Acknowledgements

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Tucson Desert Song Festival and the Tucson Guitar Society

Special thanks to

Julia Pernet for her immense contributions, support and labor of love.
Without her vision and planning this work would not have been
premiered in Tucson.

Flamenco singer/songwriter Pele de los Reyes, author of flamenco
verses of Saetla, Tangos, Tarantas and Cartageneras, and Granainas.

Author Nuria Santiago for her editorial and dramaturgical assistance.

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making this event a success: Ingvi Kallen, Carson Scott, Owen Witzeman,
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“I wish to thank my wife, Mercedes, for the inspirational spark that
gave me the vision and perseverance to complete this work.
Without her herculean effort of creating the piano reduction,
this performance would not have been possible.”

– Adam del Monte

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SEVENTH ANNUAL TUCSON DESERT SONG FESTIVAL

The University of Arizona Fred Fox School of Music
and the Tucson Guitar Society

present:

Scenes from “Lantos 1492”

A Flamenco Opera

Music and Libretto by
Adam del Monte

Daniel Helfgot
Stage Director, Dramaturge and Narrator

Mercedes Juan Musotto
Musical Director and Pianist

Cast:
Gabriel Manro (Youssef Biboldo), baritone
Roberto Perlas Gómez (Don Alfonso and Faisal), baritone and tenor
Shana Blake Hill (Angela, Wife of Alfonso), soprano
José Cortés Fernández (Mariano, Gypsy lover of Raquel), flamenco singer
Clara Rodriguez (Raquel, Daughter of Biboldo), flamenco singer
Austin Troike (David, Son of Raquel and Mariano)
Tim Klingler, chorus tenor
Mercedes Juan Musotto, piano
Kassandra Kocoshis, percussion
Adam del Monte, flamenco guitar

Wednesday, January 30, 2019
Holsclaw Hall
7:00 p.m.

This performance is underwritten by the Tucson Desert Song Festival
and the Tucson Guitar Society

Katy, and Alief, Texas, for six years and also has a background in theatre arts directing, designing, producing, and playing roles in dozens of productions.

KASSANDRA KOCOSHIS was raised in a musical family and has been playing percussion since she was eleven years old. In 2004, Kassandra found flamenco and began to study this intricate art form with percussionist Francisco Orozco Fernandez “El Yiyi.” Now residing in LA, Kassandra is an LP and Amplified Timber artist.

Two-time Grammy Award winning baritone GABRIEL MANRO has been called by the San Francisco Classical Voice “a new kind of baritone … a knock-down baritone.” He has appeared in numerous world-premiere operas and recently returned to the operatic stage after an extended run in Walt Disney Company’s Aladdin.

A native of Argentina, pianist and conductor MERCEDES JUAN MUSOTTO is the winner of the 2012 Solti Foundation Award. She worked as assistant conductor at the Teatro Argentino in La Plata, Buenos Aires. Now residing in Los Angeles, she is the conductor and chorus master at the Opera Program in Santa Monica College and at Cal State Northridge.

With over ninety roles to his credit, baritone ROBERTO PERLAS GÓMEZ has performed extensively throughout the United States with a special emphasis on California. He has done multiple leading roles including his signature role of Figaro with Sacramento Opera and Opera San Jose to name a few.

Flamenco singer CLARA RODRIGUEZ discovered her love for the art form of Flamenco as a young girl in her native Santa Barbara, California. She has performed in the flamenco tablao of Granada and has toured the United States performing at esteemed venues such as the War Memorial Opera House.

A student at The Gregory School, AUSTIN TROIKE is an avid chess player, and a member of the Tucson Arizona Boys Chorus.
The Gypsy Camp
Granaina de Raquel

Vocal pedagogy. Mr. Klingler taught secondary school choirs in Austin, America, the USA, and Europe.

100 operas, operettas, and zarzuelas for a myriad of stages in South theatrical genres. His credits include over 200 productions of more than also writes scripts and narrations for dance, cabaret, opera and other Opera director, journalist, author and translator, artists including Camarón de la Isla and Tomatito.

Ten. Immersed in the world of flamenco, he has performed with iconic gypsy family from Almería. José began his career in Jerez de la Frontera winning the “Premio del Joven Aficionado del Cante Flamenco” at age 19, del Monte began his professional career by collaborating with legendary flamenco singer Enrique Morente and the Madrid Symphony Orchestra at the Teatro Real in Madrid, and later at Teatro Manuel de Falla in Granada.

Del Monte’s most recent flamenco CD, Asi Lo Siento Yo (2010), features an all-star cast of musicians, including bassist Carles Benavent, flamenco pianist Pablo-Ruben Maldonado, and flamenco singer Guadiana. Del Monte joined the studio/jazz guitar department at the USC Thornton School of Music in 2000, and teaches flamenco and classical guitar.

For this performance, Adam del Monte will be playing two Erez Perelman guitars.

Cast Bios

American soprano SHANA BLAKE HILL continues to excite audiences and critics as a multifaceted performer in both operatic and orchestral repertoires. Especially at home with contemporary music, her world premieres and projects include her acclaimed Cincinnati Opera debut of Rosalba in Catán’s Florencia en el Amazonas.

Flamenco singer JOSÉ CORTÉS FERNÁNDEZ stems from an esteemed gypsy family from Almería. José began his career in Jerez de la Frontera winning the “Premio del Joven Aficionado del Cante Flamenco” at age ten. Immersed in the world of flamenco, he has performed with iconic artists including Camarón de la Isla and Tomatito.

Opera director, journalist, author and translator, DANIEL HELFGOT also writes scripts and narrations for dance, cabaret, opera and other theatrical genres. His credits include over 200 productions of more than 100 operas, operettas, and zarzuelas for a myriad of stages in South America, the USA, and Europe.

TIM KLINGLER is a DMA student in choral conducting, minoring in vocal pedagogy. Mr. Klingler taught secondary school choirs in Austin,

Atlanta Symphony, under the baton of Yoel Levy, at the National Black Arts Festival in Atlanta. In 2008, he performed his flamenco concerto, Ensuño Flamenco, and Concierto de Aranjuez in Israel with conductor Nir Kabaretti, celebrating the union of the classical and flamenco guitar. He studied both classical guitar and flamenco in Spain, Israel, and England – training with such famed Gypsy performers as Pepe “Habichuela,” Paco Cortez, “Niño” Miguel, and Gerardo Nuñez. His classical guitar teachers were Menashe Baquiche in Israel, and Gordon Crosskey at Chethams School of Music, and at the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, England. At age 19, del Monte began his professional career by collaborating with legendary flamenco singer Enrique Morente and the Madrid Symphony Orchestra at the Teatro Real in Madrid, and later at Teatro Manuel de Falla in Granada.

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Act I

Excerpts from Scene I .............................................Noisy Gypsy Children
Scene II ...............................................................Illumination
Scene III .............................................................The Trial (narrated - not played)
Excerpts from Scene IV ........................................The Synagogue
Scene V ......................................................................La Petenera
Scene VI .....................................................................The Gypsy Camp

INTERMISSION

Act II

Scene I ......................................................................The Market
Scene II ......................................................................Father-Daughter Moment
Scene III .....................................................................Auto de Fe (narrated - not played)
Scene IV .....................................................................Camino a Granada
Scene V ......................................................................En La Alhambra (poetry by Ibn Arabi)
Scene VI .....................................................................Granatina de Raquel
Scene VII .....................................................................Torture (narrated - not played)
Excerpts from Scene VIII ...........................................Expulsion

Synopsis

Set during the height of the Spanish Inquisition, Llantos 1492 is an opera about the persistence and ultimate triumph of identity, both religious and ethnic, in a time of intolerance. The narrative surrounds a Jewish lawyer who, when representing a gypsy village during a sham trial, manages to secure a reduced sentence for a trumped-up accusation. What simply begins as mere political maneuvering, becomes horribly transformed into intolerance, oppression, expulsions and suffering on a mass scale, and on a personal one, separation and profound loss. It is the protagonists’ llantos, their deep lament that forms the emotional basis for this opera.

At its musical core, it utilizes the rhythms and forms of flamenco – the national music of Spain – as a strong musical and stylistic template, yet ventures into more western and contemporary stylized harmonies whenever the scene requires this shift in flavor. The opera is flamenco in character, but not limited to this genre, having an almost even distribution of bel canto and flamenco voices.
Act I

Scene I: Noisy Gypsy Children

Alfonso, a bigoted low-ranking Spanish noble with a chip on his shoulder, is jarringly interrupted while praying at his home by a group of gypsy children who accidentally and innocently trespass into his garden. A conniving social climber, he has been trying to get into the good graces of King Ferdinand. He is so angered by the children, he decides to create a series of false accusations and use the harsh hand of the Inquisition to prosecute them. Angela, his wife, a sweet soul who regrets having married the wrong man, is trying to persuade him to not pursue such a harsh path. As he ignores her, she sends a note of warning through her maid to her Moorish friend, Faisal, with a request that Faisal’s close friend Youssef Biboldo act as a defense lawyer on behalf of the gypsies.

Scene II: Illumination

While sitting in his room reading up on the mystical writings of the Kabbalah and the Sufi writings of Ibn Arabi, Biboldo undergoes a cathartic, illuminative experience. Whether by divine grace or other mysticism, he becomes fully conscious of the underpinnings of the Universe and creation itself, in accordance with the Kabbalah (and as represented by the Tree of Life). While fully immersed in his mystical experience, his friend Faisal appears, interrupting him with a strident knock on his door. As Biboldo stumbles back into reality, they discuss various philosophical and personal matters, when finally Faisal brings up the subject of the prosecution of the gypsies and requests that Biboldo defend them. Filled with compassion, and identifying with the nomadic nature of the gypsies as well as their many persecutions, Biboldo agrees and decides to take on their defense.

Scene III: The Trial (narrated- not played)

Biboldo makes a risky but clever move by getting the trial to take place in municipal court rather than the Inquisition: he sends the corrupt inquisitor on an all-paid vacation with a prostitute to the Arab seaside baths, and has his friend Pedro de la Cruz – a crypto-Jew (those hiding their Jewish faith) high in the ranks of the King’s court – secretly intercept the notice of action by Don Alfonso against the gypsies. Biboldo arms a brilliant defense, and the judge dismisses the case. The gypsies are victorious and spontaneously burst into song and dance (the flamenco form of Bulerias) and henceforth call all Jews, “Biboldos” in honor of their champion and protector. Fuming and vengeful, Alfonso vows revenge against Biboldo and the gypsies.

Narrative Background

The narrative takes place just before the final conquest of the Spanish Kingdoms and expulsion of the Jews in 1492 by the armies of Fernando and Isabel, culminating with the fall of Granada under the caliph Boabdil, the last Moorish ruler. Ferdinand created the Inquisition in 1478 to brutally solidify his political rule in a time of every increasing Moorish influence and power in the south of Spain. What began as mere political maneuvering became horribly transformed into intolerance, oppression, expulsions, and suffering on a mass scale.

All occurrences are separately based on historical accounts from various sources. The most accurate part of this fictional story is that of the main character Youssef Biboldo, a lawyer representing a gypsy village who, during a sham trial, managed to secure a reduced sentence for a trumped-up misdemeanor or an empty blood libel accusation. Additionally, an accepted historical notion about this time is that there were many Jews, Conversos (those forcibly converted Jews to Christianity who hid their Jewish practice), and gypsies that hid from the Inquisition in the caves of the Sacromonte in Granada. Hence, even today there are gypsies with old Sephardic last names such as Carmona.

About the Composer – Adam del Monte

Acknowledged worldwide as a rare talent in flamenco and classical guitar genres, Adam del Monte transcends labeling and convention as a performer and composer in both genres. He incorporates a wide array of musical styles in his compositions for a unique sound and language of flamenco that is steeped in tradition and also progressive in its openness to musical flavors from around the world.

He has recorded for Deutsche Grammophon as featured flamenco guitar for the double Grammy® Award–winning opera Ainadamar (2006) by Osvaldo Golijov, with soprano Dawn Upshaw and the Atlanta Symphony, led by Robert Spano. Since then he’s been invited and continues to travel extensively around the world to perform at prestigious venues such as Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center.

Del Monte recently debuted his second flamenco guitar concerto, Paisajes, commissioned by the St. Monica Symphony, at SGI Auditorium in Los Angeles. His first flamenco guitar concerto, Ensueño Flamenco for guitar and orchestra, was premiered in Boston by the Boston Modern Orchestra Project at Jordan Hall, led by Gil Rose. He was commissioned by the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet to compose a progressive flamenco piece, Cambio de Aire. He has collaborated with Yusef Lateef and the
**Scene VIII: The Expulsion**

In Granada, Biboldo prepares his beloved grandson for his *Bar Mitzva*. As Biboldo teaches him the traditional Sephardic melismas of the Torah, the child repeats them, but adds a flamenco-like twist each time. They both laugh and the child incessantly asks Biboldo about the past. Biboldo relays to him about how four hundred years ago Granada was a paradise where people lived in peace and Jews were safe under the Moorish kingdom, and served them with honor and dignity. They hear the thunder of war in the distance as Granada falls, and decide to flee deeper into the mountains.

As Granada falls to Ferdinand’s troops, a search party led by Alfonso is underway to find Biboldo and the gypsies. After a few days, they are found hiding in what today are known as the *Caves of Sacromonte*. Upon their arrest, all panic breaks loose amongst the fugitives. Alfonso is given a free hand to deal with them, but up to a point; King Ferdinand does not want them dead, and thus gives Alfonso the freedom to exert only two options, conversion or exile. The gypsies have their ears cut off and are sent to the gallows as slaves to row ships in the Armada, and the Jews are expelled with only their shirts on their backs. Alfonso watches this terrible scene with a small group of soldiers, the Inquisitors and Angela. He’s brought her along to agonize her by forcing her to view the suffering of her beloved victims. As the gypsies are seen off to the gallows and the Jews are being exiled, Alfonso decides to augment their agony at the last minute by taking Raquel and Mariano’s son with him to have him converted to Christianity – forcibly. In response, Angela takes the child in a protective manner and manages to tell Raquel and Mariano that she will raise him as a Catholic, but will always secretly remind him of his Jewish and Gypsy heritage. As everyone is arrested, Raquel implores her son to remember his Jewish soul, while Mariano pleads with him to never forget his gypsy blood. As everyone walks off into exile singing of loss and despair, their son is left on stage, alone, singing *Seguiriya* (the most tragic and dramatic of all flamenco forms). He wears a black clergy boys outfit with a large cross hanging from his neck, yet he, in defiance, sings about the fact that he knows who he is, and that he will always remember and will remind his children and their children, what and who they really are.

**The End**

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Act II

Scene I: The Market

Days later, three vendors in the marketplace, a Moor, a Jew, and a Gypsy (the uncle of Mariano) are making fun of Alfonso and his devastating loss in court by imitating him and re-enacting some scenes from the trial. As they compete to who has the best imitation, we see some musicians playing in the background as well as a belly dancer. We are privy to the last moments of the Convivencia, the “co-existence” of these cultures in Spain just before the expulsion. While the trio continue their laughs, Mariano and Raquel are seen meeting secretly amongst the various fruit stands. Faisal is among the people at the market doing his regular socializing, when suddenly Angela arrives in great distress to warn him that Alfonso has found out about Biboldo’s conspiracy in intercepting his note to the king. Everyone from King Ferdinand to Alfonso and the Inquisition is looking for them. She further tells him that their friend, Pedro de la Cruz is to be burned alive for treason in a public spectacle known as an Auto de Fe. She implores Faisal to tell Biboldo that they must all escape immediately.

Scene II: Father-Daughter Moment

Biboldo rests in his chambers distraught about the disappearance of his daughter, when suddenly she comes home. Fraught with worry and anger, and like any anxious father, Biboldo yells at her. Raquel answers back in her defense, expressing her feelings of restriction within the confines of the Alhama (Jewish quarter). Further discussion reveals that she fell in love with a gypsy and that she may be pregnant. Biboldo is about to really lose it when all of a sudden Faisal barges in, and with great urgency relays Angela’s warning. Biboldo is heartbroken at the news of his friend Pedro’s demise and is unable to vent his paternal anger on Raquel because he realizes that they all have bigger problems and ultimately, they are all in it together. At this point, Mariano and some of the gypsy clan appear as Faisal reveals that he has mapped out the plans of the final invasion of Granada, Alfonso and his cohorts decide to interrogate the gypsy uncle, who has been rotting in jail awaiting a thorough interrogation. In the mean time, King Ferdinand and Alfonso – who has since climbed in rank and has gained the favor of the king – have “bigger fish to fry”: Ferdinand and his queen Isabella are planning the final military assault on the Kingdom of Granada.

Scene III: Auto de Fe (narrated – not played)

Pedro de la Cruz is arrested for treason, tried and burned at the stake. Here the cante of Saeta expresses the lament and homage to Pedro de La Cruz sung by a passing gypsy. The gypsy uncle of Mariano was left behind while the others escaped, because he was simply nowhere to be found at the time. He is arrested and thrown in jail awaiting a thorough interrogation. In the mean time, King Ferdinand and Alfonso – who has since climbed in rank and has gained the favor of the king – have “bigger fish to fry”: Ferdinand and his queen Isabella are planning the final military assault on the Kingdom of Granada.

Scene IV: Camino a Granada

As both the Jews and Gypsies escape to Granada, they take that time to bond in song and dance where they share their joys and sorrows. The flamenco form used here is Solea por Buleria, which leads into an old Arab-Andalusian song known as Lama Bada.

Scene V: En La Alhambra

After an arduous journey, Biboldo and the other fugitives arrive at the Alhambra palace in Granada. The Nazari prince (not yet caliph) Boabdil extends his warmest hospitality to the refugees, and reminisces with Biboldo over better times of the almost forgotten Golden Age, by reciting poetry of Ibn Arabi. Boabdil sets them up in hiding, by bringing them to the caves across from the Alhambra palace. There they remain for thirteen years.

Scene VI: Granaina de Raquel

Raquel and Mariano are fantasizing at being Arab Royalty as they roam the Alhambra palace whilst the adults are philosophizing. Raquel takes this opportunity to tell Mariano she is with child. The flamenco form used here is the Granaina.

Scene VII: Torture (narrated – not played)

In the meantime, Alfonso has waited patiently in Castile for his revenge, but no one knows exactly where Biboldo and the gypsies are hiding. As the plans of the final invasion of Granada are cemented, Alfonso and his cohorts decide to interrogate the gypsy uncle, who has been rotting in jail for over a decade. The Inquisition interrogates him but he doesn’t know anything as to their whereabouts. They don’t believe him and torture him severely. He sings a Martinet (traditionally a non-rhythmic haunting chant of tragedy and pain), the song of the blacksmith, with the accompaniment of the rhythmic beating of the anvil (heard in the overture; it is one of the leitmotifs representing the hammer of injustice and cruelty). All he divulges is that he has seen Faisal at their encampment several times. From this sliver of knowledge, Alfonso deduces that Biboldo and his family must have escaped to Granada, knowing that Faisal has close relations to the Caliph. Fernando tells Alfonso that this is his lucky moment and that they shall both exact revenge. With Angela accompanying them, they set out with a military expedition.