

# Flamenco workshop

## Ian Davies



### Cantiñas (Part 1)

The *Cantiñas* are the flamenco songs from Cádiz which include alegrías, romeras, mirabrás and caracoles, the latter having the peculiarity of its best known traditional verses depicting the streets of Madrid and mentioning the "Café de la Union" where famous people from the bullfighting scene would gather. I think it reasonable to assume that the Gaditanos (natives of Cádiz) would be singing this of their experiences in Madrid. One verse says how good the great "Alcalá Street" looks with the Andaluces walking up and down it. All four of these *Cantes* have exactly the same *compás* but vary in their melodic structure. The *Alegrías* are played in either E or A major according to the vocal range of the singer and are the most popular, but for some strange reason very nearly all of the younger singers today use E major. The same applies to the romeras and mirabrás but not to the caracoles which are always in C major. There was at one time another cante in the group of *cantiñas* called *rosas* but all that can be remembered is that it would be in E major and slower than the others, singing of more serious topics; this cante having now completely disappeared and its verses having been mixed in with those of the alegrías. One more unusual variation on the *Alegrías of Cádiz* is the *Alegrías de Cordoba* in - E minor.

### The Compás

There is very little I can say about the *compás* of the *cantiñas* as it is identical to that of the *soleá* covered in my previous articles; it does however move at a faster pace. Everything said about the *soleá* including that of the important tap on beat two of the *cierre*, equally applies to all of the *cantiñas*. I will deal with the alegrías in more detail as this is the most popular and the one usually danced. The other *cantiñas* can of course also be danced but I feel that, at least nowadays, this is often done just for the sake of change, with the dance being virtually indistinguishable from an alegrías. The one fact everybody seems to agree, is that the alegrías dance contains a *silencio* (an example of which will follow), whereas the other *cantiñas* should not. Rhythmically they all need to possess a flowing swing or bounce, *gracia* is the word, which makes these dances of Cádiz so suitable for female interpretation. A strong criticism I have of the women dancing these *bailes* in modern times is that the majority are obsessed with the quantity and strength of their footwork, paying very little attention to the rest of the body or the arms, thus rendering their dance void of any smooth aesthetic grace, the essential ingredient. Their footwork should be delicate in contrast to the more powerful zapateado which is for the men, but not to the extent that some take it just to coax out maximum applause from an audience that relates quality to perspiration. Things such as these mis-

educate the general public who either don't like it because it seems to be a lot of loud stamping on the floor, or do like flamenco dancing but for the wrong reasons, which is possibly even worse! It is soul destroying to see people leave superb artistry commenting "She was rather overweight". In flamenco there is absolutely no limit to either weight or age. You will at some time or other find dancers using castanets. These instruments which demand a lot of practice to play well, are not part of flamenco but belong to the Spanish folkloric dances of most of the country, including Andalucía. Some dances from Andalucía such as the *Fandangos de Huelva*, *Tanguillos de Cádiz* and *Sevillanas* which are normally termed as flamenco are in fact folk dances which have been taken and used by flamenco artistes to broaden their repertoire; they do use castanets. The pure flamenco art with its *Soleá*, *Seguiriya*, *Bulerías*, *Alegrías* etc. should never use them and only have done so to "give the public what they want" in the name of commercialisation.

### The structure

The *Alegrías* when danced professionally has, to a greater extent than any other baile, adopted a "standard" structure or construction, built from the respective sections which are, in order: Guitar introduction, *Entrada* of cante followed by one verse or two, *Silencio*, *Estríbillo* of cante, *Escobilla* and ending *Por Bulerías*. A short *Escobilla* is often used to lengthen the *Silencio*.

The *Entrada* of the cante is an introductory sort of warm-up, lasting normally only a couple of compases and without words sung to "Ay" or a certain traditional melody to "Tiri ti tran" which I will explain further in part two next month.

The *silencio* is a slow passage played in the respective minor key which starts with a characteristic five chords, is always six compases long and ends reverting back to major in the final *compás*. It can all be played in a major key but this is more unusual. Its *compás* is that of the *Alegrías* and not a straight  $\frac{3}{4}$  as it may seem at first. The *estribillo* for the cantaor, translated into English as "Chorus" or "Refrain", is a distinct four *compás* verse, the most popular being:

Cuando te vengas conmigo	}	1
A donde te voy a llevar		
A darte un paseito	}	2
Por la muralla real		
Por la muralla real		
Por la muralla real	}	3
Cuando te vengas conmigo		
A donde te voy a llevar	}	4

The *escobilla* is the section dedicated to the dancers footwork and is accompanied on the guitar by the melody:



You will notice the strange timing but this is no mistake. One must remember that the dancers footwork follows the *Alegrías compás* and would originally have been accompanied by straight *Alegrías* rhythm on the guitar; it was for the dancer

to make up the syncopated rhythmic variations. It is my view that the melody in question was inspired by a very old and simple step sequence (which is still in use today) and therefore seen as its accompaniment is perfectly logical but if separated

from the dance and treated out of context simply as a melody, can be misinterpreted. As you can see, the melody starts on beat two of the first  $\frac{3}{4}$  bar; it is interesting to note that some dancers will actually accentuate beat one with a step. As is often the case in flamenco, accented notes are made conspicuous precisely by their absence. The escobilla has enormous scope for improvisation by both dancer and guitarist; the perfect situation for the guitarist to "feed" off the footwork for ideas, either copying the rhythms or directly contrasting with them. Under the more sophisticated conditions of theatrical production, one can compose falsetas to blend with choreography. The ancient melody written above is brought in and used at the guitarists discretion. By the way, escobilla means "little broom", the name very possibly coming from another very old step sequence where the feet sweep the floor in a brush-like manner. Next month I will put

down a few very versatile old falsetas which I have found of a great use for escobillas.

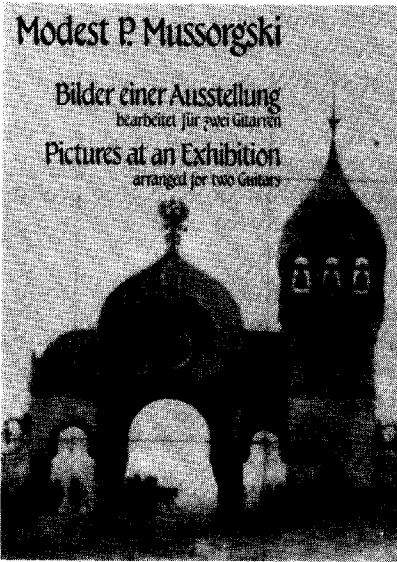
The conventional way to end an Alegrías is by augmenting the speed of the escobilla until breaking into Bulerías. The toque of Bulerías will be of course dealt with in future articles but to end this month I will give an example of a simple traditional silencio for Alegrías. I am using standard musical notation without the addition of an equivalent in cifra, the main reason being that I am deliberately keeping my examples musically simple and therefore very easy to read. I would say that anyone who has never read a note before, would find that a half an hour is all that is needed to learn the sufficient to be able to decipher my musical examples. Even in cifra, I would have to use stems to show time values. It is my intention with this simplicity to allow the essential roots of the music to be exposed and from these one can then build by incorporating one's own technical resources.



**Martin Fleeson**

As we go to press we learn with much sadness of the death of the guitar maker Martin Fleeson. Martin died from cancer of the stomach on the 4th December 1985. We extend our deepest sympathies to his wife and family. Martin was well liked by his fellow makers and players and his bright and cheery personality will be missed by all.





**Modest P. Mussorgski**  
Bilder einer Ausstellung  
bearbeitet für zwei Gitarren  
Pictures at an Exhibition  
arranged for two Guitars

## MUSIC FOR TWO GUITARS

<b>ANONYMOUS</b> Variations on Greensleeves <i>(Scheit)</i>	£2.15
<b>BARTOK, B</b> Duos <i>(Scheit)</i>	£3.25
<b>MARELLA, J.B.</b> Suite in A major <i>(Scheit)</i>	£2.60
<b>MUSSORGSKY, M.</b> Pictures at an Exhibition <i>(Wallisch)</i>	£4.55
<b>SOR, F.:</b> Duo, Op. 34 <i>(Scheit)</i>	£3.25
<b>SCHEIT, K. (arr.):</b> Duos from Shakespeare's Time	£3.90
Danish and Swedish Folksongs	£3.25

**UNIVERSAL EDITION** London showroom: 2/3 Fareham St., Dean St., London W1V 4DU  
Trade department: 38 Eldon Way, Paddock Wood, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 6BE

# Alegrías (Silencio) E minor

For Alegrías in A  
transpose to A minor.

Ian Davies.

♩—92 approx.

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

Golpe

C II

# Flamenco workshop

## Ian Davies



### CANTINAS (Part 2)

This month I would like to point out a very interesting characteristic of 'Cante Flamenco' which involves the rhythmic accentuation of the vocals in relation to the accents of the compás that the guitar and the palmas provide. The unusual mannerism which occurs persistently in all the Cantes is that of some of the singer's phrases being accentuated ahead of the compás and not with it. As an example, I am going to

use the typical *Entrada* for Alegrías which without actual words is sung to 'tiri-ti-tran', as a warm-up for the initial verse to follow. I am going to write down a very 'straight' way it is sung in compás, although of course each singer is at liberty to syncopate in his own personal style; so this is not the only way to sing it, just the straightforward basic way (fig. 1)

Fig. 1

I have placed an asterisk above the notes in question which are accented in the melody of the vocals, clashing with the accents of the compás. This mannerism as I say, can be found in abundance within all of the different Cantes and is an essential factor needing to be correctly placed. Subtleties such as these, understandably can only be perceived by those who can listen and at the same time, through total acquaintance, feel the *compás* running underneath. I think that in any form of music, rhythm needs the active mental participation of the listener to have any effect; where the audience has a natural mental rhythm built-in, gained by being exposed to music from birth.

Those who are unfortunate enough to apparently have no 'sense of rhythm' can only receive pleasure from music through melody. We, who have been born or at least brought up in the Western World, have, apart from the isolated and insignificant occasion, only been exposed to our own western music with its standard time signatures of  $\frac{4}{4}$ ,  $\frac{3}{4}$  etc. and therefore are only 'programmed' to these, so the likes of Indian, Greek or flamenco *compás* do not 'compute'; We keep getting caught out when accents fall when we least expect them and syncopation has no meaning or effect whatsoever. The key is of course being exposed to flamenco *compás* for long enough for it to become a built-in 'body rhythm' and if this has not occurred naturally from birth, it's never too late to start. An involvement with accompaniment, specially of the dances, helps much more than the solo guitar. The active mental participation of the listener that I have referred to, is when he or she knows where accents must fall in a certain time signature (eg. Beat 1 in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time) and therefore can appreciate a

contradiction by the use of syncopation. It is the very listener that adds beats when they do not exist, as if an aural illusion. For example:

The x will be heard in the mind even if it is left silent.

I have noticed that recently Paco de Lucía has been playing with an effect (particularly in bulerías) whereby he ends melodies a fraction ahead of the natural accent thus leaving the space to be filled by the listener's imagination. A simplified example similar to that above would be:

I will now put down a few pretty falsetas which I have often found very useful for *Escobilla* passages when they are running at a brisk pace. Being simple, they do not distract from the footwork and seem to blend in with a great number of different steps. They are I believe from Ramón Montoya.

I have been asked by so many people to add the equivalent *Cifra* tablature that I will do so, but it is very important to read the stems, from the notes; there is a danger if not, of being out of *compás* which would defeat the whole object. I think that *cifra* is of most use when used in conjunction with a recording.

# ALEGRÍAS IN E

IAN DAVIES

$\text{♩} = 160+$

0 2 1 0 4 2 0 2 1 0 0 0 0 0 2 4 0 2 4 5 5

C II

2 4 2 4 5 4 2 4 2 5 4 4 2 4 5 2 4 5 7 7

$\frac{1}{2}$ C IV

0 6 7 0 5 6 4 7 6 5 0 4 6 5 0 7 6 5 2 0 1 2

golpe

0 0 2 4 0 2 4 5 4 2 0 4 2 0 2 1 2 1 4 0 0 2 1

C IV

0 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 5 4 7 5 4 4 4 5 7 4 7 4 5 7 5 4

© Copyright 1986 by Ian Davies

C II



System 1: Treble clef, key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#), 3/4 time signature. The staff contains a melody with a circled 3 in the first measure and a circled 2 in the second measure. The bass staff shows fingerings: 6, 2 2 2 2, 2 2 2 4 5 4, 2 2 4, 5 2 5 2, 4 5 4 2.



System 2: Treble clef, key signature of three sharps, 3/4 time signature. The staff contains a melody with a circled 3 in the first measure. The bass staff shows fingerings: 4, 2 2 0 1, 2 4 0 2 1, 0 0, 0 2, 3 4 0 1, 2 1 2.

$\frac{1}{2}$  C V



System 3: Treble clef, key signature of three sharps, 3/4 time signature. The staff contains a melody with a circled 3 in the first measure. The bass staff shows fingerings: 0 2 4 0, 2 4 2 2 5, 1 0 4, 2 0 2, 0 2.



System 4: Treble clef, key signature of three sharps, 3/4 time signature. The staff contains a melody with a circled 3 in the first measure and circled 2s and 4s in subsequent measures. The bass staff shows fingerings: 0 2 0 1, 0 2 9 9 9, 9 9, 7 5, 2 4 2. Includes the label "gliss." and "C II".



System 5: Treble clef, key signature of three sharps, 3/4 time signature. The staff contains a melody with a circled 3 in the first measure and circled 2s and 4s in subsequent measures. The bass staff shows fingerings: 2 4 2 4, 2 4 10 10 10, 10 10, 9 7, 0 2 1. Includes the label "gliss." and "C II".



System 6: Treble clef, key signature of three sharps, 3/4 time signature. The staff contains a melody with a circled 3 in the first measure and circled 2s and 4s in subsequent measures. The bass staff shows fingerings: 0 2 0 1, 0 2 9 9 9, 9 9, 7 5, 2 4 2. Includes the label "gliss." and "C II".

3  
gliss.  
3  
gliss.  
3

C IV

②  
p p p  
p p p  
②  
p p p

C II

p  
p  
p  
p

2 p 3 p  
3 3 3  
3 golpe p  
p p p  
golpe

p  
3 3  
3 3  
3 3 3  
3