

Paco de Lucia – Flamenco Guitar Virtuoso

Written by bluelover
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The training ground for a flamenco guitarist, De Lucia once said, *"is the music around you, made by people you see, the people you make music with. You learn it from your family, from your friends, in la juera (the party) drinking. And then you work on technique. Guitarists do not need to study. And, as it is with any music, the great ones will spend some time working with the young players who show special talent. You must understand that a Gypsy's life is a life of anarchy. That is a reason why the way of flamenco music is a way without the discipline, as you know it. We don't try to organize things with our minds; we don't go to school to find out. We just live... music is everywhere in our lives."*

Paco de Lucia

Paco de Lucia was born Francisco Sanchez Gomez on 21 December 1947, the son of flamenco guitarist Antonio Sanchez, who was of Gypsy origin. He took his stage name in honour of his mother, Lucia Gomes.



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"I grew up with my family in a gypsy neighborhood. There was music all day long until late in the night. My father was a guitar player and composer, my two brothers Ramon and Pepe became musicians. When you hear music every day it becomes like milk that you drink and that you need every day. And even before I started to play an instrument, I knew all the rhythms and was able to distinguish the falsettas' in the compositions."



Gypsy Neighbourhood

Mastering the art of flamenco guitar by his 11th birthday, he made his public performance debut on Radio Algeciras in 1958. A year later, he received a special award at the Festival Concurso Internacional Flamenco de Jerez de la Frontera. Heralded as a child prodigy, de Lucia was invited to join the flamenco troupe led by dancer José Greco at the age of 16. He remained with the group for three years. A turning point in de Lucia's musical development came while on tour with Greco's troupe in North America. Meeting Sabicas, the first flamenco guitarist to tour the world, he was instructed to pursue his own style of playing. Although he remained tied to traditional flamenco on his first two solo albums – “La Fabulosa Guitarra de Paco de Lucia” in 1967 and “Fantasia Flamenca” in 1969.



Flamenco

In 1968, de Lucía met and first heard the flamenco singer **Camarón de la Isla**. *"Discovering Camarón was, for me, like the Messiah, like when God come to the Earth. It was something incredible, a magic artist. Nobody understood him at that time... I never listened, in my whole life, to something like that."*

They collaborated on several albums over the next years, until Camarón's untimely death in 1992.



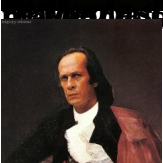
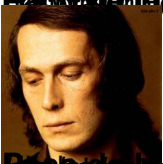
Camarón de la Isla

Paco's albums such as "El Duende Flamenco de Paco de Lucía" and "Almoraima" reinvented traditional flamenco. The early influences of the traditional players became increasingly less apparent as de Lucía embraced jazz and other influences, creating his own voice and distinct style, yet never venturing too far from his roots. His 1976 album "Almoraima" featured significant Arabic and jazz influences especially in the bulerías composition of the same name; the name Almoraima is of Arabic origin from the Moorish period.

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