stations in Sevilla which feature flamenco. The remainder of this article will deal with them.

The first I'll mention is "Radio Popular de Sevilla" found at around 825 KHz on the AM dial. This station also has flamenco every week night at 8:30 until 9:00. The announcer, Juan José Román, prefers the "more platter, less chatter" approach. It was one cante after another with only a brief introduction for the artists. The time of the year was apparent since Juan José played a good share of villancicos, a type of flamenco Christmas carol.

Another station in Sevilla is "Radio Sevilla". All day long there is pop music and no flamenco. This station is a very important one though since it broadcasts all major live events like the Quincena, or the festivals held outdoors in

the summer in places like Mairena del Alcor or Puerto de Santa María. It was my misfortune to arrive in Sevilla the very last day of the Quincena, held at the "Teatro Lope de Vega". I unpacked my bags and turned on the radio to catch the last 20 minutes of the Quincena, 15 straight days of flamenco performances. I did get to hear the alegrías of Ana María Bueno with El Chaquetón singing and Manolo Domínguez on guitar. After that some type of award was given to Enrique el Cojo and the Quincena came to a close. It is nice to know about this station in advance of your trip to Sevilla. You can tape live things if you cannot attend. Live flamenco has a certain different atmosphere compared to recorded studio flamenco. "Radio Sevilla" can be found at 800 KHz on the AM dial and directly opposite that at 97 MHz in FM stereo.

The third station in Sevilla is "Radio Cadena Flamenco". This is my favorite one since it has continuous flamenco from 7 in the morning until two in the afternoon. At two o'clock it switches to "Radio Cadena Deportiva" featuring sports reports and music. The format is somewhat varied for the flamenco programming, but the main feature is recorded flamenco. However, the recordings do have quite a mixture between old and new flamenco and even live recordings made at night at various peñas and rebroadcast in the daytime.

One morning I decided to set the alarm for seven o'clock just to see if it really comes on that early. After a wait of about five minutes I heard the familiar sound of a stereo tone arm popping onto a record surface, and there was Paco de Lucía playing tarantas. I started to laugh out loud, it was too good to be true. "Here I am in Sevilla; it's flamenco city, no doubt about it. Stevie Wonder doesn't have a chance against Camarón. Streisand will be turned down in favor of Lole. Julio Iglesias will get the 'thumbs down' in favor of Agujetas."

At that time at least, the Paco de Lucía album named "Fantasía Flamenca" was being used to sign on and off. After two or three "toques" by Paco, there were a few words by the morning announcer, Angel Rodríguez, welcoming the listeners to another day of flamenco listening. He stayed on until around 10:00 when he was replaced by a female announcer, whose name I didn't get. She remained on until about 1:00, when a program called "Rincón Flamenco" began. That program was an hour long and went until the sign off and transition to sports news. The "Rincón Flamenco" was an interesting show narrated by José Luis Montoya who gave informative digressions about flamenco artists and history.

During the breaks in between the recordings there was an occasional commercial advertisement for the local newspaper El Correo de Andalucía, and a few other local businesses. Also there was a segment titled "Al pie de la letra," during which some verses would be read to the compás of flamenco solo guitar. Another segment was "Nombres Del Flamenco" in which a short biographical sketch was given about a certain artist. Sometimes there was a greeting to the listeners from the artist who was being featured: Ex.

"Soy Camarón de La Isla y doy un saludo a Radio Cadena Flamenca....y muchas gracias."

"Soy Antonio Chocolate....saludo a todos los oyentes."

"Yo soy Turronero y envío un fuerte abrazo a todos los oyentes de Radio Cadena Flamenca".

Another interesting item was the lottery of flamenco records. The announcer suggested that you call the station at 21-26-93 and offer your opinions about the programming. Then each caller would be assigned a number for the drawing of six flamenco records, and the winners announced later in the program.

This whole format and concept was devised by Miguel Acal. You may have seen his name in some back issues of Jaleo when his record or performance reviews appeared in the form of translated reprints from a Sevilla newspaper. Apparently Miguel knows his flamenco well and has organized it all in the form of this station. Thanks to him, you can now have your flamenco all day long until two in the afternoon. If you have other things to do in Sevilla, you will hear this station as you walk around from place to place. It can be found at 90 MHz on the FM dial.

There was one other station with some flamenco, "Radio Jerez", but I didn't get any other information about it. If you go to other cities throughout Andalucía, you still can

get the "Radio Cadena Flamenca" reception, since the word "cadena" means chain or network.

If you intend to do any recording of this stereo station for your enjoyment when you return home, let me make a few suggestions. Without a good FM antenna the station will distort during loud passages, so its a good idea to do recording in mono if your machine has this option. Also you will find the charming city of Sevilla to be a bit noisy, with plenty of sounds which make it difficult to enjoy radio listening: motorcycles, cars barreling down narrow streets, window shutters, groups of friends, firecrackers, and other unidentifiable things. You may want to do much of the recording with the volume turned off, so you can hear it later in a non-"cachondeo" environment.

-- Guillermo Salazar

BOOKS BY DONN POHREN AVAILABLE AGAIN

Updated versions of books by Donn Pohren are now available. Two of these classics have been extensively revised to include information about today's flamenco.

The Art of Flamenco

The fourth edition (the third was in 1972) of this book has been thoroughly revised to include up-date information on recordings, flamenco instruction, summer seminars, publications, guitar sheet music, etc. Many new photos.

\$16.95 for surface mail; air mail, add \$2 for Europe, \$5.50 for America and Africa, \$8.50 for Oceania and Asia.

Lives and Legends of Flamenco

The first edition of this book (1964) has long been out of date and has now been revised. A supplemental section will up-date flamenco history and discuss the new generation of artists. Many new photos.

Not quite ready for publication, write if you are interested in being notified when the book is ready for mailing.

A Way of Life

The story of the Pohren's experiences in Morón de la Frontera and the flamenco personalities they came to know.

Hardcover: \$12.95 including surface mail; air mail add \$1 for Europe, \$4.50 for American and Africa, \$6.50 for Oceania and Asia. Soft cover: \$8.95 including surface mail; air mail, add \$1 for Europe, \$3.50 for America and Africa, \$5.50 for Oceania and Asia.

Write to:

Society of Spanish Studies
Apartado de Correos 83
Las Rozas (Madrid)
Spain

JALEO THANKS THE FOLLOWING CONTRIBUTORS:

Linda Carlson	- Gift Subscription
John W. Scott	- Gift Subscription
Antonio Houser	- Gift Subscription
Ricardo El Morito	- Gift Subscription
Dr. Harvey List	- Donation



THE SHAH SPEAKITH

THE SHAH REVIEWS

JOSE MOLINAS BAILES ESPAÑOLES

PRESENTED MAR. 9, 1985

JOSÉ MOLINA

WITH

DANCERS AURORA REYES CLARA MORA ESTER SUAREZ
SINGER PEPE DE CADIZ
GUITARISTS GERARDO ALCALÁ AND BASILIO JORGES

Mr. Molina's effort belonged not in Carnegie Hall, but in a cabaret. He is the only performer we have ever known to use canned music in a concert hall of such prestige and before an audience of such discernment. If one pretends to dance the music of De Falla or Albéniz in a grand concert hall, one should be dancing to a complete and competent orchestra, of which there are several in the New York area. Leave the taped version for the rehearsal studio.

This small troupe was swallowed up by the immensity of the stage, which was utterly bare of any decoration or stage set whatever. The sounds of both music and footwork were lost in the cavernous spaces of the hall. Clearly the group was "out of place" in more than one sense of the phrase.

Mr. Molina has proven once again that he has no talent for choreography, not the slightest feeling for fitting appropriate movement to music. He and his three ladies danced chorus style through much of the program, all four of them executing exactly the same steps at exactly the same time in exactly the same androgynous style. Three wore dresses, one wore pants; otherwise there was little to distinguish one from the other.

Mr. Molina's stage presence is too cute and frivolous (this in a man approaching 50 years of age), his arms are weak, his hips hyperactive, and his movements independent of the requirements of the music. He might as well have been doing gymnastics. His idea of partnering appears to be a man and a woman dancing, each alone. There was no intensity in his partnering, no male supremacy, no play of tension, no drama.

The ladies of the troupe were quite competent and interpreted well "Asturias" and "Bolero" choreographed by Mariano Parra. As for "La Boda de Luis Alonzo," poor Luis Alonzo would never have gotten married had he known what this troupe would do to the exciting music of his wedding celebration.

The flamenco numbers were competently if unremarkably accompanied by cantaoor Pepe de Cadiz and guitarists Gerardo Alcalá and Basilio Jorges.

That some of the audience were moved to give this garbage a standing ovation should surprise no one. There are people in New York who will applaud a chain-snatching, and whoever paid twelve to twenty dollars to see this mess certainly got mugged. Molina reached the apogee of his talent six or seven years ago and began a slow and steady decline from which he appears unable to recover. Sic transit gloria mundi.

