

Dear Paco,

I'm sharing this work, "Rey de Reyes"¹, with eternal gratitude, as a gift to you for all that you have done for flamenco guitar, flamenco music, music in general and for all of us. You have been a marvelous benchmark for us. You have no idea how many of us have followed your every step and your radiant light that has filled us forever with hope.

There is no other group or artistic discipline in which so many people have been in such overwhelming agreement as to who was the best and greatest practitioner of their art. In the world of flamenco guitar, no one ever doubted it-you were the greatest. It is an honor to have known you.

This work is composed of three pieces:

CALLE SAN FRANCISCO (Alegrías)

Like a whim of destiny, in addition to being your name, it is the name of the street in Algeciras where you were born: Calle San Francisco.² Here I wanted to give expression to the type of flamenco song most associated with Cádiz, the alegrías, imagining that you listened to it as a small child and unconsciously assimilated it and absorbed it almost without realizing it. For that reason, this alegría is based on traditional falsetas, those which we all keep in our memory; but I have tried to incorporate in each of them my own contribution.

ILUSTRACIÓN 17 (Soleá)

Do you remember, Paco? You arrived in Madrid with your family not long after you and Pepe competed in the International Competition of Flamenco Art in Jerez de la Frontera and won those two prizes. Your new home in the capital, located at Calle Ilustración 17, became a direct witness to your development and magnificence. There, moreover, I was lucky enough to take a few classes with your father.

In this work I try to depict that era in which you continued to grow and define your style and your overwhelming personality, always based in tradition, never losing sight of your roots and at the same time breathing new life into flamenco. In this soleá I try to make the traditional sounds quite evident, but I also aspire to introduce new sounds, emulating as best I can what Paco masterfully created during that whole phase of his life-the new sounds that were born in such wonderful works as *Fantasía Flamenca*, *El duende Flamenco de Paco de Lucía* and *Fuente y Caudal*.

COMPÁS FINAL (Rumba)

To end, my dear Paco, I have composed a rumba, simple in its harmonies-I wanted to base it on the traditional flamenco cadence (Am-G-F-E), so that it possessed a certain flamenco feeling, yet at the same time, throughout the piece, the notes are syncopated like your music, always floating in the air in perfect impossible equilibrium.

It was a rumba, "Entre dos Aguas," that ushered you into popularity and to the top, to a fame that you didn't love, and so you searched for more tranquil waters in the Caribbean, which you made your home, where surely you found yourself closer to the Paco of your youth, the one who hid behind the guitar. But, you know what, Paco? You became so large, so incredibly immense, that you could no longer hide behind it.

And in that land, on those beaches that gave you so much peace...it was there that your heart beat for the last time-your *Compás Final*.³

¹ *Rey de Reyes* means "King of Kings"

² *Paco* is a shortened form of the name *Francisco*. Paco was born on "San Francisco Street."

³ *Compás* has two meanings in this case: one refers to the meter of a flamenco song, and the other means "heartbeat." In this way, "Compás Final" can mean "Final Composition" as well as "Final Heartbeat."