

BIOGRAPHY

Born in Guadalcanal, a small village in Seville, Spain, on March 25th, 1967, Vicente Amigo Girol actually grew up and lives in Córdoba, also in Andalusia. He started studying guitar when he was eight with maestros such as El Merengue (Rafael Rodríguez Fernández) and El Tomate (Juan Muñoz Expósito) and at 15 he became an apprentice of the great Manolo Sanlúcar, in whose group he worked for several years. He appears in Sanlúcar's masterpiece *Tauromagia* (1988), considered one of the most important flamenco albums of all time.

He gained early recognition while accompanying singer El Pele (Manuel Moreno Maya), with whom he recorded "Poeta de Esquinas Blandas" (1988). That same year, Amigo also launched his solo career. Soon, he built an international reputation as he performed with Camarón de la Isla, arguably the most important singer in modern flamenco history, but also with artists such as John McLaughlin, Al Di Meola, Brazilian singer and songwriter Milton Nascimento, and Spanish pop superstar Alejandro Sanz.

He won several flamenco guitar prizes and appeared at *Leyendas de la Guitarra* (Legends of the Guitar), an international event celebrated in Spain that served as a preview of the Seville Expo in 1992, representing flamenco with Paco de Lucía, the decisive figure in modern flamenco guitar. De Lucia, who passed away on in February, 2014, became a lifelong friend and admirer. Those who set out sports-like comparisons or are eager to bestow the unwanted mantle of "the next Paco de Lucia" fail to grasp the depth of their relationship, which is underscored by the fact that they became *compadres*, godfathers to each other's children: Amigo to De Lucia's daughter Antonia; De Lucia to Amigo's youngest son, Marcos.

"Such is life. I play guitar because when I was three years old I saw Paco de Lucia on TV and it stayed with me," recalls Amigo. "Later we became friends and shared many great times. For all flamencos, Paco is the greatest. He opened paths. He did so much for flamenco guitar that we are all indebted to him."

Thoughtful and introspective, Amigo pauses before putting his work as a player in a larger context. "I'm a guitarist, but I love music well beyond my instrument," he says. "Music is my life."

Given his elegant, melodic style it's no surprise that he has been especially adept at writing for, and working with, singers, including the great Enrique Morente (who recorded several of Amigo's songs), his daughter, Estrella Morente, Carmen Linares and Diego El Cigala within the flamenco tradition, but also with artists such as Sting (on "Send Your Love" from Sting's *Sacred Love*), and Brazilian jazz pianist and vocalist Eliane Elias outside it.

He has also stretched out, contributing his playing, writing and production ideas to flamenco singers José Mercé (on *Del Amanecer*) and Remedios Amaya (*Me Voy Contigo*).

Still, while clearly rooted in flamenco, Amigo set out early on to explore the possibilities of fusions in both his recordings and collaborations. In the remarkable *Poeta* (1997), he paid tribute to the poetry of Rafael Alberti with a work for guitar and orchestra featuring Cuban guitarist, composer and conductor Leo Brower and pop star Miguel Bosé, who collaborated reciting the texts. Then, in his *Paseo de Gracia* (2009), named after a street in Barcelona, he explored pop music, calling on the Morentes and Sanz. And in the expansive *Ciudad de Las Ideas* (City of Ideas), Amigo collaborated with Argentine pop rocker Pedro Aznar and Algerian rai star Khaled.

Tierra, his seventh release, features all music composed by Amigo and arranged by him and Dire Straits keyboardist Guy Fletcher. It was recorded in London with members of Mark Knopfler's band and the Scottish folk group Capercaillie.

As his eighth studio record, *Memoria de los Sentidos*, Vicente Amigo is back to his traditional flamenco roots. In this album he has gathered the top active flamenco artists, as Potito, El Pele, Miguel Poveda, Pedro el Granaino, Niña Pastori and even Farruquito, with his incredible dance and "zapateao" on Vicente's buleria.

Four years after his last album *Tierra*, and recently awarded with the Gold Medal of the Fine Arts by the Spanish government Vicente Amigo is back with his most traditional flamenco album, the class of flamenco which is felt and expressed by very few artists.

Through his new album we could listen and enjoy themes like *Requiem*, an overwhelming tribute to his master, Paco de Lucia. Vicente also experiments with a *Seguriya* and *Tientos*, two traditional "Palos" from Flamenco music which he has never recorded in.

A transcendent performer, composer and producer, Amigo burst onto the major stages of flamenco while still a teenager. Since then, he has earned a shelf full of awards, including a Latin GRAMMY® for *Ciudad de Las Ideas* (City of Ideas) in 2001.