

JOSÉ MENESE

Flamenco Singing: José Menese
Guitar: Manolo Franco

BELÉN LÓPEZ

Belén López Company

Song and Dance

MADRID

CENTRO CULTURAL PACO RABAL-PALOMERAS BAJAS (PACO RABAL-PALOMERAS BAJAS CULTURAL CENTER)

FRIDAY, JULY 2ND AT 20:30

POR DERECHO (BY RIGHT)

For Menese, *Por derecho* (By Right) means, “producing a *cante* (flamenco song) that is musically pure, with no additives.”

Menese’s contribution to renovating and dignifying flamenco provoked sociological and cultural changes in the way this art form was perceived. The *cultura jonda* (“deep culture”) comes alive in his *cante* (flamenco singing). At the peak of his maturity as an artist, Menese has become the most authentic symbol of a decisive period in the history of flamenco art, one that began in the 1950’s and 60’s and was known as the flamenco renaissance. José Menese played a crucial role in this renaissance and he has been loyal to his lineage long enough that now, thirty years later, he has again become a point of reference for the new flamenco renaissance that fans of the purest *cante* (flamenco singing) are currently demanding.

José Menese. He was born and raised in 1942 in La Puebla de Cazalla (Seville), where, from an early age, he first began to discover his love of *cante* (flamenco singing). In 1959, having sung at La Puebla and at El Café Central, Menese debuted at the Carretria de Osuna movie theater alongside Antonio Mairena himself.

Menese moved to Madrid in the early 60’s, under the patronage of Francisco Moreno Beltrán (La Puebla’s lyricist). The two men began a long and fruitful working relationship. In fact, Beltrán wrote most of the lyrics on the *cantaor’s* records. These lyrics had a profound social and political content that won him quite a few enemies within Franco’s regime, although they were never actually censored.

Worth highlighting among Menese’s many noteworthy performances, are the recitals he gave at the Olympia in Paris in 1973 and 1974. He became the first flamenco artist ever to step on that stage. Something similar occurred in 1991, when Menese performed at the National Music Auditorium in Madrid, a space that had, until then, been reserved for classical music. Years earlier (1975), Menese had had the Teatro Real’s symphonic orchestra accompany him in Madrid as he sang the interlude to Falla’s *La vida breve* (Life is Short). And, in 1985, Menese performed at the United Nations Day concert in New York with Spain’s National Orchestra and Choir.

Menese’s official presentation in Madrid was in 1974 at the Teatro Marquina. Soon afterward, Menese enjoyed great success at the Barceló Theater. In Barcelona, he won audiences over at the Palau de la Música and at the Juana Mordó Gallery.

Following his performance at the National Auditorium, similarly important stages became part of Menese’s circuit: the Auditorium at the Instituto Cervantes in Paris, where he sang in a Tribute to Manuel de Falla along with Carmen Linares, and Madrid’s Teatro Monumental, where he pre-recorded a concert for Radio Clásica as part of the Euro-Radio 1994 special, *La Navidad en Europa* (Christmas in Europe) also with Carmen Linares and with Manuel Morao.

Menese presented his last album, *A mi madre Remedios* (To My Mother, Remedios) in September 1997 at the Cuartel del Conde Duque during Madrid's Veranos de la Villa summer concert series. In October of that same year, he joined the cast of performers in Falla's *La Vida Breve* (Life is Short) for the inauguration of Madrid's Teatro Real. Menese also performed in Madrid as part of a series of flamenco concerts scheduled during the Festival de Otoño (Autumn Festival).

That year (1997) was especially meaningful for José Menese, as he received two of today's most important flamenco awards: the Calle de Alcalá Flamenco Award at the Caja de Madrid Flamenco Festival, and Murcia's Cumbre Flamenca Patriarca del Cante Award. José Menese's important contributions to flamenco art had previously been recognized with awards such as the Cátedra de Flamencología's National *Cante* Award (1974), Almería's La Saeta de Oro (1971), the SER radio network's Premio Ondas (1968), and the Mairena de Alcor Award (1967).

His first album was published in 1963. The lyrics were written by Moreno Galván and had a profoundly social slant. The record was awarded the Jerez Cátedra de Flamencología's National Record Prize. Two years later, Menese won the Tomás El Nitri Honor award at Córdoba's National Flamenco Art Contest. After that event, Menese was set to become one of the most outstanding figures at Andalusian festivals.

Menese has recorded a total of 25 albums throughout his career, with the purest *jondo* (deep) style, singing *por siguiriyas, bulerías, mirabrás, soleás, tangos, peteneras, martinetes...* On his records, he's been accompanied by some of the best flamenco guitarists, such as Eugenio Jiménez, Manolo Brenes and Juan Carmona Habichuela and, above all, Melchor de Marchena and Enrique de Melchor.

TRES A UN TIEMPO (THREE AT A TIME)

Tres a un tiempo (Three at a Time) is a flamenco show with no dramatic plot. However, it does have a central theme: the communion of flamenco's three great disciplines. *Cante* (singing), guitar playing and *baile* (dance) show each other full respect, listening to each other and supporting one another to their mutual benefit.

Belén López. She was born in Tarragona twenty-three years ago. Despite her youth, this *ballaora* (flamenco dancer) has more experience than many others can brag about.

When she was just five years old, Belén participated in a tribute to Carmen Amaya in which Antonio "El bailarín" was also present. Two years later, she won the international TV show *Bravo, bravísimo* and danced with Ángel Corella at the Teatro Madrid. At the tender age of nine Belén López represented Spain at the International Tourism Fair in San Petersburg, where she also performed as a guest artist two years later.

At age twelve, Belén moved to Madrid and enrolled at the Professional Dance Conservatory, from which she graduated four years later. It was then (in 2003) that she was summoned to dance a solo before Queen Sofia at a benefit gala at the Teatro de la Zarzuela.

For four years, Belén López was the lead dancer at Arena di Verona (Italy), where she performed in operas such as *Carmen* and *Il Trovatore* under Franco Zeffirelli's direction. Belén was also the principal dancer at La Corrala de la Danza, directed by Il Camborio. For a few months, she was also the First Figure at the Corral de la Morería. It was there that she gained the support of Blanca del Rey, who claims that, "in today's flamenco dance scene, there's no one else with Belén López's potential."

In May 2004, Belén won the Mario Maya Award at Córdoba's National Contest. A year later, she was chosen Best New Artist at El Corral de la Pacheca.

Belén has performed at the Festival in Jerez, at the Biennale Danza e Italia, in Madrid's Teatro Español, at the Círculo de Bellas Artes in Madrid, at the Suma Flamenca Festival, at the Teatro de Madrid, at the Gasteig Theater in Munich, at the Caja Madrid Festival, at Málaga's Biennial, etc.

In January 2005, Belén López debuted with her own company at the Teatro Metropol in Tarragona with a choreography entitled *Atrapados por el arte* (Trapped by Art) that she would later put on stage once again at the Teatro Madrid.

A year later, her company would stage its first major performance, *Cuando Amanece* (When the Sun Rises). Belén was choreographer, director and lyricist for this piece when she was just twenty years old. The show combines pure flamenco dance with classical Spanish dance, which, according to the *ballaora* (dancer) tends to be left out.

In 2008, Belén presented this show at the Teatro Nuevo Apolo in Madrid and, from then on, she began to tour with it in different theaters around Spain. Throughout 2008, Belén also took part in various shows as part of the Joven Generación (Young Generation) project, which managed to sell out at the Teatro Albéniz.

In July 2009, she premiered her new show, *A mi manera* (My Way), at the Teatro La Latina. The show was produced by Entre-Arte with Juan Carmona as its musical director.

Last February, Belén had the audience on its feet at the New York City Center in a show scheduled during the 10th New York City Flamenco Festival. Rocío Molina, Manuel Liñán and Pastora Galván also participated in the event. This was the first US experience for this artist who still has a lot left to say. To date, Belén López is one of the most solid promising artists in flamenco dancing's most passionate and racial tradition.