

THE PIANO AND THE OLIVETTI

I was not aware that the sound filling the afternoons of my childhood was so full of compass. Keys at the end, from a typewriter or a piano, that have made us enjoy with their union through a theme full of swing and magic. *La máquina y el tiempo* is another example of the odd creations of David Peña Dorantes, who is able to turn an occurrence into a transcendent work, as difficult to label as his music. One hears that catchy rattle and sees the head searching of the Machados, Albertis, Lorcás or Félix Grande, who have also composed “their music” by a keyboard blow to make our flamenco bigger and more intelligible. The easy thing (and necessary) is to resort to the genes when referring to Dorantes. Nothing has been more determining in his career than the family where he was born. The Pinini, the Perrata, the Lebrijano,


Pedro Bacán or Pedro Peña are not invented names. He was in front of the house with a huge musical garden and escaped through the back door to an unknown wasteland. There he sought to be different for the whole culture, because the ancient pianos of José Romero and Arturo Pavón were valid references but far from his horizon. Today, in addition to his privileged blood, it will be unfair not to emphasize his effort (his rebellion?) to twist the roads and build a monument for the flamenco: his piano. In 20 years of career, it is possible to imagine many afternoons of listeners standing up but also of hours of silent work and incomprehension to become one of the most moving artists of the Spanish music.

Let's go for many years more. Do not stop the music.

David Calzado

Journalist and cultural manager.

Collaborator in the ABC journal.



TIME FOR WITNESS

The innovative position of the Sevillian pianist lays down masterful courses of intense sound and characteristic sense of rhythm. It is enough with feeling his beat which – as well as in his body – throbs in his compositions, in his atmosphere and in his own universe. Dorantes has been able to create, to renowned World Music, a virtuous piano that can speak different languages, from the deepest roots of flamenco – going through classic flamenco – to rip up in the purest and most exquisite jazz. Dorantes is joy, elegance, virtuosity, character; an artist who gives meaning and freshness to the piano. His technique is flawless, and he displays agility, mastery and musicality, embracing the tapping in the piano. His hands went over the keyboard; occasionally intertwining to reach the impossible. But the most important thing is that Dorantes achieved what everyone was expecting: thrill the audience (hurray for his mother!). They were all reflecting with the aged voice streaming out of his blood.

TIME FOR WITNESS
... to Seville

D O R A N T E S



Since the piano solo at the beginning of the concert it is corroborated the elegance running over the mentioned disc 'Sin Muros'. The double bass and drums players join in the brief introduction creating an atmosphere that will last until the end. I presume it is very important that the musician or the group in live concerts are talented to create a logical speech, consistent ideas, or the



concept at the transmission... that is: to be able to produce an ideal milieu where public can be swept along.

We are not in front of a classic concert exactly; there is nothing similar to what we know as jazz plainly. We are neither facing a flamenco nor a classical music concert. According to what I could see and sense, I imagine that when Dorantes introduces himself at a jazz festival, he plans the concert logically. And not because of that he forgets his different perspectives; during the whole concert we could perfectly sense flamenco inside him as well as his classic academic training. But we were ahead of Jazz. Why am I so sure? Because what I saw at the stage – despite the display of great compositions – it was pure improvisation and especially exploration of instrument sounds (mostly the piano and the drums), so that music could overflow in a unique and unrepeatably way. Some-

times I thought many people could be surprised by the new ideas performed by David, but in light of the applause and the enthusiasm shown I realised I was wrong. Although I have already written it in a previous article, I would like to repeat what a friend of mine told me once: 'Never do simple things taking for granted that people from audience is dumb... since, in this case, the only dumb person is you. If you display something correctly without the intention of laughing at them, they will reward you for that'.

With respect to the other two musicians that accompany Dorantes, Francis Pose is a prestigious double bass player, very in demand among excellent musicians. To figure out, he

has worked with Jorge Pardo, Perico Sambeat, Chano Domínguez, Pedro Iturralde, etc. So, what can he offer at scenery? – What you can all imagine: wisdom, professionalism, great improvisation and too much interaction as well as mutual understanding with his mates. He is an outstanding double bass player, and so he showed us.

About the young Javier Ruibal (son of the greatest guitarist), he makes a rich percussion work both in sound and technique. He constantly makes changes during the concert. Drumsticks sometimes. Brus-

hes others. He even plays the drums with his hands, creating different and unusual acoustics. As it can be read at Dorantes' webpage: 'Javi Ruibal, the 29 year-old young man to whom we may take into consideration and stop calling him 'Junior', since he is able to fly high and free without the need for emeritus surnames'.

In conclusion, an excellent night. Dorantes' last work tittle become visible during the concert: Dorantes is limitless. ■

Jesús Mateu Rosselló

Yes, in light of the result of the events, it was fair imaging that Dorantes' career is one of the most interesting, solvent, creative and completed one of the Spanish Contemporary Music. Yesterday's concert at Cervantes Theatre cleared all doubts up. It is possible that for those who expected the most Andalusian-style Dorantes (in this sense, Dorantes seems to be as Lorca: the more he distances from his homeland, the more he expresses himself) were disappointed, in spite of the powerful and indubitable glance to flamenco. But when the musician baptised his new disc 'Sin muros', he couldn't be more explicit (in contrast to those who resort to similar ways as simple manifestation of intentions). Yesterday's concert was such a generous performance that it could turn out overwhelming at some times. But if it is there anything that characterise Dorantes (at present, rather than ten years ago) it is his sense of harmony: the pianist experimented with everything fairly, without diverting attention from beauty. The result was truly extraordinary. The public had a great time and got to know what the trio offered. There were signs of maturity from both the musicians and the public.



THREE ARE WELL ENOUGH

Pablo Bujalance

In honor of an endless learning (the best teachers often go back to be the most amateurs), Dorantes showed courage to do whatever he wanted yesterday. It sounded classical flamenco with a taste of Falla and Paco de Lucía. But out of the blue he turned romantic and competed with Chopin, or limited himself to minimalist directions remembering Steve Reich; or adopted Bill Evans style at the piano; or summoned spirits and started seeking the harmonic impossible beyond the keyboard. Dorantes knows when to be tonal and when to stop it. The insurance for his left hand should outpace the one for Cristiano Ronaldo's calf. Francis Posé and Javi Ruibal were up to scratch. Wise men with authority. What a holy trinity. ■



The pianist from Lebrija goes on and on pleasing us within an intelligent, wise and perfectly studied inventiveness. Not a loose end.

DORANTES, PURE MUSIC

Manuel Solís

He didn't need any singing or dancing. Just Francis Posé's excellent double bass and Javi Ruibal's extraordinary skill and efficiency playing the drums, a 29 year-old young man to whom we may take into consideration and stop calling him 'Junior', since he is able to fly high and free without the need for emeritus surnames.


From flamenco we cannot listen too much; we rather listen to it delicately, since it is obvious that the Sevillian – coming from where he comes – has it streaming through his veins. But we can listen to the rest of music styles, especially jazz, reminding us at some times the crowding moments of improvisations at unforgettable and historical Jazz nights in Montreal, where

Dorantes concluded the last edition, just the same year of the death of his distinguished founder. It reminded me the 15-20 minutes largos consumed by jazz musicians at these stages while they thrill the audience, bursting into clap at the end of phrasing or improvisations. But beyond flamenco and jazz is music; that is what we could savor at Dorantes' recital. ■

Dorantes

perfectly knows how to use the times as well as to reward his loyal mates. He leaves a place for everyone: for Francis solos, who accompanied himself the chords by a guttural sound that seemed to come from the selfsame Guillespie's wild diatribes – a wonder double bass player that enjoyed with David Peña's pranks. The same as Javi Ruibal, who told me at the end of the concert that it was a real luxury playing for him.

Dorantes has gained seriousness, wisdom, freshness, improvisation and autonomy to do whatever he wants without bonds or responsibilities – neither with his surname nor with the style. He is breaking down walls and I don't really think that is his ambition. It is actually his own need to introduce himself in other different disciplines that, despite had been born somewhere else, they are much closed to flamenco. His repertoire is a transparent display of his inquisitiveness. He knows how to trade it outwards and set up – by the hand of a piano, a bass and some drums – a band, as at the origins of jazz. As Javier Ruibal (father) said in his disc 'Pensión Triana': 'what an awesome band'. ■



*Pure music. What a pleasure!
It was high time that
I didn't enjoy music as much as
I did with Dorantes last night,
at the inauguration of
'Flamenco Viene del Sur'
festival, the perfect opening for
2013. It couldn't have been
any better beginning.*

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LIMITLESS AT CERVANTES FESTIVAL

Françoise Chabassier

And the result was impressive. The pianist, accompanied by the double bass player Francis Posé and the drummer Javi Ruibal, offered his public a magnificent concert in which flamenco and jazz became fused perfectly. He performed compositions from 'Sin Muros' (bulerias), 'Atardecer' (guajira), 'Errante' (tangos) – performed for the first time in La Campana in honor of Cristo de los Gitanos –, 'Libertad entre rejas' (granaina), 'Cuatro lenguas de amor' (bulerias), etc. The audience made a special connection with Dorantes. They called him by his name, they asked him questions, and they flattered and

clapped him, all that during the concert as if they were a family. In the meantime, his fingers did not seem to be of a human being. They flew above the keyboard making the strings sound. The public at Cervantes Festival was euphoric.

But he also knows how to fade his sound for Francis Posé solos and his guttural chords, or so that Javi Ruibal can do magic with his drums. By means of the piano, the double bass and the drums, Dorantes has created a real band, as in the distant past at the beginning of Jazz.



They ask me for a review and I criticise, just making a constructive criticism. I tried not to do it but it was impossible. A delightful and highbrow performance.

Dorantes comes from a prestigious family of famous flamenco artists. Son of Pedro Peña, grandson of María la Perrata and nephew of Juan Peña 'El Lebrijano', he is related to Fernanda and Bernarda de Utrera. But he has succeeded through the piano, an unusual instrument in flamenco. Until the nineties it was unthinkable to play another instrument apart from the guitar, the box drums and the castanets.

In spite of being a great musician, he is a great man involved in difficult causes. For him, flamenco is an attitude without walls or prejudices. Attitude to do what he loves. Flamenco opens his world and the lyrics of his songs speak for himself. They are poems and thoughts that he has written encouraged by the amount of injustices for origin, race or sexual orien-

tation reasons. He has said: 'I think it's important to be flexible as well as to be able to understand what is next to us'.

Nowadays, flamenco is an art which suffers, to a lesser extent, the consequences of the current economy crisis. Dorantes wonders whether it is due to the fact that it is an immaterial heritage. Or maybe because it is a cultural distinguishing mark? Or because it is demanded by tourism? – It is as if we asked why we should protect the Alhambra, the Mosque-Cathedral of Cordoba or the Alcazar of Seville. ■

DORANTES TRÍO BURST INTO WITH MAGNIFICENT JAZZ, MEXICO

To reinterpret traditional music roots from a contemporary vision is a challenge that very few musicians have reached. David Peña Dorantes, leading Dorantes Trío in, is a masterful pianist who has gone through music frontiers taking us to a new music world where the classic meets the innovative.

Great renowned contemporary music artists were introduced at the Cervantine International Festival, which took place in 'Mesón de San Antonio'. Dorantes Trío was there as a flamenco latest wave benchmark.

This trio's music proposal consists of updating flamenco, the preferred genre in the Iberian Peninsula, with a radical shift on its instruments: replacing the guitar by the piano. His distinctive sound captivated the public at the cervantine night.

Pedro Velázquez

This trio's music proposal consists of updating flamenco, the preferred genre in the Iberian Peninsula, with a radical shift on its instruments: replacing the guitar by the piano. His distinctive sound captivated the public at the cervantine night. Their compositions made the walls thunder by the melodic, rhythmic and generic contrast in the pieces. The concert started with a pleasant, touching and romantic melody



which adorned with multiple sighs to the audience. However, dynamic tones immediately burst in showing David Peña's proficiency as well as musical genius.

It was a night in which rhythmic fluctuations and emotional ups and downs kept the public waiting for the following melodic variation. Besides the fact that this excellent musician recalled the saddest feelings, he aroused a marvelous euphoria and joy in his spectators. Every single interpretation resembled a brilliant musical excitement plus a melodic ritual.

David Peña has been named as the reformer of flamenco tradition because of changing the guitar and standard musical notes for an extraordinary versatility with the piano. It turned out marvelous that at the same time as he was touching the piano with his right hand, he was putting pressure on the strings with his left one, creating 'suffocated' sounds that nuanced the explosiveness in his compositions.

At this concert he was accompanied by the double bass player Francis Pose, who explored to the maximum not only his instrument's resounding capacity but its resonant quality.

Javi Ruibal played the percussion instruments with a magnificent subtlety. He set aside classic drumsticks and used his hands to play the drum producing a both timid and enveloping sound. ■

Dorantes Trío captivated with a renovated flamenco at the C.I.F., a fact that will not fall on deaf ears for a long time in 'Mesón de San Antonio'



WHEN THE TRIO SOUNDS

J. Fernández Bustos

There is nothing like a great band to improvise. David Peña Dorantes, despite having been at the Corral quite some time with Eva 'Yerbabuena', comes for the first time as a soloist.

From the first moment he knows he is in a box of chocolates; in his words, a lovely stage, with a lovely audience and in a lovely city. Hardly with 250 seats, every concert becomes homely, as a recital for friends. That is its spirit, from early on. The musician, the musicians, have an hour and a half to show their intimacy, to reveal themselves, to share with a dedicated public involved in sound and lighting. The artist speaks freely. He has to gamble it all and show his cards: a bit of his experience and a bit of what is yet to come.

Dorantes is sure about it and goes for something new and unrepeatable; notes and melodies inside his head along with contemporary music. With a classic but powerful academic training; with a modern and open character; but above all with an exceptional energy, the pianist from Lebrija, is carried along accompanied by the double bass player Francis Posé and the drummer Javier Ruibal. Both of them have been going with him for a long time, and these three work excellent together.

To be honest, jazz prevailed over flamenco. The whole concert was a jazzy creation, except for a wink to 'zambra caracolera' at the beginning and at the party or the lullaby.

Making a mental exercise, we could also distinguish guajira exhibitions at the second cut. But do not be deceived, flamenco is in his blood. Emotion is guaranteed and our 'olé' is let out unpurposely. Dorantes brings over Caribbean rhythms, as bolero or ballad.

The drummer plays with brushes or with his open hands, which are the best ways to be without shri-llness. The double bass player is discreet but when he improvises, he sings his songs at the same time he caresses the four strings. Both of them are memorable.



After the applause and as a gift, **Dorantes** played '**Orobroy**', his distinguishing theme belonging to the disc '**Orobroy**', 1998.

In a sense, the trio did not stop bringing already recorded compositions closer though. Especially from his third and last recording

work ('**Sin muros**', 2012). As, for example, 'Errante' – dedicated tangos to Sevillian gypsies, performed by José Mercé – or the '**Sin muros ni candados**' buleria, in which Dorantes gives himself body and soul. He is guided by his spirit. The nomadism of his nation it is not physical nor by wagon any more. But it is of mind and creative.

'**Sin muros**' means limitless, without destination, but with a real past and conscience of race, as well as with the conviction that all kind of music have the same connection. ■



'Dorantes is achieving with the piano, by leaps and bounds, what Paco de Lucía did with the guitar'

Jose Luis Navarro

Dorantes (born in Lebrija, 1969) can be considered the patriarch of modern flamenco piano. Despite some precedents in the mid-20th century, this discipline had never met with any such impact or evolution before. By the appearance of 'Orobroy' in 1998 the modern era for this instrument in flamenco undoubtedly started.

DORANTES

A fairly evenly split musician between roots in flamenco and academic origins, David is a pure-blood artist (he belongs to one of the oldest flamenco gitano lineage: Los Peñas - Perrate - Pinini - Bacán), he plays the guitar wonderfully and has a good command of every instrument in the musical world of his time. And as a pianist he is definitely one of the most important leading figure in flamenco from the 20th to 21st century (Pablo San Nicasio). Among other characteristics, Dorantes has been recognised for being the first one in totally distancing the guitar in flamenco piano compositions and in not making use of established harmonies. Dorantes has set trends. ■



FRANCIS POSÉ

Born in Málaga, he started playing the electric bass guitar in pop music concerts and took double bass as well as music theory classes at Conservatorio Superior de Música de Málaga afterwards, alternating them with jazz self-taught learning and band concerts.

In 1985, he met Ian Henry (pianist) and joined in his trio going through the Spanish territory. Since 1987 to 1990 he alternated his performances with teaching and run the first Jazz and Modern Music School founded in Málaga (Ateneo de Música y Danza). Since then he has spent his time composing and playing his own pieces of music, enclosing them in his recordings, besides experimenting in all music fields seeking a new direction (Flamenco, Funky, Latin, Afro, Classic, Innovative music, and so on).

He is a versatile musician and an improvisation music styles lover.



JAVI RUIBAL

Javi Ruibal de Flores Inchaurreondo is a percussionist and a drummer born in El Puerto de Santa María (Cádiz) on 9th July 1983. He is also a sound engineer graduated from CEV Escuela Superior de Comunicación, Imagen y Sonido in 2000 with a European recognised diploma. At the age of 15 he started in music professionally walking by his father Javier Ruibal around the world. He later took popular music studies for a year (2003) learning from Guillermo Mc Guill. And afterwards, a pair of years at Creative Music School (2004-2006) where he complements his studies with musical language and piano training. In 2007 he took classes by Ruy López Nussa (drummer) and Adel González (conga player) during three months in Cuba. In 2009 took a Swing intensive course with Ian Froman in New York. Son of the greatest Javier Ruibal, he has known how to absorb his essence to be nowadays a famous drummer and percussionist. Apart from being endorser for Ludwig, Sabian and Vic Firth among others, he is about to make a box drum public, designed only and exclusively by himself and crafted hand in hand with PRK team. 'As I like describing this kind of artists: he is not exceptional; he is out of the ordinary. Because there are remarkable musicians on the one hand, and others who are out of the ordinary on the other hand.

But, why are they extraordinary? Because of the way they put concepts into practice, or the way they know their instruments. They all have *something* that situate themselves on another level; as if we were talking about a musical alternate reality. That is why I consider Javi Ruibal an extraordinary drummer'.

PHOTOS
AND DESIGN/
JAVIER CARÓ

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