

Review from Classical Guitar Magazine by Paul Magnussen

Rincon Flamenco No. 47: Music review

Alain Faucher has been producing first rate flamenco transcriptions for as long as I can remember (which is quite a long time).

So this month we take a look at three books of his transcriptions, all of them following the same format: that is, tablature under staff notation. Even though tab is theoretically redundant for those who read, in practice it enables removal of many of the cabbalistic markings that encumber normal guitar music, and provides a useful cross-check against misprints. All is extremely meticulous, including fingerings for both left and right hands, accent marks and tempo indications.

And so to the specifics:

CANCIONES POPULARES ANTIGUAS by **Frederico Garcia Lorca**

Affedis (ISMN M-707026-12-0) 67 pages

Among Lorca's many achievements is the rescue from obscurity and possible disappearance) of many beautiful folk tunes, which are now well known to Andalucians.

Lorca was of course a pianist. Over the years there have been many attempts to arrange them for guitar, with varying degrees of success: for example, the collection by Ramón Cueto (UME 21714).

These tunes are not - or at least not primarily - flamenco, although melodies can be (and have been) quite successfully incorporated into flamenco forms, for example by Sabicas and Escudero. *Café de Chinitas* makes a nice *petenera* (Paco Peña's version appeared in CG June 2004).

The tunes included here are:

La tarara
El café de Chinitas
Sevillanas del siglo XVIII
Las tres morillas (2 versions)
El Vito (2 versions)
Romance del pastor (2 versions)
Los mozos de Monleón
Los peregrinitos
Debajo de la hoja
Zorongó
Los cuatro muleros
Anda jaleo
Nana de Sevilla
Despierta la novia
Canción albaicinerá

The arrangements are all by Manuel Cano, except for the three labelled 'version 2', which are by Serranito.

Cano (1926 - 1990) was a concert guitarist, scholar, researcher and Professor of Flamenco. Donn Pohren, with his usual directness, described Sr. Cano's playing as 'more classical than flamenco', and it's certainly true that he was better at the *andaluz* styles than the *gitano* ones. His best know recording, still available, is his fine tribute to Ramón Montoya (Hispavox 7 94603 2), played on Montoya's own beautiful Santos Hernandez which Montoya's widow lent him for the occasion.

Less well know are his arrangements of the Lorca tunes, but they're among the most attractive and guitaristic that I've heard. This book alone of the three is unaccompanied by a CD, which is a pity, because Sr. Cano's recordings seem to have sunk: at least I can find no trace of them on the internet.

Several of the pieces use scordatura tunings: 6 have the familiar D bass, 3 have 5th to G as well, and 4 use Rondeña tuning (D-bass +3rd to F#).

These arrangements should be attractive to both classical and flamenco guitarists, requiring no prior knowledge of flamenco rhythms. The Cano arrangements (ie the majority) should be within reach of Grade IV players: the Serranito ones are another matter, and the recordings would be a definite help. *Romance del pastor* and *Los tres morillas* both come from *Virtuosísimo flamenco*, which is still obtainable (if you try hard). I've been unable to run down *El Vito*, but the start of it looks extremely alarming, both before you realise what it signifies, and after.

If you just want a feel for how these tunes go, then Paco de Lucía and Ricardo Modrego recorded them on 1965's *Canciones de García Lorca para guitarra*.

HERENCIA GITANA by **Enrique de Melchor**

Affedis (ISMN M-707026-11-3), 74 pages

Limonera (Farruca)
Candil minero (Taranto)
Marismas (Fandango de Huelva)
Cafetal (Guajiras)
Zaralmondi (Colombiana)
Danza de los Gitanos (Bulería)

Two of the selections are from *La guitarra flamenca*, three from *Bajo la luna* and one from *Arco de las rosas*. However, if you haven't got these albums, you don't need to care, as all pieces are included on the accompanying CD. There are intelligent and perceptive analytical notes in Spanish, English and French.

Enrique's *toque* has moved a long way from his father's. The difficulty level here is well beyond that of the Lorca pieces, and frequently virtuosic. It's certainly beyond my technique to play these pieces with authority at the speed of the recordings, and I would guess beyond most of the prospective buyers too. But that doesn't, of course, mean that you shouldn't want to try.

REY DEL FLAMENCO

by Sabicas

Affedis (ISMN M-707056-05-8), 94 pages

Aires de Puerto real (Soléa)
Zapateado en Re
La Trinidad (Malagueña)
Olé mi Cadiz (Alegrías)
Sentiment gitano (Siguiriya)
Embrujo de Huelva (Fandango)

Sabicas's first solo LP, *Flamenco Puro*, was a landmark in the history of the flamenco guitar. But with *Rey del Flamenco*, six years later, Sabicas reached a new level. The *Zapateado in D* alone has clearly been the inspiration for more subsequent *zapateados* than I can count, and has been the staple of Paco Peña's repertoire for years.

Needless to say, the album is currently unobtainable - in fact, I don't think it's ever been available on compact disc. It's an extra bonus then that, of the original nine tracks, six come with the book's accompanying CD, which is a joy to listen to.

Like all of Sabicas's material, the pieces presented here are extremely guitaristic and fall easily under the fingers, so that many of the *falsestas* are usable by normal human beings, even if the speed is a problem in some. The transcriptions are again accompanied by excellent analytical notes (although this time in Spanish and English only).

It may be, of course, that you consider Sabicas's material old fashioned - which of course it is by modern standards. For the rest of us, though, this book, with its CD, is a treasure. I wish I'd had it forty years ago - it would have saved me a great deal of work!