

Bulerías

The song [*cante*] *bulerías* are reported to have developed at the end of the 19th century, most likely a creation of singer Loco Mateo (c. 1832-1890, Jerez de la Frontera), who concluded his specialty, the *soleares*, with a *remate por bulerías* (ending). Others believe that the *cante bulerías* were developed from earlier songs, including shorter, lighter versions of the *soleares*, called the *soleariya*, and the *alegrías*. Some think that the *bailes bulerías* may have developed from earlier, similar though more ancient dance forms, including the *jaleos* and *bamberas*.

The word *bulería* is probably derived from *burlería*, the root word of being *burlar*, meaning "to make fun of." Like the *soleares*, the musical scale of the *bulerías* is in the Phrygian mode but in the key of A. Typical traditional verses follow:

Bulerías de Jerez

Salía: Ay con el yai que yai que yai que yai que yai que yai que ya!

1. Una batita de lunare
Una batita de lunare

Ay cuando yo me lo pongo
me salen los novio a pare

Ay cuando yo me lo pongo
me salen los novio a pare

Ay mama! Ay mama,
Ay que Periquito me quiere pega,
Ay como Periquito me quiere pega.
 2. Ay esta noche mande yo
Mañana mande quien quiera

Ay esta noche vi a pone
por las esquina bandera
Ay, por las esquina bandera....

Que quie que tenga,
que quie que tenga,
Que tengo frio y no tengo, leña
Ay que tengo frio y no tengo.
 3. Ay, yo no quiero primo mio tu dinero
Ay, yo no quiero tu dinero.
- BIS Ay lo que quiero es que me quiera
lo mismo que yo te quiero.

The *bulerías* are considered by flamenco *aficionados* [experts] to be flamenco's most flexible form: constantly changing, spontaneous, humorous, and a favorite festival dance. Generally speaking, the dance is most frequently performed in *cuadro flamenco* or at a flamenco *juerga* [fiesta, party, splurge]. In most contemporary settings the *bulería* is performed at a fast pace, often at a rhythmic level exceeding 220 or more on the metronome. Besides this rapid tempo, the *compás* [rhythmic structure] for the *bulerías* is identical to the *soleares* [see Figures 1 and 2].

In traditional *cuadro flamencos*, the *bulerías* is presented with each dancer performing a short variation and returning back into the *cuadro flamenco* formation as another dancer enters the performance area. In *bulerías*, dancers often try to technically "out-dance" one another, dance teasingly about each other, spoof the audience, have fun, or dance one's mind. Intricate combinations of *palmas* [rhythmic hand clapping] and *jaleo* [shouts of encouragement] provided by the other performers, and often by knowledgeable *aficionados* [experts] who are not performing on stage or are in the audience often accompanies this dance.

Codified movement phrases have developed over time in the *bulerías* and are an integral part of this dance. Because there is also flexibility within this structure, the *bulerías* is widely interpreted by flamenco dancers and choreographers.

In most traditional flamenco dance performances, and often in theatrical, choreographed flamenco dance performances, the *bulería baile* is a structured improvisation. This structure is necessary to direct the singer [*cantaor*] and the guitarist [*tocaor*] into the various "set" sections of the dance. The "set" sections, which provide a skeletal framework for the dance, include 1) the *entrada* [entrance]; 2) the opening *llamada* [movement "call" to the singer and guitarist]; 3) the opening dance variation; 4) the *desplante/llamada* [breaking movement "call"]; 4) the *primary variation* (which often includes codified movement patterns of counter-clockwise circles and diagonal moving lines); 5) the closing *llamada* ["call" to the singer and/or guitarist]; and 6) the *salida* [exit/finish].

The improvisational aspects of the *bulería baile* occur mostly in the variations. These are the moments when the dancer can choose any sequence of flamenco steps, including marking steps [*marcando*], footwork on the beat [*zapateado en tiempo*], footwork off the beat [*zapateado en contra tiempo*], arm gestures [*braceo*], totally improvised steps [*pellizcos*], *palmas en compás* [on the beat], and *palmas en contra tiempo* [off the beat].

At the beginning of *bulerías* it is important for the dancer to "call in" the singer and/or guitarist with a movement *llamada*, or if a song is already in progress, to enter at an appropriate time (for example, on the 2nd half of a *compás*). All of the performers know exactly when this section of the dance is being performed because of the movement and musical cues built into the structure of the guitar playing [*toque*], singing [*cante*], and dancing [*baile*]. The opening *llamada* of a *bulerías* is otherwise personalized by the dancer, allowing for many movement and rhythmic variations.

However, the dance movements for the *desplante*, a type of *llamada*, have become codified over time through decades of theatrical and festival flamenco dance performances. Therefore, all flamenco performers instantly recognize the opening moments in a *desplante*. *Desplantes* are incorporated into many 12-count flamenco dances, but are most recognizable in the *bulerías* because variations between *desplantes* are usually short, quick, and direct. Because of the structure of *bulerías* in general, and the quick tempo at which it is performed, professional flamenco dancers and choreographers often use the term *desplante* as a "catch all" phrase to describe what is actually the *desplante* and the movement variation that follows it. It is thus important to separate and examine the *desplante*, and the movement variation that follows it more closely.

The clearly recognizable sections of the *bulería baile* described above and the heavy accents of the *bulería compás*, provide a skeletal framework for the dance. As previously described, the heavy accents for *bulerías*, and for many other 12-count phrased flamenco dances, including *soleares* and *soleares por bulerías*, fall on counts 12, 3, 6, 8 and 10. Contemporarily, count 7 often takes the place of count 6 as an accent in all these flamenco rhythms, especially in the *bulerías*:

