

## ***Rumba***

The ***Rumba*** is a ***cante de ida y vuelta*** - a round trip song - which most likely arrived in southern Spanish ports from Cuba and Puerto Rico. Gypsies and flamenco artists then incorporated the rhythm and percussion into flamenco dance steps to create a hybrid Spanish/Latin American form. Popular flamenco singer Pepe Marchena helped to popularize the song in the 1950s through 1970s.

Numerous contemporary flamenco groups, including the French singing group, the Gipsy Kings, the Spanish trio, Ketama, flamenco guitarist Paco de Lucía, and pop flamenco singer Manzanita and others have recorded a number of popular rumbas.

*Rumba* dance steps are sensual, fun and lighthearted, and include wry or sexy dance movements with hip rolls and hip juts. The rhythm for the *rumba* is 2/4 or 4/4, with accentuation varying from a typical *tango* to the *clavé* rhythm of Latin American rumbas. *Rumbas* are fiesta dances, and each dancer takes a turn while other dancers perform *palmas*. Percussion instruments, like the rhythm box the cajón, are often included in a total *rumba* performance, which includes dancing, singing, *palmas*, guitar playing and percussion. Guitarists often employ a slapping technique on the top of the guitar that creates an infectious, syncopated rhythm.

### **Rumba Lyrics:**

Hazme con los ojos señas  
Que en algunas ocasiones  
Los ojos sirven de lengua.

Make signs to me with your eyes  
For on many occasions  
The eyes can speak.

© Katerina Tomás 2002