

# Flamenco in San Diego

Surfers, Hippies, Navy, and Andaluzas

# The flamenco scene in the US

- ▶ Several cities have active communities of flamenco artists: e.g., New York, Chicago, Miami, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and San Diego
- ▶ These include Americans, Latinx, and some Spaniards
- ▶ Flamenco became known in the US, largely through dance companies of the 20th Century and guitar soloists such as Sabicas, Carlos Montoya y Mario Escudero
- ▶ Beginning in the 1960s, the American flamenco aficionados have had more contact with Spain and more appreciation of flamenco singing

# San Francisco - from North Beach to Morón de la Frontera

- ▶ The San Francisco flamenco scene goes back over a century; however, the current scene has its roots in the beat scene of the late 1950s (Dumas 2012)
- ▶ The Old Spaghetti Factory - a refurbished pasta Factory in North Beach became a beat hangout in the 50s.
- ▶ David Jones (Serva) - the first American student of Diego del Gastor
- ▶ Then various American guitarists made their pilgrimage to Morón
- ▶ By the 1970s, the scene was dominated by the distinctive Morón style - 'Hippie flamenco'

# San Francisco

- ▶ The San Francisco scene has consisted of:
  - ▶ Counter-culture Americans, attracted to the Gitano-style flamenco of Morón
  - ▶ Latinx (from the Mission District)
  - ▶ A few Spaniards (e.g., Rosa Montoya)
- ▶ Major groups of the 70s:
  - ▶ Los Flamencos de la Bodega
  - ▶ Teatro Flamenco
  - ▶ Ballet de Rosa Montoya

# The Old Spaghetti Factory



# San Diego

- ▶ The San Diego scene also has a counter-culture element, with several differences:
  - ▶ Less of a connection with Morón
  - ▶ The Cold War played a role
  - ▶ A larger Spanish community
  - ▶ Two important features: the beach and the Navy

# Surfers

- ▶ San Diego's counterculture of the 50s and 60s was dominated by surfers and beach bums
- ▶ Beatnik coffee houses
- ▶ Guitars were ubiquitous on beaches and coffee houses
- ▶ Flamenco-style music became popular (e.g., Malagueña)
- ▶ Spanish flamenco guitar virtuoso Mario Escudero lived in Los Angeles

# David Cheney

- ▶ Surfer 'beach bum' from La Jolla, Windensea Beach (see 'The Pump House Gang', Tom Wolfe)
- ▶ Spent time in Granada's Sacromonte area in the 50s and 60s, working in the flamenco cave venues (Niño de California) - he had originally gone to Spain to make surfboards in Torremolinos
- ▶ After returning to California, he played in coffeehouses and restaurants, occasionally playing for dancers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vg7oHvy9Q5w>

Fifty minutes of relaxing seated beside the small waves with classic flamenco guitar by the late David Cheney. Do your yoga, mix your cocktail, hoist your Pacifico, or Bogart your J - all is good



# Paco Sevilla

- ▶ (William Stanley) First Heard Spanish guitar on the beach
- ▶ Went to Spain in 1964 - had a class with Paco de Lucía and played a bit in Madrid's Amor de Dios dance studios
- ▶ After returning, he organized performances with various dancers - e.g., Juana de Alva y Reyna
- ▶ Wrote several books on flamenco

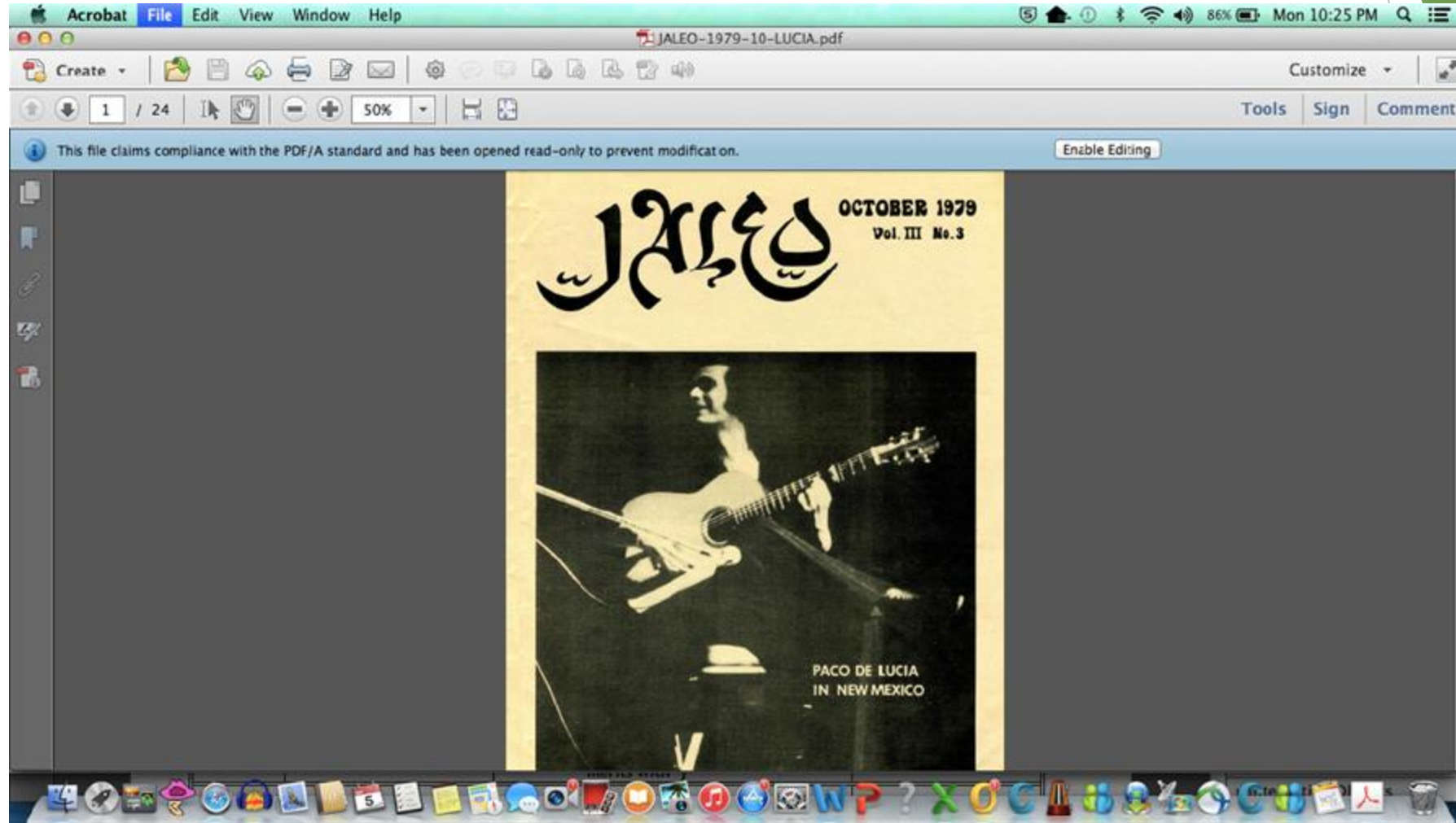
# Dancers in San Diego

- ▶ Juana de Alva - studied in Spain with La Quica, among others. Toured with Pilar López's company, along with her dancer husband
- ▶ Rayna (Debbie Ray) - studied with Luisa Triana (Antonio Triana's sister) in Los Ángeles); worked in José Greco's company
- ▶ These were the two major dancers in San Diego during the 1970s
- ▶ Both worked with Paco Sevilla
- ▶ Very little *cante* at that that time in San Diego

# Flamenco Association of San Diego

- ▶ A San Diego flamenco association was formed in the late 70s - Paco Sevilla, Juan de Alva, Rayna, among others
- ▶ They organized fiestas ('juergas') in private houses
- ▶ In 1977 they first published *Jaleo magazine*, edited by Paco Sevilla and Juana de Alva; it continued until 1992
- ▶ Circulation throughout the US
- ▶ It featured articles on flamenco artists (both from Spain and the US), flamenco topics, opinions, advertisements, and San Diego fiesta reports

# Jaleo



# The Cold War - the arrival of españolas

- ▶ Because of the Cold War, the US began establishing military bases in Spain in the 1950s.
- ▶ San Diego has a large naval presence, which is an important aspect of its culture
- ▶ Some US Naval personnel, stationed in Rota, married Spanish women. Several of these couples ended up in San Diego
- ▶ This formed the foundation of San Diego's Spanish community - mainly Andalusian women - sometimes Gitanas

# Andaluzas and flamenco in San Diego

- ▶ The Navy base in Rota played an important role in the development of flamenco in San Diego
- ▶ Some of the Andaluzas arrived with some knowledge of flamenco or a family tradition of flamenco (e.g., the Agujetas)
- ▶ They attended the association fiestas and saw there was a lack of *cante*

# El cante in the US

- ▶ Overall, there has been a lack of *cante* in the US flamenco scene
- ▶ It is very difficult to learn, if one has not grown up with it
- ▶ There were a few Spanish singers in US cities - e.g. New York
- ▶ Others - not Spanish - learned to sing, with variable success
- ▶ Since some of the Spanish women in San Diego already sang a bit or had potential to sing, they studied *cante*
- ▶ This way, San Diego is unique in the US, with about a dozen Spanish *canatorias*
- ▶ Juana Agujetas:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aNfPDWN\\_H7M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aNfPDWN_H7M)

# Casa de España

- ▶ The Spanish women who met in the fiestas established a Spanish cultural organization - La Casa de España
- ▶ Many members were navy wives, although other Spaniards, living in San Diego, joined
- ▶ Although this organization was not uniquely associated with flamenco, there was considerable cross-over with the flamenco community



# Remedios Flores

- ▶ Not all of the cantaoras were Navy wives - for example, Remedios Flores - A Gitana from Ronda and cousin to Rancapino, arrived with a US guitarist (Rodrigo)



# Academia de Baile - Juanita Franco

- ▶ Sevillana dancer Juanita Franco studied with Enrique el Cojo
- ▶ She began dancing at the Hotel Cristina when she was 12
- ▶ She met her husband there - an ex-military contractor - she married at 14 and moved to the US in 1954, arriving in San Diego in 1963
- ▶ After many years without dancing, she began again in the 70s because of the fiestas
- ▶ She established a dance academy in 1996 - she has taught most of the San Diego dancers - many from the local Mexican-American community

# Juanita Franco



# Mixing of cultures

- ▶ The San Diego flamenco scene is based on a mix of cultures:
  - ▶ Early counterculture surfers, later hippies
  - ▶ Ex-pat Spanish women
  - ▶ Their Navy husbands
  - ▶ Mexican and Mexican-Americans
- ▶ All come together in a large yearly fiesta

# Fiesta Fin de Verano

- ▶ William 'Basilio' Cerevolo and his then wife Pilar Morena (Málaga) began a Labor Day weekend flamenco fiesta - Fiesta Fin de Verano
- ▶ It began as a private after-party for a concert given by El Pollito de California in the early 1990s
- ▶ Now, aficionados from all over the US attend, plus Spanish artists reaching up to 300 attendees
- ▶ They camp out in Basilio's property

# Basilio



# Fiesta Fin de Verano

- ▶ A fee to cover costs
- ▶ They artists give workshops during the day
- ▶ Evening shows in the amphitheater
- ▶ There is a bar and a kitchen - all food and drink is included
- ▶ Many artists from San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco, ...

# The Bar





# Paella



# Lodging



# Amphitheater



# Cantaores



# Lakshmi “La Chimi”



# Javier Herredia



# El Pollito de California

- ▶ John Lane 'El Pollito' from San José, California - grandson of the mayor, son of a doctor, and from an eccentric Irish-American family
- ▶ Became a folk music enthusiast (he met Woody Guthrie in New York)
- ▶ Went to Spain to study philology
- ▶ Spent time in Sacromonte, where he worked in the caves and learned to sing and dance
- ▶ Later worked in Los Canasteros was on the La Jungla radio show in Madrid
- ▶ Known for his humorous - often original - rumbas, tangos, and bulerías - signing dancing and playing guitar

# Resaca - El Pollito de California

► [Resaca](#)



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbxpu9izc\\_U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbxpu9izc_U)