

Flamenco Buzz

Jose Luis Rodriguez "Mi Sentir" Concert

Review 2 Evenings of Magic and Virtuosity

Review by *Valdemar Phoenix* 5/25/2012



I have seen many many concerts in my 45 years of flamenco life, and these concerts by flamencoguitarist Jose Luis Rodriguez and dancer Niurca Marquez rank as among the best! Virtuosity no doubt, but also powerful emotional expression and sublime artistry from both of them.

Jose and Niurca performed on Saturday May 19 and Sunday May 20, but they chose to do slightly different repertoire each night. So, those who attended both nights got an extra treat! However, both nights were fantastic.

Jose Luis Rodriguez is a virtuoso not only in the technical sense, but also in the artistic. He is a poet of the flamenco guitar, with a expressive ability I have rarely heard. His control of technique is complete and his use of dynamics

superb. From forceful rasgueados to the softest note or tremolo, he uses his technique to express musical ideas, not just to impress. In Sunday's performance, his solea por buleria literally had many people, including myself, wiping tears from their eyes.

Add to Jose's guitar the dance of his wife and collaborator, Niurca Marquez. Niurca comes to flamenco from a contemporary dance background. Her dance choreographies are quite modern, yet retaining the elements of traditional flamenco as well. What makes her style special for me is she is free of the flamenco dance cliches so frequently seen today.

Together, Jose Luis and Niurca are experimenters, without losing the traditional essence of the art. When Jose plays, the palo is harmonically advanced, and his compas superb and also advanced, yet the palo or style he is playing is instantly recognizable. New keys and new harmonies, to be sure, but when he plays 'por solea' or 'por taranto,' you know it. What he does with each palo is supreme artistry. Niurca, too, is an innovator. Her guajira in the red bata de col a (dress with a long train) brought the house down, and is definitely a keeper. Niurca's role in these concerts with Jose is to interpret his compositions, which is not the traditional way, where the guitarist follows the dancer. Jose's compositions are rich enough harmonically and rhythmically to fill the roles of a tocaor and cantaor, providing Niurca with plenty of melodic and rhythmical ideas to play with. The results are wonderful.

Jose has promised that they will return, so if you missed them this year, you can see them perform again at Casa de Lucia next time.

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