

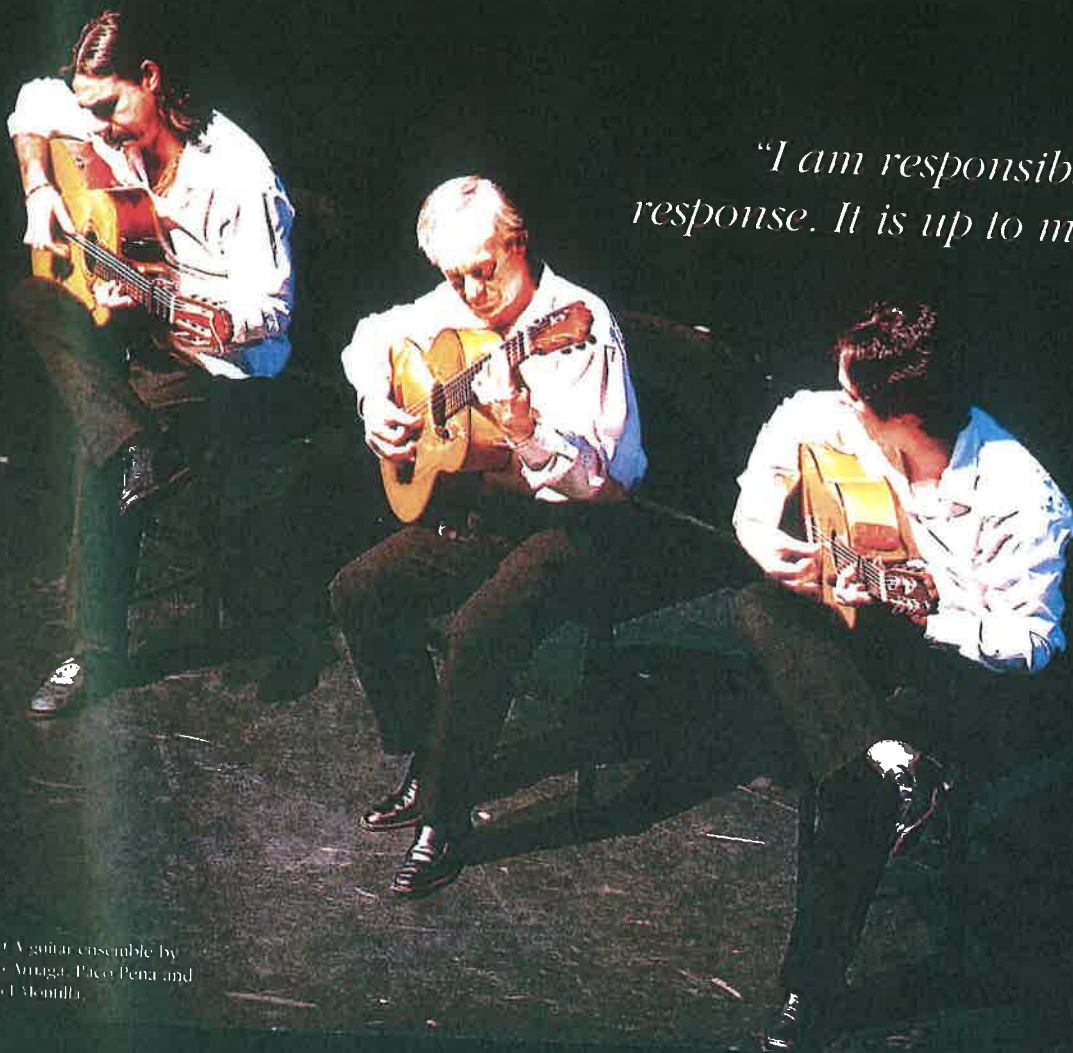
Life, Soul, Colour, Passion, Movement!

Capturing a *Flamenco* in Concert

The Flamenco music is an individualistic and structured folk art from Andalusia. It is often spontaneous and is based on a great deal of improvisation. It is a harmonic structure that creates excitement when the dancers, singer and the musicians respond to each other simultaneously. Flamenco reflects the hard times that the people have gone through like war, discrimination, expulsion from rulers and other social tensions. It expresses the feelings of the people in various situations and is very personal.

PASSIONS introduces to you an artist whose talents in the Flamenco knows no bounds - Paco Pena. A guitarist, composer and an artistic mentor to his ensemble, he began learning guitar at the age of six and made his first performance at the age of 12. Paco Pena has performed in many countries since then, which includes London, New Zealand, Germany, Amsterdam, Singapore, Australia, Japan and Hong Kong.

"I am responsible for the audience response. It is up to me to convince them"
- Paco Pena



Flamenco guitar ensemble by Paco Amaga, Paco Pena and Rafael Montilla

Paco Pena founded the Centro Flamenco Paco Pena in 1981, and became the world's first Professor of Flamenco Guitar at the Rotterdam Conservatory in the Netherlands. As a recognition for his accomplishments, Paco Pena was given the Official de la Cruz de la Orden del Merito Civil by King Juan Carlos of Spain.

He strongly believes that all music has its own personal message. It has something important to say to the audience. He also believes that it is the responsibility of the artist to ensure the response of the audience. "It is up to me to convince them. If it is not brilliant, then I have failed to make it brilliant." Paco Pena said during his press conference in the Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Malaysia on September 12, 2005.

The Paco Pena, Flamenco In Concert had a full atmosphere with the crowd highly tensed with anticipation. Just as you thought you could almost suffocate with the heavy air of expectation enveloping you, the lights dimmed and you could see the silhouettes of people moving onto the stage - Paco Pena and his ensemble of dancers Angel Munoz, Ramon Espino and Ramon Martinez, vocalists David Amador and Maria Del Mar Fernandez, guitarists Paco Amaga and Rafael Montilla. The highly ex-

uberant and energetic opening piece 'Presentacion' shook the crowd, moved them and made the day feel like a holiday. Sort of when you wake up in the light of the morning sun.

The dancers displayed a synchronization of artistic strength and sinuous grace in their dance movements perfectly complemented by the solo guitar performance by Paco Pena. There are no words to describe his mastery of the instrument, makes you want to tell him, "Don't Stop, Just Play....forever."

The group went to perform the 'Martinete', 'Cana', 'Alegrias' in the first half, demonstrating the many flavours of flamenco. Though the songs were sung in the Spanish language, I could feel the emotions that were expressed in their songs, dance movements and music played on their instruments. Particularly the raw display of anger with the angry tap dancing and the strong vocals that really reaches out to you.

This Flamenco In Concert was an enchanting and energetic performance of emotions and feeling - a rich tapestry of colour, movement, passion, life and soul all intricately woven together. Viva Senor Pena and his style of flamenco.

