

# FLAMENCO GALLERY

As seen by James Yohai

**Juan Gonzales** ("Triguito"). Guitarist. Triguito is one of the oldest flamenco guitarists still successfully performing with the best singers and dancers in Spain and elsewhere. He began to learn the flamenco guitar as a young boy, and is known to be one of the best rhythmical accompanists. He amazes listeners with the beauty of his accompanimental work, in which he employs his thumb to great effect. Knowing almost every item of the flamenco repertoire, he has performed with the cream of the old flamenco dancers and singers, and is one of the unforgettable guitarists of world class. Among the famous stars of pure flamenco with whom he performs are the great singers Rafael Farina, Pepe el Culata, Manuel Romero and Pericon de Cadiz; guitarists, Perico El Del Lunar, Andres Heredia, Rosita Duran, the dancer, and many other top-line artists.

The mere mention of these great stars to any professional or flamenco aficionado is enough to indicate the category in which Triguito belongs.

For many years Triguito has appeared in the famous Cabaret Zambra, Madrid, where he still performs; the Zambra has one of the best *Tablados Flamenco* in Spain, and it is a great achievement—and a signal honour—for an artist to perform there among such stars.

In addition to being an accomplished accompanist, Triguito is also a great soloist and a very familiar figure to all flamenco lovers in London and throughout the world. Some years ago he came with the Zambra's Ballet company to perform in the Palace Theatre, and since then, many flamenco aficionados went to Madrid to be taught by him. His ex-pupils include many prominent flamenco guitarists of different nationalities; among them is the well-known guitarist, Mauricio Eduardo, now residing in London.

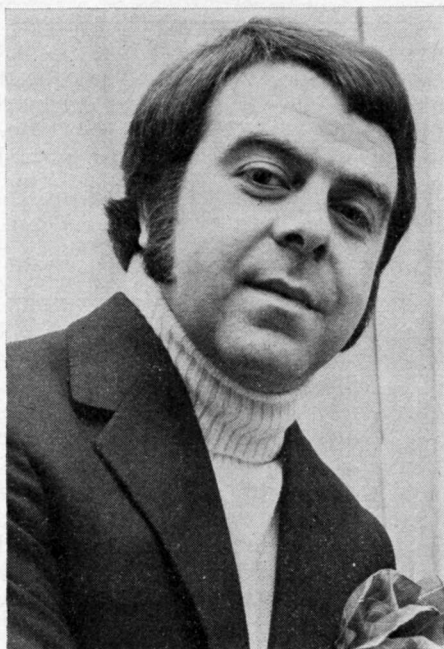
\* \* \*

**Jose Martin** ("Pepete"). Singer. Although Jose Martin—known as Pepete—was born in Santander, Northern Spain, he dominates the flamenco art as ably as any Andalusian singer. Additionally, he has versatility and great personality. Naturally, no one be-

comes a singer of his calibre without the help of some friends to teach him the secrets of this art, and as a young boy Pepete was initiated by Alejandro Martin (Senior) who, in turn, had all the secrets from his own father, Teodomiro Martin, who knew every item of the flamenco repertoire. So Pepete, with the help of such a great teacher, could not fail to learn and become a great exponent of flamenco—one to be classed among the best flamenco singers.

He knows every item, from the *Cante chico* to the *Cante grande*, and sings with such ease that everyone is surprised to learn he is from the north of Spain. Pepete, with so many good qualities, soon wins the attention of his audiences with his improvisations and fine sense of humour.

In March 1973 he presented, for the Spanish residents of this country, a great flamenco show at the Royal Albert Hall in which famous Spanish singers, dancers and guitarists participated. Pepete's great success at the Albert Hall prompted him to remain in London, where he is performing with all the best flamenco artists in theatres, clubs and Spanish restaurants.



"PEPETE"

**Alejandro Martin**, guitarist, also from Santander (he accompanied Pepete in Spain) is a descendant of a flamenco family of singers and guitarists (famous for generations) to whom he is indebted for much of his knowledge and experience. His father, grandfather, and many members of this family of aficionados contributed to the success he now enjoys as one of the best guitarists of today, famous all over the world.

Six years ago he won the second prize at a flamenco festival in Cordoba, in competition with the best guitarists of the country, and after many successful performances in Spain, Alejandro went to Mexico to join the celebrated flamenco family group *The Amayas*, as accompanist and soloist, giving recitals all over Mexico.

Nowadays, Alejandro is the permanent accompanist of the star dancers **Conchita Del Mar** and her husband **Jose Luis Ponce**. These famous dancers, with Alejandro Martin, were the principal artists in the ballet of the celebrated dancer Mariema. Alejandro Martin, Conchita Del Mar and Jose Luis Ponce now perform as a trio in the best *Salas de Fiestas* and *Tablados Flamenco* of Benidor where they have also attracted the attention of top theatrical agents from all over the world, Spain included. It is not surprising they are inundated by offers of contracts, for they always put on a spectacular show wherever they perform. I hope we shall enjoy for many more years the work of these wonderful artists Pepete, Alejandro Martin, Jr., Conchita Del Mar and Jose Luis Ponce.

\* \* \*

**Nina Los Peines** and **Pepe Pinto** (Singers). Two of the greatest flamenco singers Spain ever produced, Nina and Pepe for many years delighted flamenco-loving audiences in theatres, *Tablados Flamenco* and on radio.

Famous when they were young, and with so much in common as singers, the couple married and lived happily for many years. Nina Los Peines and Pepe Pinto—great artists both—were phenomenal exponents of the flamenco art of singing, and they performed with the

Continued on page 14

# MUSIC FOR

# TEACHING

By Mary Criswick

IT'S not often that I get enthusiastic about a new guitar tutor, but Ulf Goran's *Play Guitar* looks as though it works. It was prepared in association with Yorkshire Television, and programmes are currently broadcast on the national network on Saturday mornings. (If you missed any, they'll be repeated in the new year.)

Throughout the book we are accompanied by a little man with big feet who introduces himself as Floppy. His function, as I see it, is to remove any academic dryness from the method. And the method itself is unusual. First of all the student plays an accompaniment to *Greensleeves* by virtue of plucking one open string every bar. If you doubt the effectiveness of this, as indeed I did, just listen to Ulf on the record which comes with the book. He tells you to pitch your first sung note with the first string—and away you go. A few songs later (nearly all the songs are well known and well chosen) the student acquires a basic thumb-pluck technique, and then the left hand comes in for a chord or two. During the course of the book we are introduced to a *Malagueña* (in tablature) and basic twelve-bar blues.

The reason I would back this particular tutor is because (a) it makes learning fun, and (b) it aims wide, and pupils can progress from it to either pop or classical guitar depending on their personal aptitudes. But it doesn't exclude any one style from the beginning. Personally I'd like to see a little more emphasis on staff notation for practical reasons—so few books are printed in tablature, and tablature itself is not really standardised. While most guitar tutors really need a live teacher as well, this one will just about stand up on its own, especially with the help of the record and T.V. programmes.

Guido Topper's *Duet Approach* is no less unusual in its way: from the start the pupil has to count because all the music is in duet form. The first few tunes, however, are rather boring

(there's a limit even to Topper's inventiveness on one string) and the later pieces lose their effect in Britain because many of them are Dutch folk-songs, unknown to our schoolchildren. There are some good line drawings and each new note is shown on a sketch of the guitar fingerboard. Unlike most guitar tutors this can be used in primary schools.

Pieter van der Staak has produced *A Bag of Sweets*, or in more orthodox terms, seven very easy (primary school) and effective duets. The first four do not descend lower than the G string, and I was pleased to see the use of rudimentary dynamics which are seldom taught to beginners.

Another book of duets comes from Gerhard Maasz; these are a little more difficult, and just as effective. They make use of imitative devices and graduations in loudness; there is a lot of fingering, and I feel some of the right hand fingering to be superfluous, especially as there is more than one school of thought on this subject. For instance I always prefer to use *m* on the strong beats and *i* on the weak, but I know plenty of my pupils prefer the reverse, and I see no reason to change what comes naturally to them.

The *Punteado-Suite* by Jan Maarten Komter is a duet suitable for second to third year pupils. It comprises four pieces, all using the same theme but differently developed. *Let's take the flip side* is of the same grade and falls equally midway between being old and modern. As its name suggests, the musical style has affinities with lighter music, and the second part is in fact named *Blues*.

Although not technically any easier to play, the Vivaldi album by Theodore Norman will probably find more initial popularity in the classroom simply because the music takes fewer unexpected turns. Strangely there is an introduction that seems to be aimed at beginners, and I have to admit that the whole of the second page was incom-

prehensible to me for a few hours. For all this, the arrangements are simple, and I especially like the trio in A minor. ULF GORAN, *Play Guitar*. OUP, £1.30 (inc. record).

GUIDO TOPPER, *A duet approach to the guitar*. Broekmans / Kalmus, £1.50.

PIETER VAN DER STAAK, *A bag of sweets*. Broekmans/Kalmus, 50p.

GERHARD MAASZ, *Ten easy duets*. Schott, £1.20.

JAN MARTEN KOMTER, *Punteado-Suite*, for two guitars. Harmonia/Kalmus, 65p.

CEES HARTOG, *Let's take the flip side*, for three guitars. Harmonia/Kalmus, 80p.

VIVALDI, *Music for three guitars*, ed. T. Norman. Schirmer, £1.05.

## FLAMENCO GALLERY

*Continued from page 11*

great star dancers and guitarists in Spain and the rest of the world.

Being fully conversant with every item of the flamenco repertoire they made innumerable recordings with the great guitarists Nino Ricardo and Melchor De Marchena—recordings which will surely live for ever—and their names are imperishably recorded in the book of flamenco history as incomparably talented singers.

Creating their own styles of singing, Nino and Pepe had an immense repertoire. Nino's best items were the *Bulerias*, *Soleares*, *Seguiriyas*, *Alegrías De Cadiz* and *Sevillanas*. Pinto created his own original style in the *Fandangos*—and in these, as in all his repertoire, he was inimitable. His recording of the *Bulerias El Pino Verde* is outstanding.

I am proud to include these two great exponents of the flamenco art in my gallery and I am sure every professional artist would agree that Nina Los Peines and Pepe Pinto were singers of exceptional calibre, ever to be remembered in the flamenco Hall of Fame.