

ENRIQUE MORENTE.

Flamenco Singing: Enrique Morente.

Song

MADRID

TEATROS DEL CANAL-SALA ROJA (TEATROS DEL CANAL THEATER – RED HALL)

TUESDAY, JUNE 15TH AT 20:30

ENRIQUE MORENTE in concert

“At any given moment, our contradictions and nostalgia depend on which way the wind is blowing. And so, ‘cante’ grows with every coming year, as new artists are born who continue to enrich it as long as they live and are always constantly reinventing everything”.

Enrique Morente

In every time period, each artist has a different approach to finding his own means of expression. Yet all artists look back to those who came before with respect.

From the start, non-conformity and loyalty to the fundamental codes of flamenco singing formed the basis of his performing career. Morente's artistic pursuits drove him to take on challenges far beyond flamenco singing, as a producer, director and actor. Enrique Morente's career is dominated by his strict self-discipline and his thoroughly conscientious professionalism and dignity at the service of *cante* (flamenco singing).

Morente claims to love orthodoxy, a basic tenet of flamenco that should, nevertheless, help flamenco to evolve and to explore new musical avenues: *“Because flamenco is an art form that is alive and constantly in motion. If it weren't alive, it never would have expanded beyond the cave dwellings... or the countryside. Flamenco is associated with clichés, dogmas, and misunderstandings that won't let the ears listen freely when, in order to understand flamenco, all you have to do is to be receptive and listen.”*

Morente has repeated words similar to these throughout his career, as he has long been the victim of a sort of witch-hunt against him and has often had to defend himself with these sorts of interventions. Today he is undoubtedly the most influential person in the professional flamenco world.

Morente finds it boring to sing the same repertoire over and over again. That is why he wrings every last drop of wisdom out of the concept of orthodoxy in order to find inspiration and develop new works of art. From the early days of his career, Enrique Morente's talent has drawn the attention of critics and scholars. He is very interested in understanding and performing the most complex *cantes* (flamenco songs). That combined with his wish to become, “a wide-ranging *cantaor*, without any distinct school or region,” have led him to create a unique personality that leaves little room for clichés. The key, for Morente, is sincere and honest work, using both the heart and the head, in a delicate balance that is palpable in every one of his works.

Enrique Morente. Born in 1942 in Granada's Albaicín district, Morente became interested in flamenco song and singing in general at a very young age. He was a choirboy at the cathedral in his hometown and he soon moved to Madrid in order to train with the great masters, being well aware that he needed to acquire technique and look to certain sources. In Madrid, Pepe de la Matrona took an interest in him and Morente debuted at the Charlot *peña* (flamenco folk club). His jump to the professional world came about in 1964 when he performed with the Marienma Ballet. Three years later, he recorded his first album, *Cante Flamenco* (Flamenco Song), accompanied on guitar by Félix de Utrera. The album had Morente's own distinctly personal seal; it was both groundbreaking and a classic. From the start, non-conformity and loyalty to the fundamental codes of flamenco singing formed the basis of his performing career.

Morente's recordings would continue to reflect his pursuits as a flamenco singer and his creative talent alongside guitarists such as Niño Ricardo, Perico del Lunar, Parrilla de Jerez, Manzanita, Paco Cortés, Tomatito, Manolo and Isidoro Sanlúcar, Enrique de Melchor, El Bola, Paquete, Montoyita, Sabicas, and, especially, Pepe Habichuela.

Morente's third album *Homenaje flamenco a Miguel Hernández* (A Flamenco Tribute to Miguel Hernández- 1971) would be the first of a long list of recordings in which Morente used poems by his favorite writers as verses for his flamenco songs. He borrowed poems from Hernández, San Juan de la Cruz, García Lorca, Al Mutamid, the Machado brothers, Alberti, Lope de Vega, Bergamín, Guillén and many others.

Morente's artistic pursuits drove him to take on challenges far beyond flamenco singing, as a producer, director and actor. He continued to work in various performances, including *La Celestina* alongside pianist Antonio Robledo. Robledo and Morente co-wrote *Fantasia del cante jondo para voz flamenca y orquesta* (*Cante Jondo Fantasy for Flamenco Voice and Orchestra*), which premiered at the Royal Theater in Madrid in 1986 featuring guitarists Juan Habichuela and Gerardo Núñez as well as the Madrid Symphonic Orchestra. This last work illustrates Morente's remarkable way of combining "classical music" and flamenco. Morente also created a ballet called *Obsesión* (Obsession) that was premiered by the National Ballet of Canada. In 1988 he presented *El loco romántico* (The Romantic Madman), based on Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, at the Festival in Granada. And in 1990 he premiered *Allegro Soleá* at the Biennial in Seville. Morente composed the music for Martín Recuerda's *Las arrecogías del beaterio de Santa María Egipcíaca* (Postulants of the Santa María Egipcíaca Congregation) as well as the soundtrack for José Luis Borau's film *La Sabina* (Sabina). Worth noting among his work in theater are: *Edipo Rey* (Edipus Rex) with José Luis Gómez and director Miguel Narros' *Así que pasen cinco años* (Once Five Years Have Passed) and *Fedra*.

One of his most popular records among fans of good music is *Omega* (1997). Morente worked on this album with Granada-based rock group Lagartija Nick and guitarists such as Vicente Amigo and Tomatito. The album adapts poems by Federico García Lorca and by Canadian singer Leonard Cohen. This album confirms Enrique Morente as an inexhaustible source of ideas. Morente continued working on interesting projects such as *Lorca-Morente* and the show *África, Cuba, Caí* (Africa, Cuba, Caí), a fusion project combining three different sources and based on the notion that the rhythms and expressions from the Black Continent are clearly reflected in traditional Latin American music, which, in turn, has strong links to flamenco music.

In 2003, Morente published an album called *El pequeño reloj* (The Little Clock). In 2006 he launched *Morente sueña La Alhambra* (Morente Dreams Up the Alhambra). And, lastly, in 2008 Morente recorded *Pablo de Málaga* (Pablo from Málaga) where he unveils Picasso as a poet, giving voice to several of the poems written by the internationally famous artist from Málaga.

All these honors reward a career dominated by strict self-discipline and by an awareness of the professionalism and dignity required of flamenco singers.