

# SPANISH BAROQUE PROGRAM

## SCENE 1

**Paul Dyer**

Entrada dinámica y ruidosa

**Santiago de Murcia** (1673 – 1739), arranged by P. Dyer & A.J.E. Palmer  
Canarios

{ *A dance [performed with] violent and curt movements of the feet ... with delightful foot-stomping.*

Frank Koonce, *Baroque Guitar in Spain and the New World*

The first piece on the program comes straight from the heart of the Spanish Baroque: an inviting and passionate *canarios* by the composer Santiago de Murcia. A dance popular across Europe in Murcia's lifetime, the *canarios* seems to have originated among the natives of *Las Islas Canarias* (the Canary Islands) which is today an autonomous community of Spain off the coast of north-western Africa. The dance was given its name by early Spanish explorers to the islands, who thought that its movements looked rather like a canary hopping on its perch. The brisk and upbeat dance quickly spread throughout Europe, and this example is by one of the dominating Spanish musical figures of the time. Murcia was a respected guitarist, composer, theorist, and the personal teacher to the Queen of Spain, Maria Luisa of Savoy. This work comes from the *Códice Saldívar No. 4*, a beautiful manuscript which was lost for centuries before being rediscovered in an antique store in Mexico by the historian Gabriel Saldívar y Silva in 1943. While it is unclear how the work first made its way to Mexico, Saldívar made it his life's work to research the manuscript and his theory that Murcia was its author. He died in the back of a taxi on his way to the airport to undertake this research in Spain, but it now seems clear that his theory was indeed correct.

**Tarquinio Merula** (1595 – 1665)

Su la cetra amorosa

{ *And if you want me to sing of new fires and other passions ... I would rival the most songful birds, so sweetly would I sing.*

The aria *Su la cetra amorosa* by Tarquinio Merula takes us across the Mediterranean to Italy. Merula was a noted violinist, receiving his early training in the highly musical town of Cremona, which to this day remains a prominent centre for violin making. Merula is considered a member of the Venetian School, whose most famous composer was Claudio Monteverdi, although Merula is younger and more adventurous in his harmonies and structures. This aria is a kind of *ciaccona*: a Spanish dance in triple metre which features a constantly repeated bass line. In this aria, Merula takes the bass line through a host of different keys, while

the voice soars virtuosically above. The text is highly expressive, telling the story of a lover who has found love again after a bitter heartbreak. Despite her "tortured ... pierced, scorched heart", our scorned lover finds reason to "sing sweetly and blithely" about "new fires and passions".

**Santiago de Murcia** (1673 – 1739), arranged by S. Maiorana & A.J.E. Palmer  
Fandango

{ *The gestures and the attitudes are the most lascivious imaginable. Everything is represented, from the sigh of desire to the final ecstasy; it is a very history of love.*

Giacomo Girolamo Casanova, *on the fandango*

We again visit the music of Santiago de Murcia for this *fandango*, a dance form originating in Spain, usually accompanied by castanets or *las palmas* (hand-clapping). The *fandango* is an extravagant and theatrical dance with an unrestrained and flirtatious character. It is usually danced by a couple, and is in a lively triple metre. The earliest known example is from around the start of the 1700s, and by the end of the century the dance had spread across Europe and become very popular amongst the aristocracy. So well-known had it become that Mozart even wrote a *fandango* in *The Marriage of Figaro*. The dance has a distinctive chord progression, which you will hear in the opening few phrases of Murcia's work, performed on Baroque guitar.

## SCENE 2

**Anonymous** (18th century), arranged by P. Dyer, E. Egüez & A.J.E. Palmer

Muerto estás

{ *This is my favourite piece on the program. It is heartbreakingly beautiful, slow, sincere and pure.*

Paul Dyer

The origins of this piece are shrouded in mystery. It is found in a manuscript known as the *Zuola Codex*, which takes its names from Gregorio de Zuola, a Franciscan who probably penned it in modern-day Peru. Although the codex is one of the earliest examples of documented music originating in South America, its content is largely of European origin and sheds little light on the indigenous music of the continent. While Zuola notes the composers of some of the seventeen works found in the manuscript, he gives no indication of the origin of *Muerto estás*. As a result, some have speculated that Zuola himself may have composed the song, although there is no clear evidence for this in the manuscript. The song, whose title translates as 'you are dead', is an emotional exploration of grief and loss.

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*Muerto estáis, por eso os pido  
El corazón descubierto,  
Para perdonar despierto,  
Para castigar dormido.*

You are dead, thus I beg of you  
Your bare heart,  
To forgive while awake,  
To punish while asleep.

*Si decís que está velando,  
Cuando Vos estáis durmiendo,  
¿Quién duda que estáis oyendo  
A quién os canta llorando?*

If you say that it is watching,  
When you are sleeping,  
Who can doubt that you are hearing  
The one who, crying, sings for you?

**Isaac Albéniz** (1860 – 1909), arranged by S. Maiorana & A.J.E. Palmer  
Leyenda ‘Asturias’

*Leyenda ‘Asturias’ is perhaps the quintessential  
‘Spanish guitar’ piece ... [it] has inspired numerous  
dramatic stories, ranging from biblical thunderstorms  
to devastating earthquakes.*

Stanley Yates, *guitarist*

A contemporary of Claude Debussy, Isaac Albéniz was a Spanish composer whose impressionistic music drew on the folk and traditional styles of his home country. While he was primarily a pianist and never composed for the guitar, many of his works have been arranged for the guitar and are now cornerstones of the classical guitar repertoire. This particular work is the first in a collection of three titled *Chants d’Espagne* (Songs of Spain), and was given the title of *Leyenda* (Legend) by the composer. After his death, however, Albéniz’s publisher collected eight of his works into a *Suite Española* (Spanish Suite), and gave each of them titles after different regions of Spain. This piece was given the title of *Asturias*, a region in the north of Spain, though it has no clear link to the area at all. In fact, its musical content is more reminiscent of the flamenco tradition of Andalucía. This version has been adapted by the guitarist, Stefano Maiorana, for the Baroque guitar, with the addition of other Baroque instruments by the Brandenburg’s Alex Palmer.

## SCENE 3

**Luis de Narváez** (fl. 1526 – 1549), arranged by T. Coelho  
Con qué la lavaré

*This song speaks about old values in Spain and many other countries, when a woman, particularly one of wealthy or noble background, could not marry well unless she was a virgin. This song expresses the despair of a young woman who, either by choice or by force, has lost that virtue ... My heart cries out for this young woman, and in the past I have been moved to tears while listening to this piece.*

Miguel Iglesias, *Spanish singer and translator*

Luis de Narváez was a Spanish composer born in Granada, a historically prominent city in Andalucía. Granada is the home of the stunning Alhambra, an ancient Moorish citadel and palace which existed more or less in its current form during Narváez’s lifetime. It was also the last city in Spain to be conquered by the Catholic monarchs Isabel and Fernando, ending the *reconquista* (reconquest) of Spain from Muslim rule in 1492. While his exact birthdate is unknown, Narváez was born within a few short decades of this power shift in Granada, and Muslim rule was still a very recent memory. With the exception of two minor works, all that survives of Narváez’s work is a six-volume collection of music primarily written for his own instrument, the *vihuela*, an instrument which resembles the guitar. The *vihuela* was usually plucked, however a bowed variant developed in the 14th century which ultimately evolved into the *viol*. This particular work comes from the fifth volume of the collection, and is sung by a woman who feels shame and anguish over the loss of her virginity.

*¿Con qué la lavaré  
la flor de la mi cara?  
¿Con qué la lavaré  
que vivo mal penada?  
Lávanse las casadas  
con agua de limones,  
lávome yo cuytada  
con penas y dolores.*

What will I use to wash  
the flower of my face?  
What will I use to wash,  
I who live in terrible pain?  
The married women wash themselves  
with lemon water,  
I, who am wretched, wash myself  
with shame and pain.

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**Antonio Vivaldi** (1678 – 1741)

La Folia

{ *Vivaldi's variations on the Folia rank among the most popular chamber music works of the Baroque era. It is a brilliant piece in which virtuosity is mixed with counterpoint.*

Johan van Veen, *musicologist*

Although this work is by the immortal Italian master Vivaldi, the *folia* is a dance form with its roots in the Iberian peninsula. The term *folia* means 'madness' in Spanish, and was so called because it often featured frenzied movements and feverish speeds. While it originated as an improvisatory form, by Vivaldi's time it was characterised by a specific progression of chords. Although the *folia* was enormously popular and spread widely throughout Europe, its Spanish roots are strong: it is referred to as the *folies d'Espagne* (madnesses of Spain) in French, and Liszt composed a version of the dance in his *Rhapsodie Espagnole* (Spanish rhapsody). In this *folia*, the chord pattern is stated once, then followed by nineteen variations, which differ in speed, rhythm, style and mood. Paul Dyer has selected fifteen of these variations for this performance, creating a whirlwind tour through the wide range of expressive possibilities of the Baroque.

## SCENE 4

**Traditional Catalan Song**, arranged by A.J.E. Palmer

La mare de Déu

{ *It is a very old song, full of spirituality, both in its lyrics and its melody.*

Pietat Estany, *Catalan historian*

This popular lullaby is from the Spanish region of Catalunya, and is familiar throughout the area to this day. The Catalunya region, whose capital is Barcelona, has a strong national identity and a great body of literature in its native language, Catalan. Catalan lullabies frequently reference the Virgin Mary, and this is a particularly ancient and spiritual example, which in some versions tells the story of Mary's life from childhood through to the Annunciation – when the Archangel Gabriel announced to the virgin mother that she was with child. *La mare de Déu* is now taught to many children in the Catalan-speaking world, and is often sung at Christmas time. While it has been performed by singers of all kinds over the years, this imagination by the Brandenburg returns the melody to its original ancient roots.

*La mare de Déu,  
quant era xiqueta  
anava a costura  
a aprendre de lletra.*

The mother of God  
when she was a child  
would go to school  
to learn how to write.

*Amb son coixinet  
i la cistellet;  
en el cistellet,  
du quatre pometes.*

With her little pillow,  
and her little basket;  
in the basket,  
four little apples.

*Un bocí de pa,  
també avellanetes,  
hi portava nous  
i alguna panseta.*

A piece of bread,  
and hazelnuts too,  
she was carrying walnuts  
and some raisins.

*En feia fusets,  
en teixia veta;  
i amb un coixinet  
en feia punteta.*

She made spindles  
she knitted with ribbon yarn,  
and with a little pillow  
she made bobbin lace.

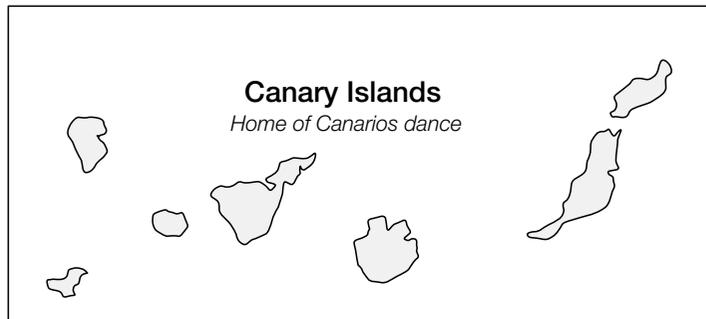
**Anonymous** (c. 1490), arranged by P. Dyer & A.J.E. Palmer  
Villancico 'Rodrigo Martínez'

{ *This piece to me is about giving thanks: it is wholesome, naïve, simple, trusting and innocent.*

Paul Dyer

While the composer of this work is unknown, it most likely dates from around 1490. It is named after Rodrigo Martínez, a nobleman who lived in the 11th and 12th centuries in León, a present-day region of Spain, which was at the time an independent kingdom. This work is a *villancico*, a term which originally referred to a folk song with an *estribillo* (refrain) and *coplas* (stanzas), but now commonly refers to any Christmas carol in the Spanish language. The connection with Christmas is a 20th-century development, however, and this work has no such link. This work comes from the *cancionero de palacio* (songbook of the palace) a Spanish manuscript of Renaissance music which resides in the royal palace of Madrid. The *cancionero* was compiled over a span of around four decades from about 1460 to 1500, a period which roughly aligns with the reign of Queen Isabel and King Fernando. The couple, commonly referred to as *los Reyes Católicos* (the Catholic monarchs) are most famous for the final recapture of modern-day Spain from Muslim rule in 1492, and the imposition of Catholicism across the kingdom.

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**Traditional Catalan Song**, arranged by A.J.E. Palmer  
La dama d'Aragó

{ *This is regarded as one of the most famous songs learned at school in Catalunya – and my father, like many other Catalan musicians, sang it to me as a child.*

Pietat Estany, *Catalan historian*

This folk song dates back to at least the 16th century, and is considered one of the oldest songs in the Catalan popular repertoire. Its origin has been attributed to the ancient craftsmen of Spain's mountainous north-east, where it was supposedly sung while preparing and weaving fabrics. The title of the song translates as 'the lady of Aragon', a region of modern-day Spain which was at the time an independent kingdom. It is believed that the titular lady is Maria of Montpellier, the Queen of Aragon from 1204 to 1213. The legend goes that one night, the neglected Maria slipped into the bed of her husband, King Pedro II, and posed as his concubine in order to seduce him and thus conceive the next king of Aragon, Jaume I. Thus the lady is referred to in the song as *robadora de l'amor* (thief of love). Jaume is regarded as one of the finest kings in Spanish history; he reigned for 63 years, expanded Aragon's territory enormously, and was an influential figure in the development of Catalan language and literature.

*A Aragó n'hi ha una dama que és bonica com un sol;  
té la cabellera rossa, li arriba fins als talons.*

In Aragon there is a lady who is as fair as the sun;  
her flaxen hair flows down to her feet.

*Ai... amorosa Anna Maria, robadora de meu cor,  
ai... de l'amor.*

Ah... the lovely Anna Maria, thief of my heart,  
ah... of love.

*Sa mare la pentinava amb una pinteta d'or;  
sa tia els hi esclaria els cabells, de dos en dos.*

Her mother was combing it with a golden comb,  
her aunt was braiding it, strand by strand.

*Cada cabell una perla, cada perla un anell d'or;  
cada anell d'or una cinta que li volta tot el cos.*

Each hair a pearl, each pearl a golden ring;  
each golden ring a girdle that wraps around her body.

*Sa germana més petita li baixava el lligador;  
el lligador que li baixa és un floc de molts colors.*

Her youngest sister untied her ribbon;  
the ribbon she unties is a bunch of many colours.

*Son germà se la mirava amb un ull tot amorós:  
'no fóssim germans, Maria, mos casaríem tos dos'.*

Her brother looked upon her with a loving gaze:  
'were we not siblings, Maria, the two of us would marry'.

**Santiago de Murcia** (1673 – 1739), arranged by S. Maiorana & A.J.E. Palmer  
Jácara

{ *This piece is sexy, rambunctious, rowdy, and has a directness and commotion to me that perfectly captures Spain.*

Paul Dyer

The *jácara* is a Spanish song form which originates in the *Siglo de Oro* (Golden Age) of Spain. This was a period of enormous artistic and literary development, beginning with the complete expulsion of Muslim rule from Spain in 1492 and covering the height of Spain's political and colonial power for the next 150 years. The *jácara* originated in this period as a ballad about the ruffians, prostitutes, pickpockets and swindlers in the criminal underworld of 17th-century Spanish cities. By the lifetime of Santiago de Murcia, the *jácara* had also become an instrumental musical style. The majority of the *jácara*s of the period were for Baroque guitar, however some examples for two-handed harp also exist. This particular interpretation showcases *rasgueado*, a guitar strumming technique common in the *flamenco* style.

## Improvisation

Passacaglia Andaluz

{ *I define bullfighting as a type of dramatic ballet dance with death. As he would in dancing, the bullfighter must control his movements maintaining the rhythm, not of music, but of danger. On stage, a faux-pas means an interruption of artistic flow; in the bullfighting arena, a mistake could mean the death of the star of this drama.*

Mario Carrión, *matador*

The work is a *passacaglia*, a form which originated in Spain in the seventeenth century. The name derives from Spanish *pasar* (to walk) and *calle* (the street), suggesting its origins as a street dance. The *passacaglia*, like the *ciaccona* from earlier in the program, features a set of variations which develop over a repeatedly stated bass line. The *passacaglia* captured the imagination of many Baroque giants, including Bach, Lully, Pachelbel, Vivaldi and Purcell, who all wrote significant compositions in the form. This example, however, is an improvisatory one crafted by the Brandenburg and based on a traditional *andaluz* chord progression – that is, from the Andalucía region in the south of Spain. This piece was first featured on the Brandenburg's ARIA award-winning 2010 CD *Tapas*, which is certainly a fitting moniker for this work, as *tapas* – small appetisers or snacks in Spanish cuisine – probably also originated in Andalucía.

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