

Soleares - © 2002 Katerina Tomás

Most flamenco scholars believe that the word *soléa* is a Gypsy abbreviation of the word *soledad*, which means loneliness. Another definition of the word *soleares* is centered on the Spanish word for sun, *sol*. Still another definition claims the word and the accompanying sentiments surrounding the song and dance *soleares* stem from the Spanish word *solar*, which means house or foundation.

The *soleares* is considered, both in song and in dance, to be the central figure around which most of Flamenco revolves. The *soleares* is also considered *cante jondo* ("deep" song): of a serious nature in song, guitar, and dance. The *letras* (lyrics) of the song generally consist of four free verses of eight syllables each, or of three verses of eight syllables each. All of the verses below are traditional as interpreted by Terremoto de Jerez, the elder:

Soleares de Jerez (Terremoto de Jerez)

Salida Le le le

Le le le le le....

Ahh... Ahhhh Ay.....

1. Ya mi mare de, mi alma
lo que, la camelo yo
lo que, la camelo yo.

BIS y es que la llevo... metia...
Ay... mu dentro de mi..i corazon

2. Yo voy a perde.. la, razon.
Yo iba a perde.. la, razon.

BIS Ay mientras yo,
hablo contigo..Ayyyyy!
que a mi me engañami. corazon.

3. Y hasta la fe.. del, bautismo.
yo la bia empeñaito por tu quere.

Por tu quere yo
la empeñao.
Yo la empeñao por tu quere.

BIS y ahora te va y me... abandona....
Ay...que te castigue, dibe.

Love in all of it's dimensions is the main theme of the *Soleares*; love of a sweetheart, brother, sister, mother, father, friend; love as joy and despair. The *Soleares* also often deals with anguish, poverty and death, but unlike a more

serious song, the *siguiriyá*, which carries these emotions to the brink of experience, the *Soléa* couches them in melody, wit, irony and laughter.

The *Soleares* is often performed as a dance. The compás (rhythmic structure) is in an alternating 3/4 and 6/8 rhythm (1-2-3, 1-2-3, 1-2, 1-2, 1-2), but dancers prefer to think of it simply as 12 counts per rhythmic cycle, with heavy accents falling on counts 3, 6, 8, 10, and 12. Often dance movements or complete holds and silences fall on count 10. Significantly enough, the dance phrase usually begins on count 12 in the letra and count 1 for footwork or *llamadas*. The dance structure is easier than *alegrías*, and generally speaking, consists of 1) salida, 2) llamada, 3) letras 4) escobillas 5) bulerías. Capturing an authentic and powerful interpretation of the lyrics and music in dance is considered to be quite difficult, and the piece is usually reserved for experienced.

Traditional dance patterns (particularly the *desplante llamada* and a backward diagonal moving stepping pattern) and other phrases handed down through time as an oral tradition, and from at least the early 19th century, are still performed today, and provide a skeletal structure for the dance choreography.

La Caña – Soléa Antigua

The above description works well for a flamenco song called *La Caña*, which is believed to be an ancient form of the *Soleares*. The major difference is that *La Caña* includes a passing phrase – *paseíllo* – that occurs at the beginning, middle and end of the song. This is sung only as the vowel “e” or “Ay”.

La Caña is performed frequently as a dance, and a famous version appears in the 1952 film *Misterio y duende del flamenco* by dancer Pilar López, who performed it and most of her flamenco dances with castanets. Both *La Caña* and *Soleares* are not performed with castanets much anymore, but rather, in the “puro” style, or without any props. The structure for *La Caña* would be as the *soleares* above, differences being that the 1) salida would include the *paseíllo*; After 3) the 1ª letra, the *paseíllo* would appear again. If the dancer chooses to end with *La Caña* (and not bulerías) the dance would probably end with an exit of the *paseíllo*. *La Caña* is also performed at a more rapid tempo than *soleares*.

La Caña - Pedro Sanz

Ya mí me pueden mandar,
Ay, mandar a servir a Dios,
A servir a Dios...y al Rey;

Pero, dejar a tu persona,
Ay, tu persona,
Y eso no lo manda,
Y eso no lo manda la ley.

Que alza y viva Ronda,
Reina de los cielos,
Y eso no lo manda,
Y eso no lo manda la ley.