FLAMENCO: HISTORY, ELEMENTS and PROTAGONISTS

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ORIGINS OF FLAMENCO:

The birthplace of flamenco is Andalusia, and more specifically the line formed by the cities of Seville, Xerez and Cadiz.

In this area, the Arabic, Christian and Jewish cultures were mixed for centuries; in the 15th century, the Gipsy culture would join to them.

From this cultural fusion, the elements that make up flamenco art would emerge little by little, and by the 18th century, it sounds already very similar to how we know it nowadays.

Later, the *Cantes de ida y vuelta* would be born, from the influence of Latin American music: our songs sounded there and returned modified enriching what we already had.
THE STAGES OF THE HISTORY OF FLAMENCO

1. DARK STAGE (18th - Mid-19th century)
   - At this time flamenco is a private art that takes place only in homes, taverns and private parties.
   - Singers: El Planeta, El Fillo, El Tío Luis ...
   - Songs: deblas, martinetes, tonás, playeras ...

2. STAGE OF CAFÉS CANTANTES (Mid 19th-1920s)
   - Flamenco is professionalized in venues that offer flamenco singing, playing and dancing shows. Silverio Franconetti’s was one of the most famous cafes.
   - Singers: La Niña de los Peines, Enrique el Mellizo, Antonio Chacón...
   - Songs: tangos, soleás, bulerías ...
3. STAGE OF THE FLAMENCO OPERA (1920-1955)
   - In 1922 several artists and intellectuals try to promote flamenco, creating the National Contest of Cante Jondo.
   - Singers: El Niño de Marchena, Pepe el de la Matrona, Antonio Molina, Juanito Valderrama…
   - Dancers: Pastora Imperio, Carmen Amaya…

   - The interest in flamenco resurfaces and numerous festivals are organized throughout the Spanish geography.
   - Singers: José Mercé, Enrique Morente, Camarón de la Isla…
   - Guitarists: Paco de Lucía, Manolo Sanlúcar…
   - Dancers: Antonio Gades, Cristina Hoyos, Farruco…
5. **CONTEMPORARY STAGE (1985- Present)**

- Flamenco merges with other musical styles, such as **jazz**, **rock** or **pop**.
- **Singers**: Arcángel, Miguel Poveda, Estrella Morente, Carmen Linares...
- **Guitarists**: Tomatito, Raimundo Amador, Vicente Amigo...
- **Dancers**: Sara Baras, Antonio Canales, Joaquín Cortés...
THE ELEMENTS OF FLAMENCO: SINGING, PLAYING AND DANCING

SINGING (*EL CANTE*):
To sing flamenco you don't need any particular voice timbre, anyone can sing flamenco. But it does require a specific vocal technique, with resources that make the song sound *aflamencado*: *jipíos*, *quejío*, vibrato, melismas, etc ...

Flamenco singers are known as *cantaores/as*.
PLAYING *EL TOQUE*:
The instruments used to play flamenco are varied, but definitely the most important is the FLAMENCO GUITAR.

Unlike the classical guitar, the flamenco guitar has the strings closer to the neck and its body has less depth, which makes its sound softer, so as not to eclipse the singing.

These are different techniques of the flamenco guitar: strumming, plucking, tremolo and percussion on the guitar body.

Paco de Lucía

Tomatito, Niño de Pura and Manolo Franco
Other essential instruments in flamenco are those of PERCUSSION:

**FLAMENCO PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS**

**CONVENTIONAL**
- FLAMENCO BOX
- CASTANETS
- OTHERS

**NOT CONVENTIONAL**
- ANISETTE BOTTLE
- METALLIC MORTAR

**CORPORAL**
- CLAPPING
- STAMPING

**For specific flamenco styles**
- TAMBOURINE
- CANE
- DRUMS
- DARBUKA

**Imported from other genres or cultures**
- Only hands
- Hands hitting the body

**FLAMENCO PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS**

The flamenco box

Paco de Lucía explains the origen of the flamenco box

Flamenco and percussion
DANCING (EL BAILE):

Flamenco dancing is mainly characterized by passion and expression of feelings. To achieve this, the dancer uses his/her whole body: he/she moves hands and arms, swings waist and hips, hits the ground with his/her feet and even changes the expressions on his/her face.

Among the most cheerful and fast dances, bulerías, alegrías, tango or sevillanas stand out; among the slowest and most emotional, we can mention the seguiriña, the soleá or the farruca.

Flamenco group: singing, playing and dancing

Flamenco dance shoes (high heels in women, boots or closed shoes in men) have nails at the tips and heels to reinforce the percussive sound on the floor.
THE STYLES (PALOS) OF FLAMENCO

We know each of the flamenco singing styles as "palo", depending on its structure, its meter, its origin, its type of accompaniment, its lyrics, etc.

There are more than 50 different palos, but many are very similar to each other and some derive from others.

Among the main flamenco palos we can highlight the following:

- **Soleás or soleares**
- **Alegrias**
- **Bulerías**
- **Seguiriyas**
- **Fandangos**
- **Sevillanas**
- **Tangos**
- **Cantes de ida y vuelta: rumba, colombiana, milonga…**

12 beats meter

Triple meter

Duple or Quadruple meter