

Flamenco Legends by Javier Limón: The Paco de Lucía Project

Wednesday November 1, 2017; 7:30 pm



A Celebration of the Legendary Flamenco Guitarist by his Acclaimed Sextet 50 Years after the Release of His First Solo Album, a Uniquely Personal Tribute to Paco de Lucía, Produced by Javier Limón

Great bandleaders shape their ensembles into their personal instruments.

In the early 1980s, guitarist and composer Paco de Lucía assembled a sextet that, in its instrumentation and jazz-like approach, would forever change the sound of flamenco. It would take the guitarist 20 years to put together another group that would provide him with both the support and push for his talent and his vision.

The nucleus of the band came together in 2004, at the recording of de Lucía's Latin Grammy-winning *Cositas Buenas*, (Good Little Things) and grew into a collection of exceptional young talent including his nephew, Antonio Sánchez on guitar; Alain Pérez on bass; Israel Suárez "Piraña," percussion; Antonio Serrano, harmonica; David de Jacoba, singer and Antonio Fernandez "Farruco" (a/k/a "Farru"), dancer.

With this group, de Lucía (born Francisco Gustavo Sánchez Gomez) toured and performed for the next 10 years. The talented, combustible mix of wisdom and power was best captured in the 2010 double CD *Paco de Lucía En Vivo – Conciertos: Live in Spain*.

But de Lucía died unexpectedly of a heart attack in Mexico on February 25, 2014. He was 66.

His passing seemed to also mark the end of his group. It did not.

The Paco de Lucía Project, created by Grammy-winning producer and composer Javier Limón, a longtime collaborator and friend of de Lucía, brings back together the group for a celebration of Paco and his legacy. Notably, this tour takes place on the 50th anniversary of the release of de Lucía's first recording, aptly titled *La fabulosa guitarra de Paco de Lucía* (The Fabulous Guitar of Paco de Lucia) (1967).

"For us it's a tribute to a genius, a teacher, a partner in so many adventures and someone we loved very much..." says Antonio Sánchez. "In this project each one of us contributes our part to celebrate Paco and his work. Serrano is such a brilliant harmonica player; Piraña is the best percussionist in the history of flamenco; Alain is a tremendous musician and composer and Farru and David are great at what they do."

Sánchez, the son of Paco's older brother, also named Antonio Sánchez, started playing at a very young age under the watchful eye of his uncles, Paco and Ramón de Algeciras, and his cousin J.M. Bandera. (His dad, who died just two months after Paco's passing, is the only of the brothers who did not pursue an artistic career). Sánchez also studied with Juan Manuel Cañizares, another flamenco guitar and composition luminary. Antonio then worked with dance companies and in tablaos (flamenco clubs), most notably the popular tablao Cordobés de Barcelona and in 2010, joined his uncle as a second guitar, replacing then-budding flamenco star Niño Josele.

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"Paco saw me perform only a few times but when he needed a guitarist, someone suggested my name and he hired me," recalls Sánchez. As for the difference between Paco the uncle and Paco the boss, Sanchez asserts: "Paco was always the same, on stage, out on the street or at home. He was very humble and with a great sense of humor. When this group played with him there was a great sense of complicity between all of us — glances, smiles, a knowing wink. There was a lot of communication without words. It felt very much like a family."

That sentiment was, in fact, one of the reasons that inspired producer Javier Limón, who won a Latin Grammy with de Lucía for *Cositas Buenas*, to create the Paco de Lucía Project.

He recalled that while producing *Entre 20 Aguas* (Between 20 Waters), a Latin Grammy-winning album of Paco de Lucía's music performed by a cast of international superstars, he was reminded that "Paco had created a new sound with his first group, and another with this band, because it's made of musicians from a different generation than his — he had arrived at a different approach to composing and to a different sonority. And I kept thinking: why are we throwing away a sound that took so many years and so much work to create? And the other reason is emotional," he continued. "For all of us to get together for Paco and remember moments and stories from the concerts and the tours is such a joy."

On stage, de Lucía gave his band "a lot of freedom," said Sánchez.

"With his first sextet he had to create everything from zero, there were no models," he said. "The members of our band grew up listening to Paco, so we arrived with our homework done. The dynamic was different."

Perhaps mirroring Miles Davis's approach, who famously told his musicians he paid them "to rehearse on stage," de Lucía didn't rehearse his band, recalled Sánchez. It was a strategy that created a creative tension, that "in performance, forced us to be more in-the-moment," he said. And after all, he noted, "the language of a group is not made of words but of listening, of paying attention and taking chances."

For this tour, the program will consist of de Lucía's jewels such as "Ziryab," "Canción de Amor," and "Entre dos Aguas," as well as original music by the members of the band.

"I take carrying on Paco's music with great humility. It's a great challenge," said Sánchez who, by carrying Paco's family name and being the guitarist in the group, has the added burden of "playing Paco." "The name is a burden only if you don't study, if you don't apply yourself and work. I come from a very humble family. That doesn't affect me. As a guitarist, it falls on me to present his work, but this project is by all of us. The important things here are the music and the group."

LINEUP:

Antonio Sánchez (guitar)
Antonio Serrano (harmonica)
Alain Pérez (bass)
Israel Suárez "Piraña" (percussion)
David de Jacoba (vocals)
Antonio Fernández "Farruco" (dance)

For tonight's performance Antonio Serrano will be replaced by Tali Rubinstein (recorder)

BIOS



ALAIN PÉREZ (bass) was born in Trinidad, Cuba and his early musical studies included classical guitar and piano. His early Cuban musical credits included recordings with Chucho Valdés and Issac Delgado, and he was part of the "Cuba Team" all-stars that toured Europe in 1998. He made his recording debut with Paco de Lucía in 2004 on the Latin Grammy-winning CD *Cositas Buenas* produced by Javier Limón. Pérez has also collaborated with Celia Cruz, Enrique Morente, Paquito D'Rivera, Chick Corea, Diego el Cigala, Jerry González and many others, and released a number of solo recordings, including the 2015 CDs *El Alma del Son: A Tribute to Matamoros* and *Hablando con Juana*.



ANTONIO SERRANO (harmonica) is a Madrid native who studied harmonica from the age of 7. He studied under the great Larry Adler, with whom he first achieved international recognition on the European concert stage. His studies have ranged from classical to blues, jazz and pop. He has played or recorded with Toots Thielemans and Wynton Marsalis, and performed original classical concertos for harmonica, as well as arrangements of Gershwin, Piazzolla, and others. He and Paco de Lucía are credited with introducing the harmonica to flamenco when Serrano joined the guitarist's ensemble in 2004. He has released 11 solo albums, including 2012's *Harmonious*. (For this evening's performance he will be replaced by Tali Rubinstein)



ANTONIO SÁNCHEZ (guitar) was born in Madrid in 1984, introduced to the flamenco guitar at a very young age by his uncles, Paco de Lucía and Ramón de Algeciras, and his cousin J. M. Bandera, and studied under Juan Manuel Cañizares. His career started in the flamenco tablaos of Madrid and Barcelona, and he

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has toured with the flamenco ballet companies of Antonio Marquez and Domingo Ortega. He joined Paco de Lucía's group over a decade ago as second guitarist, and has toured with him throughout Europe and North America.



DAVID DE JACOBA (vocals) is considered one of the most important young flamenco artists in the world today. His debut album *Jubileo*, produced by Lucky Losada and Carlos de Jacoba, was nominated for "Best Album by a New Singer" at the Flamenco Hoy Awards. The CD featured a who's who of flamenco stars, from Pepe Habichuela

and Vicente Amigo to Juan Antonio Salazar and Tomatito. Paco de Lucía chose David to accompany him during his last four years of touring. David's credits also include collaborations with flamenco greats Enrique Morente, Joaquín Cortés, Sara Baras, Niño Josele and Duquende, as well as leading figures in Latin jazz such as as Giovanni Hidalgo and Jerry González.



ISRAEL SUAREZ "PIRAÑA" (percussion) is one of the most renowned cajón (box drum) players in the world. He began his career with the singer Niña Pastori and has performed with a panoply of major stars including Vicente Amigo, Sara Baras, Antonio Canales, Arcángel, Luz Casal, and Buika, as well as American pop artist

Lenny Kravitz, Portuguese fado star Mariza, and Latin pop singers Ricky Martin and Alejandro Fernández. Piraña (whose nickname refers to the ferocious piranha fish) has toured and recorded in Paco de Lucía's ensemble for over ten years, a special honor given De Lucía's groundbreaking role in introducing the Peruvian cajón to the traditional flamenco ensemble.



FARRUCO (dance) is the brother of the great dancer Farruquito. Born Antonio Fernández Montoya in Seville in 1988, he took his famous grandfather's artistic name, Farruco, as his own. He made his debut in the international flamenco scene in Berlin at the age of 2 and made his US debut in 2001 in his brother's show

Farruquito and Family. In 2006 he premiered his first solo show, embarking on a world tour that included New York City Center. His credits reach beyond flamenco, including performances with Beyoncé, Bjork, Marc Anthony and Paulina Rubio. He toured his second choreographed work *Los Farruco* from 2008-2009, during which he found time to write music and lyrics for Tomatito, Los Makarines, and for his brother's flamenco show *Puro*. In 2010 he joined Paco de Lucía's company, performing over 100 shows worldwide with the guitar legend.



TALI RUBINSTEIN (recorder) Tali is an internationally acclaimed musician, singer and composer from Israel who graduated from Berklee School of Music in Cambridge, MA in 2014, and is now based in New York City. She has performed with a wide range of musicians including

Latin artists Alejandro Sanz and Tomatito as well as Jewish musicians ranging from the great Moroccan-born singer Emil Zrihan to Idan Raichel and Anat Cohen. Her collaborations with Javier Limón's Casa Limón label have included a duet CD with Tal Even-Tsur "Tal y Tali" and the Paco de Lucía tribute CD *Entre 20 Aguas*. She tours regularly in the US, Europe, Middle East, East Asia and South America, playing in major concert halls and festivals around the globe.

JAVIER LIMÓN (producer) A graduate of the Madrid Royal Conservatory, where he studied classical piano, oboe, and guitar, Javier Limón began his career as a composer, working with various flamenco artists. Raised in Spain, he traveled to New York City at an early age to train in American arts schools. After meeting Bebo Valdés and Jerry González, Limón began working in Latin jazz and with Cuban musicians in addition to working on flamenco. In 2004, Limón was awarded the Latin Grammy for Producer of the Year for his work on five records: *Lágrimas Negras* by Diego el Cigala and Bebo Valdés; *Cositas Buenas* by Paco de Lucía; *El Cantante* by Andrés Calamaro; *El Pequeño Reloj* by Enrique Morente; *Niño Josele* by Niño Josele; and the multi-artist collection *Tributo Flamenco a Don Juan Valderrama*. In 2009, Limón won a Grammy Award for Best Latin Jazz Album for recording *Juntos Para Siempre*, a series of father-and-son piano duets by Bebo and Chucho Valdés. Limón has combined several professional occupations in the worlds of art and communication. Although he has mainly focused on composition and the production of albums, film scores, and television shows, his work as a communicator and teacher is equally impressive. He is currently the Artistic Director for Berklee School of Music's Mediterranean Music Institute.



Photo by Luis Malibrán