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Classical to Flamenco
Clarinet

How to approach Flamenco from a classical perspective?

Written reflection within degree project
The sounding part consists of the following recording:
Classical to Flamenco
About three years ago I started developing a project from Classical to Flamenco music with the clarinet as the main voice. There is a mix of music with basically two styles in the project in a concert form. I approached a new style that was not mine, and with some work of exploration I have been learning how to play and connect with it from a classical perspective into the flamenco style and tradition.

This work is based on research of the tradition. I have been exploring the history of this art to understand how it has evolved and the main characteristics. After this, I looked for classical musicians who started to learn flamenco and got some inspiration for my project.

The last part is the action phase, where I started to make the project real and what the process looked like. This work concludes with the results of the practical part and a discussion about how I would like to develop this project in the future.

**Keywords:**

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1) INTRODUCTION

PERSONAL NOTE

I was wondering why classical music was not as developed as other topics in our life. For example, I look around the world and I can see how technology, sports and medicine are developing.

That is the reason why I have done my Masters project combining two different styles of music. Since I am a classical musician and almost all of the education that I have received is from the classical world, I was looking for a new experience that could complement my musical education and develop my skills further. To do this, I started to research about the flamenco background, including the ages, styles and musicians. Also, I looked for other modern musicians that have transitioned from a classical music education to flamenco and have received inspiration from them.

Flamenco is a completely new world for me as a professional, but as a musician and a person who was born in the roots of flamenco, I grew up very close to this style of music. That is the main reason why I wanted to include it in my work. I tried to play flamenco years ago. Playing it a few times was enough to realize that mixing flamenco with my classically inspired ideas could be an original music concert.

To specify more, the following work is based on the main question "how to approach to Flamenco from a classical perspective?" and is divided into different parts:

The first part consists of historical research of different articles and official websites that discuss flamenco. We need to understand how this genre was born, what different styles it has, where it was performed and who some of the famous flamenco artists are…
In the second part, you will find other modern musicians who have inspired me during this project, including excerpts from interviews. This section ends with the question "how can I combine classical music and the flamenco tradition?", where I explain the importance of creativity in flamenco music and the Flamenco composers that I introduce in the concert.

After this, I discuss the practical part. First, I include all of my experience on how I started to feel closer to Flamenco music and some concerts that I have gone to. Following this, I talk about the exploration I have done since I started to develop the project: how I managed to actualize the project, how I started to practice the pieces, and the process of rehearsals with other classical musicians and our major obstacles.

To conclude the work I include the discussion about the project, where I talk about the feedback I got from the audience and teachers. And finally, how I would like to develop this project in the future.
PURPOSE OF THE WORK

The goals I want to achieve with this work are as follows:

- To research about a new music style, Flamenco.
- To develop my own project with a concert format and make it real.
- To learn how to play Flamenco with the clarinet from a Classical education.
- To work on Flamenco music with other classical musicians.
- To observe the results from the concert with two music styles.

1) First part
   - Première Rhapsodie for Clarinet and Piano, Debussy.

2) Second part
   - Homagge to Manuel de Falla (Béla Kovács)
   - Almoraima (Paco de Lucía)
   - La última noche en la casa del flamenco (Kenji Bunch)

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH FLAMENCO

Since I was a kid I used to hear Flamenco everywhere around me. At the age of 8 I started to study at the Conservatory of Almería, where I had the opportunity to learn classical music in the same place where people were studying flamenco dance and music.

I did not know what that was exactly, but I was used to hearing it everywhere in the Conservatory as well as on the streets.

I have always been more focused on classical music as a career but I have also been interested in different kinds of music. For example, I started to
discover Jazz when I joined a young Big Band at the conservatory, and I still remember that experience. In that world I was completely a beginner, but I always wanted to learn more.

Later on, at the end of my studies at the Conservatory I had the opportunity to take improvisation lessons with the Piano Jazz teacher. I remember those lessons a lot. We used to play famous jazz songs and I learned how to play jazz with my instrument, thinking of chords and doing free improvisation above the accompaniment.

Years later, when my Bachelor started in Barcelona, is when I decided to play clarinet jazz with Mr Xavier Figuerola, a sax and clarinet jazz player as well as teacher. I learned jazz techniques that complemented my skills with the clarinet.

During my first three years I had another subject that was called Improvisation. Those lessons were my favourite, with the teacher Albert Gumí. I learned a lot and it was my favourite time of the week. We were playing different kinds of music going through medieval, classical, flamenco, jazz, funk and modern music.

However, I realized I was really enjoying learning Flamenco. This was an important point in my career as a musician, as I started listening more to Flamenco and looking for new pieces for the clarinet.

I got new scores while talking to some composers and when I saw them for the first time I thought it was too difficult to play because of the new rhythms, sonorities, and flow. I also knew that the key to learning Flamenco was letting yourself be carried away by the improvisation of the piece.

As a classical musician, I always appreciated reading the music and not just learning by ear and memory, as a lot of flamenco musicians do. The recordings have been something that made me learn more, I started to listen to them more because I wanted to develop my technique and the way to express myself with the clarinet in this kind of music.
2) DEVELOPMENT - FLAMENCO HISTORY AND LISTENING EXPERIENCE

BACKGROUND OF FLAMENCO

I looked into the Flamenco history to understand more about this style:

Flamenco is a style typical of Andalucia, from the 18th century, originated by the influence of different cultures such as Gypsy, Arab, Jewish and Christian. In 2010 Flamenco was declared Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO.

Flamenco is born from the people themselves: it has a folk root. It was characterized by its power to transmit feelings and as a way of expressing experiences. The lyrics dealt with themes of pain, joy, passion, love, etc.

Flamenco music itself is an art of oral tradition meaning that it is an art that is not written down but is spread from generation to generation orally.¹ There are certain rhythmic patterns that can be transcribed, but in a simpler way so that any other musician in the world can understand and play it.

The quality of these performances focus on the audition, rhythms, improvisation, creativity...²

The Flamenco dance can be defined as the artistic expression of flamenco through dance. Having its own technique, it is also characterized by being an individual, introverted, explosive and spontaneous style.³

YEARS OF FLAMENCO

The following sketch of flamenco history is based on the following sources, El Palacio Andaluz. El cante jondo o cante primitivo andaluz; Casa del Arte Flamenco. Historia del Flamenco; de las Heras Monastero. Revista de investigación educativa, versión online.

¹El Palacio Andaluz. Curiosidades sobre el origen del Flamenco.
²Fernández Sánchez. Flamenco Transcriptions for melodic instruments. 12
³Martínez de la Peña. Teoría y Práctica del Baile Flamenco.
- Primitive Age: 1765 – 1860:

This is the time when Flamenco starts to be considered as a documented art. The main cantes flamencos (flamenco songs) starts to spread and to be more structured, extended and defused, played in cities like Cádiz, Jérez de la Frontera, and Triana, Sevilla. When this age started, Flamenco started getting closer to other parts of society. In the beginning it only appeared in gypsy families. The dance is considered as something separate that was to be enjoyed and entertained.

- Golden Age: 1860 - 1910:

This period was an evolution and the name refers to the success during that time, when flamenco was developed in music cafés called "cafés cantantes". Dancers appeared on stage and were one of the biggest attractions for the public. Also, guitarists playing and accompanying the dancers increasingly gained a reputation. This is when the flamenco guitar was born. It is also when the flamenco starts to have an extraordinary growth, and is spread throughout the Spanish society.

It begins to be considered as a professional art where the different styles are fixed, with different rhythms and patrons that I will explain more later.

- Theatre Age: 1920 - now

The flamenco even appears in the theaters. Some important moments in this period were:

Flamenco Ópera, from 1910 to 1955. At this time, popular inspiration gave way to an intellectual elaboration for choreographic purposes, flamenco was deformed for a less demanding public and the guitar accompaniment was replaced by orchestra.

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4 de las Heras Monastero. Revista de investigación educativa, versión online.
As a reaction of the commercial development in this period, an important venue in the development of the flamenco art was the "Concurso Nacional de Cante Jondo" in Granada, 1922.

An intelligent group of artists created this competition with the main purpose of getting back the purity of the flamenco that during recent years was going in a different direction.

What is the "cante jondo"?

The cante jondo or cante flamenco is a unique way of interpreting flamenco and is the purest expression of showing one's feelings on the tablao or stage. It is an interpretation based on lament, from the first to the last word, and the result of which is a whole manifestation of emotions, where the deepest feelings of flamenco singers arrive to the audience. It is part of the Flamenco repertory, including gypsy and flamenco songs. At last, flamenco has been transformed, obtaining a great musical variety in its history.⁵

- Renaissance of the Flamenco, from 1955

The Renaissance was the definitive revaluation of flamenco that managed to rescue everything that had been marginalised and relegated from the previous period. The tablaos appeared, as well as numerous events related to this art form such as festivals, competitions and flamenco in theatres.

With the guitarist Paco de Lucía begins a new era where the guitar acquires great importance around the world. It is at this point when the flamenco becomes universal and new artists start to do flamenco with other musical styles or tendencies, as I will discuss later. There now started to appear conflicts between the most original flamencos purists and others who were more interested in the evolution and innovation of this art.⁶

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⁵ El Palacio Andaluz. El cante jondo o cante primitivo andaluz.
⁶ Casa del Arte Flamenco. Historia del Flamenco.
- Contemporary Period, 1985 - now

Flamenco is considered as a flowering and growing art, which is open for new expressions. That is why it continues getting better and why so many fusions with other artforms are done, for example mixing with jazz rock or contemporary dance. It has great international prestige and is increasingly attracting the attention of artists, public and scholars from all over the world. Since the origins until nowadays have been so many players, singers or dancers and so many different styles in this universal art. In this period of time I could mention Camarón, Paco de Lucía, Jorge Pardo, and others more recently that I will present later.

"PALOS FLAMENCOS"

Flamenco is a very complex genre with many distinct styles. Not all types of flamenco sound the same. The palos are each of the styles within flamenco. There are a lot of different styles which derive from a few basic styles. Not to mention that flamenco is a musical genre in which improvisation and the artist's personal touch is essential.

According to the article "Cuna del Flamenco. Palos Flamencos" which I used as a main source to explain some of the different palos, we can find some of the most common flamenco styles:

1) Sevillanas

We start with probably the most widespread of flamenco dance styles. It has conquered hearts around the world. With a cheerful character, it is always a good option to have them present for celebrations.

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7 Candela, la sala flamenca más autentica de Madrid. Breve historia del arte flamenco.
One of the most recognized styles in Flamenco, Sevillanas are danced throughout Andalucia and is normally performed in pairs. This cante is a variety of the classic seguiriya, another style that I will explain later. If you visit the Seville April Fair, you will be able to see hundreds of people dancing Sevillanas both in the booths and at the crossroads.

2) Soleás

The soleá is believed to be born from what is known as “jaleo”, a mix of three cantes: the jota, the fandango, and the seguiriya, which occurred in southern Andalusia during the 19th century. Relaxed and solemn, it is one of the most important styles of flamenco. They are characterized by being interpreted with a lot of passion. It is not very clear if the name comes from loneliness, but this cante denotes a lot of feeling and solemnity.

It is also considered one of the most important flamenco styles and from which the alegrías and bulerías derive, but they do not convey the bustle and festive character.

Regarding its musical structure, the soleá has the so-called model flamenco style: a 6/8 and 3/4, modal key and melismas of its melody. Its lyrics have a high literary value, with reference to classic and well-known works of the time.

3) Bulerías

The fast, frenetic pace and artistic flexibility characterize them and they usually mark the end of the party. Bulerías are born from the soleá, with which it shares the beat, although it has more force. Hailing from Jerez de la Frontera, in Cádiz, it is said to be one of the most flexible flamenco styles.
There is another type of modality, the bulerías in Phrygian mode, a scale used in musical styles such as jazz, rock and flamenco, to explore sounds beyond typical major and minor scales.
The piece Almoraima from Paco de Lucía, which I include in my concert, is a bulería. We can hear the rhythms and tempo later on in the recordings from my project.

4) Alegrías

The name itself indicates the character of this flamenco palo, "Alegría" means "Happiness". It is fast, with a party rhythm that directly encourages dancing. Its name describes its tempo and character, since it is one of the most rhythmic flamenco styles, being the same as the soleá but faster, so again 6/8 + 3/4.
However, it is the "jota" from Navarre and Aragon that is the fundamental basis of Alegrías. If you listen to the most classic lyrics of this flamenco palo, you will find references to the Virgen del Pilar, Navarre and the river Ebro, which is typical of Aragon. From all this cultural mix, a kind of "jota gaditana" from Cádiz came out, which derived in the current Alegrías, full of energy.  

5) Seguiriyas

Seguiriyas is reminiscent of cante jondo and is full of feeling. It is painful and serious, capable of moving everyone who listens to it.
Although the origin of the cante of the seguiriyas is uncertain, it is believed to derive from the plañideras when women were hired in the 19th century to sing at funerals. Since it was a mourning song, the theme of death was recurring and is the main source of inspiration in the lyrics of the seguiriyas.

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8 Cuna del Flamenco. Las Alegrías, el palo flamenco del "Tirititrán".
The metric of the seguiriya is the sum of two types of bars, three by four and six by eight.
Currently the cante is accompanied with the flamenco guitar. This is despite the fact that its origin, like the primitive cantes, were called 'dry sticks', meaning that is without accompaniment.

6) Fandangos

The fandango is one of the most widespread flamenco styles in Andalusia since it is present in all provinces. Although it is today considered one of the fundamental flamenco songs and dances, its origin is not directly linked to this art, but to a popular dance typical of places in Latin America, such as Brazil. Continuing with the historical evolution of fandango, it had two versions: one to be sung and the other to be danced. It began to be popular in Andalucia in the eighteenth century, although only the version that could be danced, played in a minor mode and with tendencies that would be the flamenco cadence. On a 3/4 beat, each geographical area has made its own version of the fandangos, the best known being those from Huelva and from Malaga.

7) Tangos

The flamenco tango is considered one of the oldest flamenco styles, along with the soleá, also called the “mother of flamenco”. The rhythmic pattern of tango comes from the contradanzas that the slaves of Santiago de Cuba brought to America. From there, it spreads throughout Europe, and arrived in Cádiz as an American tango, establishing itself as one of the central numbers of zarzuelas.

The rhythms began to vary and the first variations of the flamenco tango that we know today emerged: if it was softer, a romantic song, it was called “habanera”. Since it was a more humorous version and slowed down, it
takes the name of "tiento". It has nothing to do with Argentine tangos. Along with the Bulería and Sevillanas, it is one of the most danced flamenco styles at flamenco parties.⁹

As I discussed earlier about the "Peñas" or "Tablaos flamencos", I will now discuss this concept and places where flamenco is performed more clearly.

"PEÑA" OR "TABLAO FLAMENCO"

The meaning of peña or tablao flamenco is a place where flamenco people go to watch different concerts or shows while they enjoy drink or food, like a flamenco club where the main goal is to listen to the authentic and pure flamenco.

The tablaos have an atmosphere where the public can enjoy performances in the most traditional way. The acoustics are important, so a tablao has a special stage for the musicians and dancers. A wooden floor provides a suitable sound from the flamenco dancers when they are tapping on the floor.

These places were created a long time ago, but if we compare with the flamenco age, the tablaos are a quite new. The first tablaos are from mid XX century. Before this, these places were called Café Cantantes, where they used to meet for the flamenco shows. Cádiz, Sevilla and Madrid were the principal cities for this, but after some time they were extended to other locations. Most of the flamenco players started to perform on these places and after that, they became more famous.¹⁰

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⁹ Cuna del Flamenco. Palos Flamencos.
¹⁰ FlamencoBarroc - Palau Dalmases, ¿Qué es un tablao flamenco?.

EXAMPLES OF MUSICIANS WHO ARE IN THE FLAMENCO TRADITION

I will now highlight the greatest flamenco musicians:

Paco de Lucía:

Paco de Lucia was a Spanish virtuoso flamenco guitarist, composer, and record producer. A leading proponent of the new flamenco style, he was one of the first flamenco guitarists to branch into classical and jazz.

De Lucía was noted for his fast and fluent *picados* (fingertip runs). A master of contrast, he often juxtaposed *picados* and *rasgueados* (flamenco strumming) with more sensitive playing and was known for adding abstract chords and scale tones to his compositions with jazz influences. These innovations allowed him to play a key role in the development of traditional flamenco and the evolution of new flamenco and Latin jazz fusion from the 1970s. He received positive critique for his recordings with flamenco singer Camarón de la Isla in the 1970s, recording ten albums which are considered some of the most important and influential in flamenco history.

His name came up again when he decided to give prominence to his musicians and became the only flamenco guitarist accompanied by a bass and a lute. They accompany the melodies of Paco de Lucía in Almoraima, an album that includes the emblematic Moorish Buleria with the same name. From this moment he found other ways to perform music with other great musicians in different ways.11

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I would like to share part of an interview he made in 1992, where he talked about flamenco and different combinations of music.

- "How does the primitivism of flamenco combine with the search for new harmonies?"
  + "Well, with one hand grasping tradition and with the other scratching, searching. It is very important not to lose the tradition because that is where the essence, the message, the base is. About the tradition if you can go anywhere and escape but without ever leaving that root because, ultimately, the identity, the smell and the flavor of flamenco are there."

- "What place does flamenco occupy within European culture?"
  + "I believe that flamenco is the most important culture we have in Spain and I dare say that in Europe. It is incredible music, it has a great emotional force and a rhythm and an emotion that very few European folklore possess. Flamenco represents the culture of our country, although many are bothered by this globalization because it is Andalusian and Basque, Galician or Catalan have nothing to do with it."

- "What do you think of fusion music?"
  + "Fusion can work, although I don't believe in it. In my work with Larry Coryell, John McLaughlin or Al diMeola, the music was not flamenco or jazz, it was a fusion of musicians, not music."

With his words you can see how he gives importance to the fact to not lose the tradition. Also, consider that it is interesting when he speaks about the fusion of musicians and not the music, because sometimes the mix of musicians is what generates other style of music.

As an example for this musician, you can hear about him in the recording mentioned: de Lucia, Paco. *Almoraíma*. Philips Records. 1976.

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Camarón de la Isla:

He was a Spanish-Romani flamenco singer. Considered one of the all-time greatest flamenco singers, he was noted for his collaborations with Paco de Lucía and Tomatito. The three of them were of major importance in this style in the second half of the 20th century.

Many people consider Camarón to be the most popular and influential flamenco *cantaor* (singer) of the modern period. Although his work was criticized by some traditionalists, he was one of the first to feature an electric bass in his songs. This was a turning point in the history of Flamenco music that helped distinguish Nuevo Flamenco.\(^{13}\)

As an example I would like to mention the following recording: de la Isla, Camaron. Soy Gitano. Philips Records, 1989.

Jorge Pardo:

He is a Spanish musician, flautist and saxophonist, born in 1956 in Madrid, known for the albums he released with Milestone Records in the 1990s. He has been a side musician of Paco de Lucia and also with the American jazz legend Chick Corea. He is a giant figure of the fusion between jazz and flamenco with more than 40 albums. A quote from him that has musical importance was:

>“The world of words is a world that defines very specific ideas, a world that also contains many perversions. However, the world of sounds is a world full of sincerity and non-transferable, it is a world that speaks directly to the heart and spirit of the people”\(^{14}\)

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\(^{13}\) Ruíza, M., Fernández, T. and Tamaro, E. *Camarón de la Isla. Biografía. Biografías y Vidas. La enciclopedia biográfica en línea*

\(^{14}\) de la Cruz and de la Torre. *Documental Imprescindibles*
He describes in words the potential of music: how music can describe so much more than just words. What you hear is objective and there is no other meaning in it. In 2013 he received the award for best European Jazz musician by the French Academy of Jazz.

An example of his work is his recording of Almoraima that you can find searching the following album: Pardo, Jorge and Dominguez, Chano. 

**THE CONCERTS THAT HAD THE GREATEST IMPACT ON ME**

During several years I went to different concerts and performances and I would now like to talk about the concerts that were the most useful to me.

1) About Flamenco, some years ago I wanted to go to an original flamenco show in a "peña".

From the moment when I first arrived at the concert, I was fascinated by a different reality as I was surrounded by *gitanos* and other flamenco people of the *peña*, it was a completely different atmosphere from the classical world I was used to. They were playing music that allowed them to express their feelings. The group was formed by three singers, two guitarists and a percussionist with the *cajon flamenco* and claps.

Once the show started they did the entire performance without a pause. I was impressed that they were communicating all the time with the public, sharing impressions, jokes, drinking water and even laughing with them.

2) Another concert I went too recently, and had not expected to be so good, was a few years ago in Barcelona, with the singer Estrella Morente in "El Palau de la Música Catalana".

She is a famous Spanish flamenco singer, who did the concert with a small wind band, a group of guitarists, percussionists, and a pianist. In this
performance she was alternating with the different musicians, but again the impression and feeling I got was very different from a classical music concert. Every time she finished a piece she took a break and she went off of the stage to change her clothes. Meanwhile the audience was still clapping for the last interpretation.

The way she was singing impressed me a lot and made me feel that sometimes in the classical music I am so focused on doing everything as perfectly as possible that I forget that I am human: that we cannot achieve perfection. That is when I started to change my ideas. That the goal during a concert should be to enjoy the music I am playing and try to express my feelings to the audience. I realized the importance of having a connection with the audience and that if the audience feels involved in the concert, they will get a connection with the musicians.

This feeling was also connected to the fact that the musicians had memorized the music allowing them to focus more on their feelings while performing.
3) EXPLORATION

WHY I COMBINE CLASSICAL MUSIC AND THE FLAMENCO TRADITION?

Music is directly connected to creativity. Every musician works on his creativity in a piece of music, trying to have personality and originality in the interpretation. We can see how creativity can also be found in other aspects, for example with other formations or formats of concerts. This creativity sometimes causes very varied musical styles to emerge, some with greater success than others. But few of them manage to establish themselves as new musical style that continue to be developed and interpreted.

As I mentioned earlier about this project, it is not a creation of something new, since previously there have been concerts in which some classical and flamenco music were combined, as well as where clarinet has interpreted flamenco pieces. In my opinion, it has been over the time when I realized how much I like this kind of music. Every time that I played spanish music related to flamenco, I realized that it was a kind of music where I could express a lot of my feelings.

SECOND PART OF THE CONCERT

To understand the context of the second part of the concert, it is important to research about the history as well as interviews from the composers that I will perform in the Flamenco part,

Bela Kovacs:

Bela Kovacs has been hailed by critics and the public alike as the finest Hungarian clarinetist of his time.
According to Robert Cummings on his website of this author, Kovacs was also playing jazz, as evidenced by the perky Gershwin takeoff for clarinet and piano, After You, Gershwin. Kovacs played the performance and recording of that work, but he was also the composer of it.\textsuperscript{15}

In the clarinet repertoire he composed the Homages book, a set of nine homages to famous composers: J.S. Bach, Paganini, Weber, Debussy, De Falla, Strauss, Bartok, Kodaly & Khatchaturian:

"My pedagogical activities inspired me to compose the Homages. The pieces were intended to be etudes or studies which students may use as supplementary material to the usual dry and mechanical - although indispensable - exercises. They contain various challenges. If performed with impressive dexterity, with proper tone production and sufficient knowledge of styles, coupled with a sense of humor and a certain amount of fantasy, they could - hopefully - find success even on the concert stage. ..."
- Bela Kovacs.\textsuperscript{16}

\textbf{Paco de Lucia:}

I already talked about this musician at the end of the background section.

\textbf{Kenji Bunch:}

As he describes on his website, Kenji Bunch is one of the most engaging and influential Americans composers. Bunch’s work has created a new genre classification called neo-American: casual on the outside, complex underneath, immediate and accessible to first-time listeners. Rich and tonal harmonies characterize his work and easily lend themselves to dance and film. He is a frequent performer with jazz, pop, folk, country, rock, and experimental musicians.

\textsuperscript{15} Cummings, Artist Biography, Bela Kovacs.
\textsuperscript{16} Hickey’s Music Center. Clarinet Solos - Unaccompanied, Kovacs, Bela. Hommages
As a part of an interview that he includes on his website, I would like to share one of the questions that I think is important for me in my flamenco work and innovation as he talks about the classical and folk world.

- "I remember we talked about the musical influences and interests that have shaped your work. Do you think your answer would be different now, a few years down the road?"

KB: "That’s an interesting question. I think, hopefully, we all evolve over time- or at least, we inevitably change over time, whether or not it can be seen as evolution. I think, for me anyway, I’ve really focused the work I do a lot in the last several years- so maybe my answers would be a little different. Five years ago, I was just starting to perform my own compositions publicly. Prior to that, I made a point of keeping my playing and composing careers quite separate. These days, I’d say the overwhelming majority of the work I do involves, in some way, me performing my own music. I also used to keep my interest in folk music (bluegrass fiddle, etc.) kind of sequestered away from my work in the “classical” world. Now, I often combine that influence into the music I write and perform. So, to get back to your question, I still like to think I have an open enough mind to be receptive to potential inspiration from any source- musical or otherwise- but I’ve focused my career more today, and I think a list of what influences me currently might reflect that streamlining".17

I feel connected to his words when he mentions that we inevitable change over time. Also he is interested in other style of music like folk music, and he sometimes get inspired from that. So he combines different music as I started to do with the Flamenco.

17 Bunch. Interview.
MODERN ARTIST THAT HAVE BEEN SOME INSPIRATION FOR ME

The information about the following musicians is based on their websites.

Dorantes:
In relation to creativity and innovation, Dorantes is known as "The jewel of flamenco piano". He belongs to the flamenco world due to his experience, but his creations are personal. It has nothing to do with the most common fusion experiments. He has given to the piano an enriching musical dimension in a similar way as Kenji Bunch, but each of them have their own personality. The first album he recorded, Orobroy (1998)\textsuperscript{18}, was a refreshing surprise, and he has shown his talent ever since.
At the age of ten, Dorantes became fascinated with the possibilities of the piano and began in a self-taught way to elaborate the structures on which the current development of the flamenco piano is based today. When he was very young he entered the Superior Conservatory of Music of Seville, being one of the first gypsies to undergo academic training there he multiplied his creative capacity by ten, making a real revolution and opening new paths in flamenco. He introduced the piano, an instrument until then uncharted in the traditional rhythms of Andalusia. Dorantes discovered new harmonies, rhythms and concepts.
He produced music charged with intelligence, combining classical music, flamenco and jazz. Dorantes mentions that flamenco music is something that you can use to express yourself. There are different kind of palos, but he says that Flamenco is more about playing what you feel in context with the music.

\textsuperscript{18} Orobroy. David Dorantes. 17 of November 2009. Parlophone Spain.
Paco Montalvo:

We can find him as a creator and innovator, he leads and sets trends in the music of our time. At the age of 27, he has been on the main stages around the world in more than twenty-five countries such as America, Asia, Africa and Europe. He achieved a Gold Record, but I should add that his music registers millions of downloads in more than 77 countries around the world. When he was at the main hall of Carnegie Hall in New York at the age of 18 in a memorable interpretation of "Paganini's Violin Concerto No. 1", he became the youngest violinist of the 21st century to debut in this famous Concert Hall.

He is not only a violinist, but after a few years he started to even compose his own flamenco music for violin. We can find him playing some of the most famous pieces in the world as well as his own new compositions.

In an interview by La Vanguardia for his debut playing in El Liceu, I would like to mark when he talks about his start in flamenco. He says that he was a classical musician who was studying classically in the first year of his career and playing concerts in the classical world. But he mentions that he always liked flamenco. He is from the south, Córdoba, where, since he was a child, he was listening to guitars, claps and flamenco singers. Influenced and inspired by Paco de Lucía even for classical music, at the age of 18 he stepped into playing flamenco in concerts after years of learning and investigating the style.¹⁹

In this interview they talk about some experiences that he had when he was on tour or during different concerts. If we talk about the flamenco purist musicians and what they think about him, he had the opportunity to meet the president of one of the most famous peñas flamencas in Spain. He tried to perform a concert for them to see if his flamenco was good enough for the flamenco people or not, and after he had played there, he was a great success.

¹⁹ Guerrera, Andrés. Paco Montalvo, el violinista cordobés que conmovió a Han Solo.
Another thing that I consider very important is when he talks about what is going through his mind every time he plays the instrument: that it all about expression and communication with the audience.

Rubén Jiménez:

Called Niño Rubén, he is a Spanish bassoon player and composer specialized in flamenco music. He began his career in the world of music completely by chance, making his debut as a soloist at the age of thirteen when he discovered his passion for composition. Although his training is academic, his eagerness to find the essence of his roots led him to become the creator of flamenco bassoon when he was only twenty years old, an innovation that he exposes in his work "Al Toque del Fagot Flamenco". Thanks to his efforts, the bassoon has been the protagonist of numerous spaces where it had never been heard, managing to revalue one of the most unknown symphonic instruments.

I would like to share part of the interview "The Creation of Flamenco Bassoon" with Niño Rubén.

"From a very young age I have always loved my culture and the music of my home country of Spain, and this has led all my artistic work to be specialized in the field of Spanish music, and especially that of the Spanish music genre known as flamenco."

Another part of the interview that I consider very important for my work is when he talks about the kind of innovation he did, forgetting a bit about the classical way.20

"I began to realize that everything I was doing wasn't actually me. I had forgotten how much I enjoyed being a soloist. Most important, I had forgotten how much the music of my land meant to me. I made the decision

20 Palop Flamenco. Entrevista a Niño Rubén "fagotista".
to stop playing in one of the orchestras I was a part of at that time, the Southern Spain Orchestra.

I think we sometimes need to die in order to be reborn, and in reality I discovered it was my freedom which was born again. This is actually one of main reasons I use my artistic name instead of my real name. I always wanted to be a soloist, I have always admired the art of flamenco and I have always composed. I think it is important to think about what role the music of our land that occupies and how we can take advantage of living in a certain place and time. I think it is very important to think about what we can contribute to our culture and also to the evolution of the bassoon.

"One day I tried to play something traditional with a flamenco guitarist, and my thoughts changed in a second in such a way that I fell in love with what I was doing. I saw a whole world to explore where there could be much more than what I ever would have thought."

THE PROCESS: FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE DAY OF THE CONCERT

First, this idea has been in my mind for many years, but when I started my Masters at KMH I decided to develop it more.

I started to fix different goals along the year so I could work on this:

1) **Idea**: My first mission was to understand how I wanted to introduce the Spanish and Flamenco music in this concert. As I am a classical musician, I decided to start the concert in a traditional way because it was how I am trained. Once I figured out the concert form, I had to choose the pieces.

2) **Look for the pieces**: This step took many months as I had to do a bit of research to decide what pieces to choose as well as buy them. It was almost summer when I was done with this step, so I planned to study the
new pieces during the summer in Spain and rehearse with friends to try out the new idea.

3) Musicians: At the beginning of my second year I started to contact and look for Flamenco players in Sweden to play with me in my concert. The first musician I met was Erik Steen, a flamenco guitarist from Sweden. I contacted him to introduce him to my project and to help me find more flamenco players, specifically a guitarist and a percussionist. This is how we started a collaboration. He suggested that I meet up with him to talk more about my project. We made this happen and after that meeting the most important message that he transmitted to me it was his interest in my project. Additionally, that I needed to finance the project.

This was the first obstacle because as a student I did not have a budget for the Master Exam Concert. Erik suggested that I contact other organizations or venues where might be able to get a budget for my project.

4) Venues and budget: It took time to look for and contact different organizations. The venue that I considered most interesting for my concert was the Institute Cervantes of Stockholm, where they support Spanish culture.

I sent them a message and kept in touch with the main director, who suggested that we meet in person in order for me to explain to him about my project. I prepared myself to present my project to the formal organization and I received a positive answer: they were interested. The next step to make it happen was to send them a formal description of the project including the budget I needed.

Furthermore, I calculated the budget I needed for the two musicians I wanted to play with, including other musicians from Spain. Another problem appeared when the budget that Erik gave me was too high for the number of musicians that I needed. Even though I knew it was probably too high, I sent the budget to the Institute Cervantes but it was sadly too much for them. However, they would have helped me with a smaller amount.
I had been thinking for a long time how to restructure my project and one of the ideas was to contact a different guitarist. It was tough in the beginning but after many days of looking I found one. He was unfortunately not interested in my project. During this process I learned a lot about how to develop a project and how to be a freelance musician. Time was running out fast and suddenly it was already January 2021. I had my idea clear in my mind, but there were still so many things to fix.

I had to find a solution as soon as possible so I decided to do the concert differently, without Spanish musicians. The time of the concert was getting closer and I had to be realistic with my decisions, if my original idea was not possible I had to do something easier to get.

It was already March 2021 when I found the musicians. For the Flamenco part I got a pianist and a percussionist, but I could not find a guitarist. All of the musicians were from KMH so in the end I did not need a budget. At this point it was time to start with the rehearsals and get ready for the concert.

**REHEARSALS FOR THE CONCERT**

I was planning on playing two different pieces in the Flamenco part: the first one with the percussionist and the last one adding the pianist.

**First part of the process:** to practice individually the pieces. This first section contains information about how I started to practice the pieces by myself during Summer of 2020. This part of preparation was not very difficult for me as I already knew from before some techniques that are natural for me. Since I grew up hearing flamenco, I consider myself to have this music in my blood.
I now divide the work into different parts to clarify what I have worked on:

- **Listening to flamenco music:**

This part was very important for me, as I could learn a lot by listening to other flamenco musicians.

I paid attention to the sound of different instrumentalists. For example, Jorge Pardo plays techniques like the frulatos or vibratos on the flute. It is a broken sound with a lot of passion as well as a way to improvise and feel the music. Previously in the recordings that I mentioned earlier about some flamenco musicians you can hear these techniques.

After listening to a lot of this music, I tried to imitate the common flamenco sound with different techniques on the clarinet.

- **Techniques:**

As a clarinetist, I worked on improving my frulato: the vibrato with a broken sound.

For this, the main exercise I did were long notes, starting with a good sound and suddenly changing it with the frulato technique to develop it. The frulato is based on the vibration of the tongue with the consonant "R" at the same time that we blow. I did the same technique with vibrato and a broken sound in the throat. These techniques are similar as you get a similar effect, basically a vibration in the sound.

However, as I said before, these techniques are very personal and some people do not have the ability of get them. Other people can do them but use a different way to achieve the same result. That exercise is based on my experience as well as my own results.

After working on this technique and achieving improvement in my level, I introduced it to the piece.
- **Pieces:**

At the same time that I was working on the technique, I considered it to be important to start reading the scores and working on them more musically. For this I did exactly the same work as I have been educated in the classical world: to practice the piece, have it on fingers and know all the parts with the accompaniment. When I started to feel more secure with the music I started to introduce the techniques in different parts of the piece. I tried it in places that I liked it and I evaluated if it was working, or maybe if I could change the places where I was introducing the effects.

This part was not that hard for me as I believe that I am quite capable at reading new music.

- **Improvisation:**

As part of the work, at the end of my practice sessions, I started trying to improvise. For this I looked for some tracks to improvise with on YouTube and I playing above them. This was a big experiment. Some days I was playing better and other days I could not find the way to improvise. But this gave me more feeling into flamenco and I was able to choose places where I could improvise in the pieces for the concert.

I would like to share some of the improvisation work that I did in the few weeks before the concert.

I was inspired from Joaquín Rodrigo with "El concierto de Aranjuez", so I wanted to include it in the concert. I decided that after the Cadenza in the last piece of the program was a good place to improvise about this theme from the 2nd movement of Aranjuez. I had to transpose and find the tonality to play it to match the key of the last piece.

You can listen to the result in the listening part of this work.
Some of the tracks that I used to play with on YouTube are as follows:

- "Base de acompañamiento Rumba Flamenca La menor Sol Fa Mi"
- "Base de compas rumba a 103 cajon y palmas"
- "Buleria, Base rítmica cajón flamenco y palmas, ritmo normal"

You can find them on YouTube with the previous name.

**Second part of the process:** work with the classical musicians.

I include the dates of rehearsals:

**24-03-2021. First rehearsal with the pianist.**

This was the first contact that I had with the pianist in this musical style. We focused the first rehearsal on playing through to the end together. I already knew the piece but it was the first time for pianist so he wanted to get to know it better before playing everything together. When we finished playing it through, we scheduled more rehearsals to continue working on the piece more deeply.

**28-03-2021. First rehearsal with the percussionist.**

I started with playing through the pieces to get a first impression.

After this, we started to work on the different rhythms in the piece. Almoraima is a bulería formed with 3/4 and 6/8 bars that the percussionist was following. However, there were some points that I was feeling very uncomfortable with. I suggested that he help me with sometimes doing 3/4 instead of 6/8. This way it would be easier for both of us to arrive exactly together in the next bar.

I focused the first rehearsal on this: we made notes in all the places that we were going to change the rhythms of the bar. And, of course, every time we changed something, we played through it to check that it made sense.

Before finishing the rehearsal, I played the improvisation for him that I wanted to introduce into the piece and I suggested an accompaniment for his
part. He made some notes on the score and after that we tried it. This was a simple thing to do because it was a famous melody of "El concierto de Aranjuez" and put an easy accompaniment with the cajón flamenco.

31-03-2021. First rehearsal with both musicians.

This was the first time that we met all of us together. As always, we played through all the piece to see how it sounded. After this first time, we started to work on the different points where we were not together.

I noticed that the most difficult thing that day was that we were not arriving together in some parts of the score. We had bad balance in the tempo and rhythms. I started to work on this with the pianist, as it was the most difficult part and I realized that he was playing some wrong rhythms. In this music, it is very important be calm and not to rush, and he had many syncopations where he was rushing a lot.

After working on this, we included the percussionist, and he was helped us a lot because it was easier to maintain the tempo for him with the cajón. Even for me it was now easier to play more melodic because I was following him. However there were still some parts where the pianist was not with us.

01-04-2021. Individual rehearsal.

One day after the previous rehearsal, we met separately to continue working on the tempo and rhythmical part.

The first rehearsal was with the percussionist and I felt a big step done with him. We were together almost all of the time so I could play more freely. On the other hand, in the improvisation part he had some doubts, so we focused that day more on those parts. We tried different tempos for the accompaniment since we could play the improvisation in a fast or slow tempo. We agreed that was easier and better to do it a bit faster to keep the flamenco flow. Once we agreed on that and repeated the improvisation a few times with the same tempo, I explained to him exactly how many bars I wanted to improvise and the result was much better.
The second part of the rehearsal was adding the pianist. We worked again on the same rhythmical parts as the day before and it was better. We slowed down the tempo as an exercise so that we would not have any more doubts with the rhythms. After this, we finally played the piece properly at a really good level for the first time.

06-04-2021. Last week of rehearsals before the concert.

The concert was on the 9th of April, so we started the week of rehearsals really focused. I noticed a big change from everyone.

We played both pieces without stop, in the concert order, and it was great. I was happy with the result, but now that we were playing together I wanted to work more on the musical aspect.

I suggested some effects to the pianist to make it more flamenco and jazzy, such as glissandos before coming in with melodic phrases on the clarinet.

Also, I wanted the introduction of the piece to have a more of a free feeling. I asked him for more time in those places, trying to create more interesting phrases. This is very personal because everyone has their own interpretation and I just suggested my own ideas.


This day we played in Nathan Milstein, the same hall as the concert. My teacher Hermann Stefansson came to listen and he told me that it was great to see how I was enjoying the flamenco pieces. He told us that everything was perfect on time, and he made some suggestions for the dynamics.

After this, I wanted to play through the more problematic places again just to double check the rhythms. I asked them to enjoy the music and have that flow. In general, I was very happy with the result and I did not want to play anymore. We took a rest day on the 8th of April. The 9th of April we had a
sound check, and that was all because I wanted to feel fresh for the concert after resting the pieces.

**RECORDING OF THE CONCERT**

External archive for the recording.
Recording 1: Classical to Flamenco Clarinet (full concert).

**4) DISCUSSION AFTER THE PERFORMANCE**

A couple of days after the concert I analyzed the whole experience.
So how was my experience approaching Flamenco from a classical perspective?

I can say I learnt a lot after all this work with my colleagues, we approached a different style for us where we had to work in a different way.

If I would need to change something, I would work more on the improvisations and the sound. Since we are classical musicians we are used to work on difficult pieces.
However, I find more difficulties on the improvisations as it was something new for us. That is why if I would have to do this project again, I would spend more time working on my own improvisations, where I could get more original parts from my own. Also, I would work more on it with the group, because I would like that everyone would improvise something new.

Other important part is the sound, from a classical point of view we take care of the sound a lot. For this music, I can say that I worked with different techniques that I would not include in the classical pieces.
If someone from the classical world would like to approach Flamenco, I would recommend to start listening to different recordings and traditional musicians. That was one of the most important connections for me when I wanted to approach the new style, because in music and specially in Flamenco, we learn by ear. Once you know how this music sounds, you can imitate it. That is how I approached more to it, listening and imitating, but before, working on the techniques and improvisations that later would help me to approach flamenco.

I would like to include the results of my own performance as an example, with the feedback from my teachers and the audience:

A few days before the concert I had some doubts, I was wondering if I made the right decision as it was not an easy choice. The first 30 minutes I played classical music by Debussy and Brahms; and in the second part, three Flamenco pieces. I played one hour with no stop and I memorized almost all of the music. This was a challenge for me. I am used to playing by heart but not for that long. On the days before the concert I could not stop listening and focusing on memorizing the music.

When the day of the concert arrived I was really excited about it because I had been working on it for two years and I really wanted to make it real in front of an audience. The concert was streamed, so I could send the link to old teachers from Spain, family, friends, etc. With the streaming I was even more excited because some people that could not be there had the opportunity to watch it online. I knew that a lot of people were curious and wanted to watch the concert. That is also made me a bit scared about it. I wondered if the concert was going to be too long and if the mix of two types of music was a good decision.

In my opinion, I think that in the beginning of the performance I was not that focused because I was over thinking and worried about the program as well as the people who were watching me. After a few minutes I started to
get into the music and I started to enjoy playing music on stage. Since then I was enjoying it more and more because I was playing by heart and felt comfortable. When the pause arrived, I was happy with the result of the first half. My colleagues from the chamber music group started to talk about their good impressions, but I had to keep focused because I knew that there was still the second part to do.

The second part I felt very comfortable playing but in the end I started getting tired. Nevertheless, I finished my concert in the best way I could and I enjoyed the whole process.

I was waiting to receive different kinds of critic about the concert, but everything that people from the audience told me after the concert was very positive, especially about the flamenco part. People liked the combination of the two different styles in the concert.

I would say that the first part was more sophisticated as the music was composed by Debussy and Brahms so it requires a lot of technique and maturity, but the second part was definitely more enjoyable for the audience. A lot of people told me how much they liked the recital, making it specifically clear that the second part was outstanding. Some people have never seen a classical musician playing this kind of music, so the concert was something really different for them.

All of the positive feedback made me think about how I can continue with this project in the future, developing it more and making it real with musicians that I have in mind and trying to play concerts in different cities, and why not in different countries; as Flamenco was recognized by the UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, symbolizing the colour and romance of southern Spain.
CRITICAL AFTERTHOUGHTS

The original concept of this concert was that between the two parts, there would be a break of a few minutes before the other style starts. During this break a flamenco dancer would appear, entertaining the public and suddenly the musicians would be on the stage again following the concert with the flamenco part.

Once the second piece of the concert would be done, the lights would turn off and suddenly a flamenco dancer would be on the stage, with a focus of light on her. In my mind the dancer would catch the attention of everyone as it is not expected in a classical music concert.

After this small break of the group, the second part would start adding new lights and the dancer would sometimes be performing during this music. The lights would be very important as they create the different atmospheres in the flamenco part: different scenarios with different colours in each piece.

This did not happen because I needed a lot of people to collaborate with me, and due to Covid-19 the budget I could get for them was very low.

When I think about my next goal, I would love to apply this project in Spain this summer. I am planning to get in contact with the best musicians I know from Almería and Granada. I will look for musicians who are looking forward to start this new project together with me, so then we could have the same energy and goal.

Once I find them, we can start to put together all of our ideas, establishing the following steps. With this first part done and before the rehearsals I will start looking for venues, organizations and other people who could be interested in supporting our project.

In general, being a musician after all years of study, I start to see the importance of being able to develop my own ideas and make them work. Nowadays it is really hard to find work in music, as it always has been in the field of classical music. I am not mainly talking about being a musician
in a symphony orchestra. If you get a job in an orchestra you have to follow
the schedule of the orchestra.
I have in this written thesis been talking about my own experience as a
freelance musician, some thoughts on how to develop my own project and
ideas. I hope I can help other musicians to motivate them and have in mind
all the problems that can appear along the process, but also how to solve
them.

In the future, I would like to create my own arrangements of famous pieces
that do not have a clarinet score.
And why not, even create my own flamenco compositions based in some
Flamenco or Spanish music.
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ALBUMS


