

Flamenco Theory

What Beginners Need to Know About Flamenco

(but were never taught in the studio)

History of Flamenco

Hundreds of years of Andalusian (southern region of Spain) history that interplays

- **Andalusian**
- **Moorish**
- **Jewish**
- **Gitano (Roma)**

cultures before and after the Reconquest of Spain (1492).



The Romani Trail

Gypsy vs. Roma vs. Gitano

Originated in India, arrived to Spain in 1400's.

Language is Caló (mix of Spanish and Roma) in Spain, Romani in other areas.

In Flamenco, we say Gitano.



In the Beginning...

There was the *cante* (singing)!

Cante was the center of flamenco and stayed within Gitano family settings.



Café Cantantes

Out of the homes and into a performance environment in the 19th century.

Grew to the Golden Age of Flamenco in the late 19th century where the “*cafe cantantes*” flourished in Andalucía.

This is where the **dancer became the major attraction** of the performances.





76. 142

Sevilla.

Café Cantante.

E. Bauckh

Flamenco Today

Andalusian cultural art form → homes, *juergas*. weddings



Flamenco Today



Spanish cultural form → dance academies



Flamenco Today

World Heritage Treasure by UNESCO in 2010 → Flamenco aficionados from all over the world practice flamenco and flock to Spain every year for workshops and studies.





Forms of Flamenco

Casera (home-style) means the kind of flamenco you'll find at homes danced by non professionals at parties or *juergas*

Peña Flamenca is a private organization or club dedicated to flamenco. They have shows that are more informal for their members.

Tablao flamenco which is the type performed at the flamenco restaurants or clubs. These are small venues and tend to be improvised, although there may be some rehearsal for ongoing shows.

Teatro (theater) are the big flamenco productions that you see touring with company dancers, a choreographer and many musicians.



Elements of Flamenco

Cante- singing (cantaor/a)

Toque/Guitarra- guitar (el/la guitarrista)

Baile- dance (bailaor/a)

Cajón- wooden percussion box (cajonista/a)

Palmas- handing clapping (palmero/a)

Jaleos- shouts of encouragement (festerero/a)



Styles

Traditional

Contemporary

Avant Garde

Gitano vs. Dance Academy

And ??????



Elements of Flamenco for Dancers

Marcaje (marking/travel
steps)

Taconeo (percussive
footwork)

Braceo (upper body)

Vueltas (turns)

Palmas (hand clapping)



It all starts with

¡ COMPAS!

*The rhythm

*To be IN the rhythm

*Also, a “measure” of
music

Compás

**Different rhythms (palos)
have different times.**

4's (Tangos, Tientos,
Farruca, etc)

12's (Alegrías, Solea,
Guajira, etc)

5's (Seguirilla,
Martinete)

4 Count Compás

Tangos, Tientos, Farruca,
Tarantos

1-2-3-4

1-2-3-4

1-2-3-4

1-2-3

12 Count Compás

Alegrías, Solea por
Bulerías, Guajiras, Solea

12-1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11

12-1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10

5 Count Compás

Seguirilla, Martinete

1 | 2 | 3 | | 4 | | 5 |

1 | 2 | 3 | | 4 | | 5

6 Count Compás

Sevillanas, Fandangos de
Huelva

1-2-3-4-5-6

1-2-3-4-5-6

1-2-3-4-5-6

1-2-3-4-5

Palos

Palos- rhythms

Differentiated by melody, time,
“aire” (attitude, feeling,)
chords

[Here’s where you play “Name
That Tune!”]

-**Cante Chico**: light song~
Bulerías, Tangos, Alegrías, etc

-**Cante Jondo**: deep song~ Solea,
Seguirilla, Taranto, etc

What's in a Complete Dance?

1. **Letra(s)**: verse of song
2. **Falseta**: guitar melodic solo
3. **Escobilla**: long footwork sequence



Professional Structure

Communication with
musicians in tablao

How many **letras**?

More than 1 letra of
Bulerías/Tangos?

This does NOT apply to
Tangos, Bulerias por
fiesta or Sevillanas!!

Complete Structure

Entire dance

LOTS OF VARIABLES!

- **Falseta** (guitar solo)
- **Salida** (ay, ay, ay)
- **Llamada** (call)
- **Letra** (verse)
- **Llamada** (call)
- **Letra** (verse)
- **Falseta** (guitar solo)
- **Escobilla** (footwork section)
- **Subida** (tempo build up)
- **Bulerías/Tangos/Macho** (fast verse)
- **Estríbillo** (ending chorus)

Let's Watch Flamenco!

Looking for:

Elements of a Dancer-

- Marcaje (marking steps/travel steps)
- Taconeo (footwork)
- Braceo (upper body)

Structure of Dance-

- Letras
 - Falsetas
 - Escobillas
-