

DORANTES: "EL TIEMPO POR TESTIGO"



Teresa Fernandez Herrera 04/10/2017 BLOGS, Música y Teatro Dejar comentario

He is David Peña Dorantes, Dorantes for art. He has the honor of introducing the piano in the flamenco with a revolutionary virtuosity. He has given concerts all over the world, with artists coming from a thousand different musics. He has a museum of prizes, all of them deserved. Because he's different, a music researcher. Personally conveys an sweetness that excites. Now, this universal Lebrijano, has just released his album *El tiempo por testigo* and that's what we're going to talk about in this interview, about time in all its aspects, from all possible angles.



Teresa Fernández. The time for witness represents the images and experiences of twenty years of your life, in which you update the time and the feelings of seven tracks from past albums and you look forward to *La Maquina*, *Y el tiempo* and *Barejones*, the neighborhood of your childhood. Can you give me a reflection of something about it, in an intimate key?

Dorantes. It is difficult to take it to words, because in twenty years I have lived many experiences thanks to the music and the characters that have always surrounded me and have led me to this musical banquet. My uncle Vicente, brother of my grandfather Bernardo Peña is very important in my life; He had a very delicate, very sweet soleá singing, and we give more importance to the small details, the sweetness, more than exaggerating it. All the characters that appeared in my life since childhood defined me ... Then there is my uncle Juan El Lebrijano that marks me from a more musical point of view, more in the way of how to be musicians. And my grandmother, with the delicacy with which she sang, I have learned from her own love to face the music, to interpret. And my father, who has been in charge of telling me, 'If you're going to be a musician, you have to study.' He studied, was a teacher, wanted to be a doctor but my grandfather fell ill and could not be. So I come from there, the most intimate flamenco. In the conservatory, neither his philosophy nor the people around me had anything to do with it. I studied the career, I was playing pieces of all the great masters, but I never wanted to leave the flamenco language that I had learned when i was a child, I felt it was something special, that my classmates in the conservatory did not have and I knew it, but I was not aware of the advantages it supposed. Then you get older and you realize that what I've learned from the characters of my childhood gives me something different from other types of music. And comes the experience of traveling, of going up on stage. These are twenty years to carve myself and the years to come will continue defining me.



TF. Gypsy pride is recurrent in many subjects and projects throughout your career ... It is as if you had deeply rooted the suffering of centuries in the broad sense, let us say European.

Dorantes. True, but without touching the fanaticism at all. It is true that the pride of being a gypsy is great, I am proud to be a gypsy, but that pride does not make me feel different at any moment. I feel very proud of what I am and what I have inherited, but I feel like one in society and I believe that others see me as one in society. Being a gypsy gives you a culture that comes from your past. True that musically it gives a different color and also in life, in a different scale of values, neither better nor worse, at any moment we believe that being a gypsy is better. It is a reality that is inherited, a matter of deep feeling. When it comes to flamenco I get a lot of memories of childhood, in the form of phrasing, my uncle Vicente singing soleá, my uncle Bastian singing seguiriyas, my uncle Pedro Bacán playing the guitar, my aunts from Utrera, the Fernanda singing soleá and the Bernarda singing bulerías. The sweetness and creativity of my grandmother, all that is in my flamenco with motive and all that makes me feel good.

TF. You're missing a word, David. I think what you feel is a lot of love for flamenco.

Dorantes. Totally. This was passed on to me by my father and all the others members of my family. I have been given love, because it is true that flamenco is music, but it is also coexistence. It is a philosophy of life and a way of relation between each other. This weekend was the birthday of a niece of mine, There were my four brothers, my parents... So there was a time we were all singing, we do because we really need it, we transmit love and we get together. And at the same time, that moment that we are together serves us to educate our children. My children are educated in knowing how to be, in the sensitivity there is, they know they can not speak when someone is singing, they can not go through the middle because the magic moment disappears, a lot of little details that later will suit them in life . It's not just music and party, no, it's something much deeper.



TF. The pianola in the house of your grandmother Maria la Perrata and the conservatory are related?

Dorantes. The pianola has a very special meaning. Because it was the first instrument whose sound involved me and caught me. I was going to my grandmother's house, and there was that piano that no one was

playing anymore and it seemed that it was waiting for me, because I went through the door and I go directly to it. I do not remember it as a piece of furniture, but with personality, with identity and I was looking for the voice of that instrument that for me had life. And I remember wrapping myself around, opening doors for me. From a very young age I wanted to be a musician, you see, in my father's house there was a little accordion and I liked to handle their sounds. At the age of eight I played piano and guitar. At ten or eleven I went to the conservatory.

TF. In the professional ambit the desire to combine resources, the inherited flamenco, the musical culture acquired in your studies, the jazz, more personal more, yours. Everything is in your music from the beginning and has continued to grow until today ...

Dorantes. The creative and the musician in general must always be in evolution, never fall into monotony, seek every day, thank every day that dawns. Today I was coming in the AVE, it was dawning and I saw the sun rising and while watching that tiny sun I was thinking: 'Life is offering me a new day, I will take advantage of it, I will be happy, I will not let go it.' And I thank my father who infused us things like that to his children. So, every day my goal is to enjoy it, never to fall into monotony, to stay motivated to continue creating. I do not think now I will do such thing, I do not know what is going to come, I go with the flow, I have clear that every day I will take advantage.

TF. There are so many things in your music that at the end of each concert is like having lived a great adventure.

Dorantes. Of course, yes, in me there are a lot of things, I do not know ... I like having a wide palette to transmit, for me the most important thing is to transmit. Musical aesthetics interest me, but above all is the transmission. I think that the composer or the performer not only should be left with a resource, for example, you can play a very simple piece and then a very atonal thing, then a very fast thing and then something very slow. You have to have all that things and the same with the sonority of the piano, you have to have many dimensions in both the technical and the compositional, you have to have ample resources to be able to absorb from daily life. For example, expressionism has to be in quarters, I am a lover of quarters, perhaps because on a piano they sound more tuned than

the third ones; there are so many different things, like Impressionist music or descriptive music for landscapes ... I like it very much.

TF. Let go with the researcher and experimenter Dorantes. Do you know that you remind me of Velázquez? He was a born researcher, each picture was a step closer to a final goal: the removal of boundaries in the space of a painting, with elements such as light, vision and perception. What would you say about yourself? Is there a medium or long-term goal in your research and musical experimentation?



Dorantes. There is an evolution, yes. The track of "La Maquina" is a section of what I look for. But there are other tracks that I have never taken out of the drawer and will ever get them out. I am researching with a different harmonic theme, with a different harmonic scale, a place of my own that I am creating, I have been working on it for some time and I hope to get it sometime. It is a harmonious, almost mathematical system of relationships between different tonalities, constructions of different scales, I have it very advanced but it is difficult because I do not want it to lose the aroma of flamenco and then it is difficult, but yes, to experience and to obtain is one of the things that I love and look for different forms of flamenco. I have things composed in this theoretical system that I am creating and well, in the end I do not know if it will be interesting or not ...

TF. I think you're giving me a novelty ...

Dorantes. Yes, I have never said it, but I have more things there with different sounds, a little bit of everything.

TF. I'm going to change to an issue that I call 'Gypsies'. Recently in Jerez, they told me that there was never persecution thanks to the farmhouses, the forges and some other office and thus the flamenco was growing in the courtyards of neighborhoods. And that created very favorable differences, socially and artistically, with respect to gypsies beyond the Lower Andalusia. I suppose that in the center is the triangle Utrera - Lebrija - Jerez and perhaps to the provinces of Seville and Cadiz. And they told me about the special thing about the Jerez school, both teaching singing and guitar. Lebrija with his extensive family of artists is not far behind ...

Dorantes. Yes, in Lebrija we have always been very integrated, we have always been working in the fields ... There has been hunger ... My grandmother went hungry as a child, her father made soup chairs, but she had a lot of children and they had a lot of hungry. Maybe in Utrera it was harder. In Lebrija they were the ones who worked in the field of the chickpeas, the cotton and all that, and the fatigues were to be working from sun to sun and badly paid, but at the same time they were very

integrated in the society, they were respectful. They were in general fatigued, also the non Gypsies ... But they were well treated by the gentlemen. And yes, there was the other part, that of flamenco, the gentlemen called them for their parties and there they went. My grandmother was going, my father was going, and I did not know what they were going to collect. Integration has always existed. I know that in other places in Spain, it hasn't. Discrimination has been there, also in Andalusia, but not so much in this triangle. One uncle of mine is working as a police, another one is civil guard, we are very integrated all. We have not had many problems, we have managed to integrate well.

TF. Social change in Spain has been important, but there are still people who discriminate against gypsies and other minorities. You, that are moving around the world, how you see it, what says for example your friends of Taksim Trio of Turkey?

Dorantes. In Turkey there is a difference, of course. Musically not, but in society. And here, it is true that sometimes they feel a suspicion, they do not give you all the confidence just in case. Yes, there is that suspicion, but I get along well. I feel sorry, but I feel that it isn't my fault. So I always give him time, it's like a form of learning, I give him time and in the end he learns that he has made a mistake ... I tell you an anecdote. About four years ago I was going to give a very important concert in France and there was a lot of press in Seville and they came home to make me a private press conference. My house is in a small town, I live well, I have a swimming pool. A foreign journalist goes and says: "I thought you lived in a caravan." It blew me away.



TF. To finish we return to the boy that you were in Barejones. Your childhood neighborhood is not what it used to be.

Dorantes. My neighborhood was bordered by the countryside, there was a pine forest where children were going to play that no longer exists, now it is full of buildings. I went to try to remember things recently and I did not recognize it. In my childhood it was very beautiful. An uncle of mine had a donkey and I went every afternoon with him to brush it

and to play jumping for the straw bales. There was a lake behind, very dangerous, the children approached it with fear that our parents fought us. It was a very nice place. My parents were very open people and many artists came to the patio. My family on the part of my grandfather Bernardo were seven brothers, five of them went to Jerez and two stayed in Lebrija. That's why in Jerez I have Diego Carrasco and more relatives, a lot of them. And it can be said that Lebrija is the mother. There is a hearth here that everything is more leisurely, more tranquil, even the bulerías. The blow, the pull back, the polyrhythmia, there is a special gift, different, has another different taste, unique as well.

TF. I believe that in this hour of conversation, Dorantes has been describing, as he said at the outset, all aspects, from all angles of the twenty years he collects in the ten themes of Time for Witness. Thank you very much, Dorantes.