

### Hybrid flamenco form - *soleares por bulerías*

Over time, a hybrid flamenco song and dance form has developed that includes aspects of both the *soleares* and the *bulerías* - *soleares por bulerías*.

Flamencologists describe *soleares por bulerías* as a song that has developed from variants of the original *soleares* into *cante* [song] versions known as *soléa corta*, a short *soléa* verse with three, instead of the normal four lines of verse:

<i>Dejo la puerta entorná</i>	I'll leave the door ajar
<i>por si alguna vez te diera</i>	in case one day you have
<i>la tentación de empujá.</i>	the temptation to enter

[Pohren 1990: 148].

Another variation is the *soleariya*, with three very brief lines:

<i>Por ti</i>	I pass the hours of the night
<i>las horitas de la noche</i>	without sleep
<i>me las paso sin dormir</i>	because of you

[Pohren 1990: 148]

Some flamencologists believe that it was the *soleariya*, which led to the development of the *bulerías cante* [Pohren 1990:147; Jung 1990: 77].

The dance *soleares por bulerías* is naturally shorter because of these short *cantes*, and the dancer improvises around these verses. The tempo for *soleares por bulerías* is faster than its solemn mother *cante* form, the *soleares*.

Pohren describes how these shorter *soléa cantes* form one of flamenco's principal flamenco songs of ardor and romance. Most other flamencologists only describe the *soleares grandes cantes* [long and serious *soleares* songs], which are about loneliness and solitude, and do not mention the *soléa corta*, *soleariya*, or the dance, *soleares por bulerías*. Pohren reports that when these shorter *soleares coplas* [songs] are about love, dancers generally interpret the *soleares* as a *soleares por bulerías* [Pohren 1990:147].

An example of this is Roberto Amaral's Zorongo Gitano, which narratively interprets the song *zorongo* as a *soleares por bulerías* and as a song of love, as Amaral

gives choreographic voice to García Lorca's verses about two lovers meeting under the moonlight.

The *soleares por bulerías* are usually performed contemporarily as abstract flamenco dances (not narrative), probably because of the continuing popularity of both the *soleares* and the *bulerías*. Like the *bulerías*, portions of the *soleares por bulerías* are danced rapidly, and fast *zapateados* [footwork segments] are often included. For uninitiated audiences it is impossible to tell the *bulerías* and the *soleares por bulerías* apart when performed at this quick tempo.

Amaral confirms that *soleares por bulerías* is a combination of the *soleares* and the *bulerías*. He describes *soleares por bulerías* as a *soleares* musically, performed in the tempo of a moderate *bulerías*. Amaral describes the *soleares por bulerías* rhythm as 6/8 time, which he feels rhythmically works well with García Lorca's *zorongo* [Thomas 1994d].

When choreographing a traditional *soleares por bulerías* Amaral states that he pays more attention to lyrics [*letras*], singing [*cante*] and mood than when improvising a traditional *bulería*. He states that traditional *soleares por bulerías* are formal, longer solo dances, and that *bulerías* are more improvisatory [Thomas 1994d].

In sum, ranging in tempo from *soleares* to fast *bulerías*, borrowing from *soleares* and *bulerías* musically and rhythmically, the *soleares por bulerías* is a hybrid flamenco song and dance, impressionistically performed more seriously than the traditional, light-hearted *bulerías*, but not as seriously as the solemn *soleares*.

A contemporary theatrical flamenco dance treatment of *soleares por bulerías* is Roberto Amaral's Zorongo Gitano, which combines the *bulerías* rhythm, the basis for dance movement, with the lyrical, musical, and emotional elements of the *soleares* to interpret García Lorca's music and poetry.

**Codified movement structure for Roberto Amaral's  
*bulerías, soleares por bulerías, and soleares bailes***

The choreographic structure of Roberto Amaral's *bulerías*, *soleares*, and *soleares por bailes*, (flamenco songs with identical rhythms) taught by him in his advanced flamenco dance class and his choreography class, are described as a way to describe the general, codified movement structure of these 12-count flamenco dances. This choreographic structure is the tool for analyzing Amaral's García Lorca-inspired dance, Zorongo Gitano.

The movements described here are traditional, and have been adapted into theatrical flamenco by Amaral. This examination can also be applied when analyzing the movement and structure of José Greco's Cordoba/Anda Jaleo, which depends upon the *bulería* rhythm as a choreographic tool.

### **Roberto Amaral's *bulerías***

#### ***Entrada* (Entrance on stage)**

The flamenco dancer, in this case, a *bailaora* [female] begins Amaral's *bulería baile* [dance] with an entrance [*entrada*], which consists of two or more sets of 12-count phrases of walking and combination walking and marking [*marcar/marcando*] steps. The dancer enters by circulating twice through the performance space in a counter-clockwise circle, from upstage to down stage, which carries the dancer roughly around the circumference of the performance space, and eventually, into the center of the stage.

#### ***Llamada* (Call to the singer)**

The dancer then "calls" to the flamenco singer, in this case the *cantaor* [male flamenco singer], by performing movements which signify this *llamada*. The movements are clear to the singer and directed towards him. The movements "call in" the singer to begin the first verse of the *bulerías cante* [song]. The dancer's steps in the *llamada* can consist of foot stamping [*zapateado/taconeo*], hand clapping [*palmas*] or body slapping, whole body movements, partial body movements, and wry or witty movements, called *pellizcos*. This opening *llamada* is usually performed to one 12-count cycle of *compás* [rhythm].

### **Opening variation**

After the opening *llamada*, the dancer performs four sets of *bulería compás* (four sets of 12 count phrases, a total of 48 counts, and one verse of the song), and includes highly individualized combinations of marking steps [*marcando*] and arm movements [*braceo*], which lead into a signature flamenco movement sequence, the *desplante*.

### ***Desplante/llamada* (breaking call)**

The *bulería desplante* is performed to two 12-count phrases [two sets of *compás*]. The *desplante* is also a *llamada* [call] to the guitarist and singer, signifying a break in the dance, a moment when the dancer will, after this *desplante*, move into the primary movement variation. The *desplante* is a specialized *llamada*, which has the same look and feeling in all flamenco dances.

The first 12-count phrase of the basic *desplante* is performed as follows:

The dancer places her left foot to the side and approximately 12 inches from her right foot on count 12. The dancer then performs three *gólpes* [strikes, stamps of the entire foot on the floor] on the right foot on counts one, two and three, as the right foot simultaneously moves directly next to the left.

On count four, the ball of the left foot [*planta*] moves directly forward approximately 12 inches, and is placed and held. On count five, the same foot (left) steps forward approximately another six inches. On count six, the right foot moves forward and next to the left foot, and performs a stamp of the foot [*gólpe*].

On count seven, the right foot moves into a *planta* [ball of the foot placed and held] directly backwards, still directly next to, and at the heel of the left foot. On count **&**<sup>1</sup>, the heel of the right foot drops [*talón*] without the ball of the right foot leaving the ground. Counts eight **&** repeat the above sequence on the right foot. Counts nine **&** repeat the above sequence on the left foot. Count ten is a foot stamp [*gólpe*] performed

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<sup>1</sup> The count of **&** (and) falls between the previous and the following count, or, on the "off beat" or *en contra tiempo* (in counter rhythm).

in place on the left foot. Count eleven is a foot stamp [*gólpe*] performed in place on the right foot.

The *desplante* described above is a codified movement sequence, developed over time, which in this simple movement form, and also in variations of this form, is immediately recognized by the guitarist and singer as a breaking (changing) point in the dance.

Arms movements [*braceo*] for the *bulerías desplante* have become codified over time, but this is only generally speaking, because many variations of *braceo* have developed for the *desplante*.

A simple *braceo* pattern can, for example, include both arms moving up and reaching out to the sides of the body with both hands flexed, with the palms facing outward (towards the sides of the walls) on counts twelve, one and two. The wrists then meet directly in front of the breast, and the elbows remain lifted and pointed to the side (towards the sides of the walls) on count three. On counts four, five and six, the wrists rotate once, the right wrist in a clockwise circle, the left in a counter-clockwise circle. Throughout this entire *braceo* movement sequence, the elbows remain lifted. On counts seven &, eight &, nine & ten, the arms slowly move down to the waist from in front of the body, and with the fingertips pointing towards the body. On count eleven, the hands are placed on the hips.

Many variations of this basic *desplante*, particularly of the *braceo*, have developed over time. This description is therefore, necessarily general.

The second 12-count set of *desplante* is individualized, and can include footwork, wrapping movements of the flamenco skirt, hand clapping on the beat [*palmas en tiempo*] or off the beat [*en contra tiempo*], *braceo*, *pellizcos* [wry, witty movements or entirely improvised movements, like skipping, miming, etc.], and numerous other variations. This second set of 12 counts is a "readying" point; an anticipatory moment for the primary section of the *bulería baile*, the variation.

### **Primary movement variation/culmination of *desplante***

After the opening 24 counts of the *desplante*, the primary variation is performed. This variation is often also considered to be part of the *desplante*. This variation includes footwork both on and off the beat [*zapateado en compás, zapateado en contra tiempo*], *braceo*, rhythmic finger snaps [*pitos*], marking steps [*marcando*], and *pellizcos* in a variety of combinations, and is performed to four or six sets of 12-count phrases, depending upon (though not entirely) the length of the singer's verse. If the variation has not been choreographed and is improvised, the length of the variation will vary from dancer to dancer.

### **Codified movement in the primary movement variation/ culmination of *desplante***

Two recognizable flamenco movement patterns which are often included in the variation, and included in Amaral's variation, are a counter-clockwise circle, which is often performed with hand clapping off the beat [*palmas en contra tiempo*] to two 12-count cycles of *compás* [rhythm]. This circle is performed in a large or small area by the dancer during the variation, and it is a way to increase the speed of the variation and to check tempos with the guitarist.

The dancer can perform foot stamps [*gólpes*] while moving around in the circle, or a combination of stamps and marking steps, and generally speaking, the latter combination of movements is performed more often in contemporary flamenco.

The other recognizable codified movement pattern, a pattern which is performed in all 12-count flamenco dances, is a diagonal traveling step which proceeds as follows:

The dancer begins on count 12 with the right foot moving and stopping on the right ball of the foot [*planta*] in a diagonal line at approximately 45 degrees, traveling from down stage left to upstage right (approximately). On count 1 the right foot lowers and steps onto the foot with no sound. On count 2 the left foot glides or steps in front of and is placed for a brief moment in front of the right foot. Counts 3 and 4 are identical to

counts 1 and 2. Count 5 is identical to count 2, but the left foot is placed in back, instead of in front of the right foot.

Count 6 places the right foot in front of the left, and the dancer often noticeably turns out the feet at this moment.

Count 7 is held in place. On count 8, the dancer pivots on the balls of both feet to face the other down stage diagonal at an approximate 45 degree angle.

Count 9 is held in place. On count 10, the dancer steps on the left foot while lifting the right knee close to the chest. The right toe is pointed. On count 11, the dancer places the right leg and foot in front of the left foot and leg. Also on count 11, the action of the lifting leg lifts the skirt of the dancer, creating a ruffling effect. The movement sequence is then performed to the other side beginning on the left foot.

This description is very basic, and variations of this diagonal codified movement phrase can also include footwork on and off the beat [*zapateado en tiempo/zapateado en contra tiempo*], as well as various combinations of arm gestures [*braceo*] and hand/wrist gestures and movements [*muñecas*].

### **Final *desplante*/llamada (breaking call)**

After the variation, the dancer performs another initial *desplante* [breaking movement "call"] of 24 counts (two sets of 12-count phrases/two sets of 12-count *compás*), which can be slightly (or sometimes, even radically) different movement from the first *desplante*, but the basic rhythmic structure of the *desplante* is always the same. This basic structure is important, because the singer and guitarist must be clear about the signaling of a new *desplante*. In other words, even with some movement variations, the movements for the first 12 counts of the *desplante* must rhythmically, or through movement, signify a danced *desplante*.

The second 12 counts of the *desplante* are choreographed and improvised footwork on the beat [*zapateado en tiempo*] and marking steps [*marcando*]. These

twelve counts are a "readying," anticipatory moment for the final section of the *bulería baile*, the *salida*.

### ***Salida (exit)***

The dancer then performs a *salida*, [exit] to usually two 12 count phrases (two sets of *compás*). The *salida* exits the dancer on a diagonal line traveling from down stage left to upstage right, (or vice versa, depending upon where the previous movement has ended) at an approximate 45 degree angle, and from the main performance space back into the *cuadro flamenco* formation, which is up stage and center stage. The dancer ends the *bulerías* variation with a *pellizco*, which in this instance is a clap and mimicking gesture towards the audience during the last 12-count phrase, on count 10. The dancer holds the final two counts of the dance, counts 11 and 12, and after the dance is finished, returns to the *cuadro flamenco* ensemble, sitting in a chair. Another dancer, this time a *bailaor* [male flamenco dancer] enters the performance area to begin his *bulería baile*.

### **Robert Amaral's *soleares/soleares por bulerías***

Roberto Amaral's *soleares* incorporates many of the same elements as his *bulerías*. This brief description of Amaral's *soleares* and *soleares por bulerías bailes* [dances] are included here so that the reader may refer to the previous movement descriptions for the *bulerías*, which are more detailed and inform the movement descriptions of the *soleares* and *soleares por bulerías*.

Generally speaking, the tempo is slower in the *soleares*, but when footwork is performed, the *soleares* can be danced rapidly and at this point, the *soleares* often changes into *soleares por bulerías*.

The structure of the *soleares* in its entirety varies from the *bulerías* in many ways, particularly impressionistically. The *soleares* is a long, solo dance, incorporating all of the elements in the previously described *bulerías*. However, these elements are elongated in the *soleares*, and may not be performed in the same sequence as the *bulerías*.

Obviously, both dances begin with an *entrada*, and the *soleares* usually ends with a

*salida* which exits upstage and then strikes a pose, or a *salida* which exits by leaving the stage.

Many versions of the *soleares* are performed by Amaral, and I include a brief description which does not go into as much detail as the detailed description of *bulerías*. I learned this *soleares*, which includes an ending [*remate*] of *soleares por bulerías*, from Amaral in 1992.

The dancer begins with one 12-count clapped *llamada*, and then performs three 12-count *compás* cycles of marking steps [*marcando*] and [*braceo*]. The marking steps travel (the feet move and glide) on the heavy accents of 3, 7, 8 and 10, which places the dancer in the performance space, center stage on count 12.

The dancer continues to mark, incorporating arm gestures, [*braceo*], traveling on the heavy accent counts for another four sets of 12-counts (48 counts total). The dancer then performs a long, rapid series of foot stamps on the beat [*gólpes en tiempo*] and off the beat [*en contra tiempo*] for four more sets of 12-count *compás* [rhythmic cycles] and the tempo of the dance increases and moves into a 12-count danced *llamada*. The dancer has "called" in the singer with this *llamada*.

Throughout the next section of the dance, which is this main section, the dancer performs marking steps with arm gestures [*braceo*], incorporating short sections of footwork of approximately 2 to 4 sets of *compás* each. This section of the *soleares* is usually improvised by the dancer to the singer's verses, and varies in length. Amaral's variation section has approximately 12 sets of *compás* [twelve sets with 12 counts in each set]. The overall tone of the dance, and the impression the dancer gives the audience, is serious.

A feature not included in the *bulerías*, but often included in the *soleares*, and included in Amaral's *soleares*, is a long segment of footwork, called the *escobilla*. Shorter *escobillas* can be included in *bulerías* variations, but often they are not.

After the *escobilla*, the mood and tempo of the *soleares* switches to the faster *soleares por bulerías*, and the dancer performs combinations of rhythmic hand claps on the beat [*palmas en tiempo*]) and off the beat [*en contra tiempo*], arm gestures [*braceo*], skirt work [*trabajo de la falda*], rhythmic finger snaps [*pitos*], and many gliding and lifting steps of the legs and knees. This section is closer to the *bulerías* in structure than the slower movement in the *soleares*, and the recognizable sections of *desplantes* [breaking movement "calls"] and movement variations, including the recognizable codified movement phrases, come into play. This ending section of the *soleares*, which has changed into a *soleares por bulerías*, has approximately 8 to 12 sets of 12-count *compás*.

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