

## *Carmen Linares*

"Cantaora" is the title of one of Carmen Linares' albums because she is the indisputable 'Cantaora' (female flamenco singer) of our time.

Born in Linares (Jaén, Andalusia), she's conquered a privileged position in the world of Flamenco music on her own merits, having become one of Flamenco music's most critically acclaimed and international artists.

If Carmen is a mainstay in Flamenco's singing world, she's also the one who best conveys the heritage of a female tradition which has always dwelled in the same origins as 'Cante Jondo' (deep-rooted flamenco singing). For she who sings is Carmen Linares. She does not imitate; she shares her tone, her interpretational intensity, to update a first-rate musical and literary legacy.

She moved to Madrid in 1965, where she encountered the singing prowess of some of the most renowned artists at the time – Pepe Matrona, Juan Varea, Rafael Romero or "Fosforito" - . At the turn of the decade she began her professional career in Carmen Mora and Paco Romero's dance companies, making her debut album in 1970 accompanied by Juan "Habichuela". Thereafter followed by – as a great professional leap into the intense world of 'Tablaos' (Flamenco venues) – Torres Bermejas, "Chinitas" – Which gathered talents such as "Camarón", Enrique Morente, "Perla de Cádiz", Serranito, the 'Habichuelas' (French Beans in Spanish).

Carmen Linares was the chosen voice to re-open Manuel de Falla's original version of "Amor Brujo" ('Amor, el Mago' in English), in the inauguration of the VI Biennial of Flamenco Art in Seville. That constant search for new forms of expression, has culminated in an enriching art capable of combining 'Cante Jondo' with chamber and symphony orchestras. She's been one of the first Flamenco artists who, invited by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, acted in the Lincoln Center. The New York Times described her as "a singer with incredible expressive power". Alongside directors of the stature of Frühbech de Burgos, Josep Pons and Leo Brower she has appeared performing "Amor Brujo", and "La vida breve" (A Brief Life) at the 'Colón' Theatre in Buenos Aires, at the Sydney Opera House and in the Great Theatre of Córdoba, Spain.

From her remake of the "Traditional Popular Songs" which Lorca had depicted, a new album arose which would stand as musical background to Victor Ullate's ballet giving way to the creation of a new show starred by Carmen herself and the female actor Lola Herrera, "Un rato, un minuto, un siglo..." ("A while, a minute, a century..."), premiered in the Royal Theatre of Madrid.

Together with the great Greek female actor Irene Papas, she will write an incredible chapter with the staging of "Apocalipsis, voz de mujer" ("Apocalypse, a woman's voice"). That female voice which gave life to the anthological album "La mujer en el cante" -1996-, ("The role of women in Flamenco singing") a key album in Flamenco music, in which she rescues valuable documents of the past to project them into the future with a modern voice and contemporary musical attitude. The great composer and guitarist Manolo Sanlúcar chooses "Locura de brisa y trino" -2000- ("Madness of Breeze and Trill") to rescue Lorca's poems harmonized by modern guitar compositions.

Carmen Linares' discography, something she has looked after with great rigor, has been critically acclaimed and received numerous and important awards: ICARUS (1988), Silver medal of the Governing board of Andalucía (1998) and the Spanish National Music Award in 2001. Her latest work "Un Ramito de Locura" ("A Sprig of Madness") (Universal 2002) has been nominated as best Flamenco album in the 2002 music awards and Latin Grammys in 2003.

Carmen Linares continues performing to this date the shows that make up the framework of her career: "Antología flamenca", "Canciones Populares de Lorca", "El Amor Brujo", "Un Ramito de Locura" and "Popular y Jondo". She was awarded the Gold Medal in Fine Art for her musical contribution to national culture.

In 2007 she has faced new projects such as "Desde el Alma" ("From the Soul"), "Falla, Lorca y Cante Jondo" and "De aire y madera" ("Of Air & Wood") with which she has pegged her musical career. In addition, she has taken part in the show "Poeta en Nueva York" (Poet in New York) directed and choreographed by the dancer Blanca LÍ who has performed to great acclaim in Granada and Paris.

In 2008 she has embarked on her latest album project in which she interprets verses of the poet Juan Ramón Jiménez over musical compositions by Juan Carlos Romero. "Raíces y Alas" (Roots and Wings) was released at the Flamenco Biennial of Seville to great acclaim of both public and critics. Proof of this is the award received as Best Musical Composition at the Flamenco Biennial and Best Flamenco Album award granted by the Musical Academy in Spain.

Her powerful and genuine 'Cante' ('Singing' in Flamenco jargon) is enriched by her profound knowledge of Flamenco music and manages to sincerely and spontaneously move the audience... without any doubt, Flamenco has thrived with her.