

The Zambra, Tourism and Discourses of Authenticity in Granada's Flamenco Scene

In Spain, flamenco has become an important element in the tourism industry particularly in the southern region of Andalusia. Indeed, throughout its history flamenco has been closely linked to the development of tourism and has played an important role in the formation of exotic stereotypes of Spanish identity. In recent years, however, flamenco has come to represent the political, economic and cultural aspirations of an autonomous Andalusian region and is now a profitable state-sponsored culture industry of which tourism is an intrinsic part. Some scholars have examined the political and economic role of flamenco in the Andalusian tourism industry (Aix Gracia 2014; Aoyama 2009; Washabaugh 2012: 89–92), while a handful of others have offered ethnographic case studies that examine the links between flamenco, ethnic identity, heritage and tourism in specific locations such as Jerez de la Frontera (Giguère 2005, 2010; Pasqualino 1998; Quintana 1998). This article focuses on one locally embedded manifestation of flamenco and its role in the tourism industry – the *zambra* of Granada – based on ethnographic research conducted in the city. The *zambra* is a performance context and genre unique to the Sacromonte neighborhood of Granada and its *gitano* (Gypsy) community. It is inextricably linked to the tourism industry, as every year thousands of tourists come to watch flamenco performances in the neighborhood's famous caves. However, members of the local flamenco community rarely frequent these performances and therefore the *zambra*'s reliance on tourism has led some aficionados and artists in Granada to criticize it for being a commercialized genre that departs from idealized notions of “authenticity” in flamenco performance.

Nonetheless, like many manifestations of flamenco that embrace different aesthetic criteria, discourses of authenticity regarding the *zambra* are often conflicting. On the one hand, the *zambra* as a performance context (i.e., cave venues) and Sacromonte as a locality are sites of so-called authenticity, because they are allegedly linked to the historical development of flamenco and are the home of Granada's most distinguished *gitano* artistic lineages. As such, Sacromonte is often viewed as a cradle of flamenco artistry from where Granada's most talented artists have emerged.

Moreover, the *zambra* is also known for unique dance styles that exist nowhere else in Andalusia. On the other hand, the *zambra* is sometimes viewed as a commercial context degraded by tourism and detached from “true” flamenco artistry. Here, discourses of nostalgia for a golden age in Sacromonte when traditional dances were still performed are a counterpoint to this notion of degradation. In this article, I examine the different discourses and practices that characterize the *zambra* and its relationship with tourism. Invoking theoretical perspectives on music and tourism studies, I situate the *zambra* at the center of conflicting discourses regarding tourism, authenticity and local heritage in Granada. As such, I hope to move beyond rigid notions of authenticity “to explore the value of the tourist site, not to ascertain tourism’s determinative influence on authentic culture (preservative or degenerative), but rather as a unique space within which multiple interpretations of a single ostensible culture can be negotiated, contested and consumed (whether by natives or outsiders)” (Lacy and Douglass 2002: 7).

The Historical Development of Flamenco and Tourism

Flamenco is a music and dance tradition commonly associated with the autonomous region of Andalusia. It also operates as powerful form of cultural expression for the *gitano* community in Southern Spain, sometimes functioning as a form of cultural capital that distinguishes *gitanos* from the majority culture (Bourdieu 1986; Giguère 2010).¹ As a musical and kinesthetic phenomenon, flamenco is characterized by a “continuum of styles” ranging from traditional forms to modern innovations that interact with global genres and markets (Manuel 1989). While flamenco is to be found in other parts of Spain, Andalusia is usually viewed as its “homeland” evidenced in recent years by strong institutional support for the tradition by the Andalusian Government, which develops it as a prominent symbol of regional identity (Aix Gracia 2014; Cruces Roldán 2002;

¹ Some scholars have shown how flamenco is still involved in powerful discourses that link flamenco artistry with *gitano* blood and heritage (Giguère 2010; Pasqualino 1998). However, it is important to recognize that flamenco can also be a means of facilitating exchange between *gitanos* and mainstream society (Quintana 1998), given that many *gitanos* still identify as Andalusians.

Machin-Autenrieth 2015; Manuel 1989; Steingress 1998a, 1998b, 2002; Washabaugh 1996, 2012).²

In part this emphasis on the regional relevance of flamenco is because many of its forms (*palos*) are believed to have originated in various parts of Andalusia thus centralizing the region in narratives about the tradition's history.³

The origins of flamenco are supposedly found in the multicultural history of Andalusia, with various cultural groups (Arabs, Gypsies, Jews, Andalusians, migrants from other parts of Spain) having left their mark on the tradition. In particular, scholars and aficionados often argue that flamenco emerged from cultural interactions between *gitanos* and *moriscos* (Muslims converted to Christianity after the fall of Islamic Spain in 1492), as well as the wider *gitanization* of Andalusian folk forms. In reality, many scholars agree that flamenco as a consolidated tradition only really emerged in the nineteenth century as a product of commercial theatres (*cafés cantantes*) in Andalusia and Madrid (Steingress 1993, 1998b). The historian Timothy Mitchell (1994) believes that late-eighteenth century “proto”-flamenco forms that had previously been a form of social catharsis for subaltern groups were later capitalized upon by wealthy landowners, aristocrats and businessmen (often referred to as *señoritos*) thus enabling these early styles to gain popularity in public performance contexts. In turn, flamenco was canonized and standardized in public spaces as an identifiable genre with discernible forms and stylistic characteristics.⁴

Flamenco is, arguably, a product of the romanticization and exoticization of Gypsy and Andalusian cultural stereotypes (Charnon-Deutsch 2004). These stereotypes appealed to the cultural trends of Romanticism in nineteenth-century Europe and thus became embedded in national and

² While it is evident that flamenco's origins are largely to be found in Andalusia, it is also important to note that other regions of Spain (such as Extremadura and Murcia) have played an important role in its development and have their own distinctive styles. However, this has not prevented Andalusian institutions from monopolizing the tradition in its own project of regional identity building.

³ Some forms have also drawn influence from the Americas, most notably the *cantes de ida y vuelta* (roundtrip songs) repertoire. For an overview of *palos*, see Manuel (2010).

⁴ In flamenco scholarship debates continue regarding the historical development of flamenco, which are beyond the scope of this article. However, scholars tend to foreground a particular socio-cultural reading of flamenco and its relevance for different categories of identity: as a transcendental, universalist tradition born of Spanish nationalism in commercial contexts (see for example Steingress 1993, 1998a, 1998b, 2002), as a regional phenomenon that was born of the Andalusian working classes (see for example Cruces Roldán 2002) or the continuation of Mairena and Molina's (1967) *gitano*-biased narrative that roots flamenco in notions of blood and cultural rights.

international representations of flamenco that exist to this day. During the nineteenth century, Spaniards capitalized upon their own cultural traditions to counter the dominance of French and Italian cultures in a process of internal identity building and as a response to a general growth in nationalism following the War of Independence with France (Álvarez Junco 2001; Steingress 1998a).⁵ The popularity of flamenco in mid-nineteenth century Spain was the result of an inward appropriation of national cultural stereotypes that existed largely in the south. Ironically, these stereotypes partly originated from the writings of foreign travelers during the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Travel writers and intellectuals such as Washington Irving (1783–1859) constructed notions of “Spanish-ness” built on the exotic and seemingly non-European peoples, traditions and architecture that they found in southern Spain. For many foreigners interested in Spanish culture (particularly from France), “true” Spain existed in the south; the north was too similar to Europe and thus failed to quench the romantic thirst for the exotic (Fernández Cifuentes 2007; Llano 2012).⁶ Early forms of flamenco such as the *zambra* (discussed below) were part of this romanticized ideal, an ideal captured in the exotic figure of the female dancer that has come to embody stereotypical representations of flamenco artistry (Heffner Hayes 2009).

Flamenco’s role in exotic representations of Spanish identity reached its zenith during the Franco regime (1939–75), particularly as a promotional strategy for attracting tourism during the 1950s/60s. The dictatorship suppressed the regional diversity of Spain that had been foregrounded during the Second Republic (1931–36), with national unity and the Castilian language becoming central to Spanish politics. Displays of cultural diversity were quickly quashed as they posed a threat to the construction of a unified national identity. However, as the historians Jean Grugel and Tim Rees (1997: 140) note, “the dictatorship failed to produce a distinctive culture of its own,

⁵ Nationalism in Spain during the nineteenth century was problematic. While it is true that a sense of national solidarity and unity was being developed at this time, it did not have the prominence of other European nation states such as France. This was largely due to the fragmentation of national identities in Spain with other regions such as the Basque Country and Catalonia (and to a certain extent, even Andalusia) asserting their own claims to territorial autonomy and identity.

⁶ Samuel Llano’s (2013) book gives consideration to the exotic, orientalist narratives that underpinned French imaginaries of Spanish music. However, his main aim is to move beyond such assumptions and to explore the intellectual dimension of Spanish music in France during the early-twentieth century and the ways in which conflicting meanings were ascribed to Spanish music in the context of political and social change in France.

[thus] relying on the manipulation of existing forms.” On the one hand, the regime sought to build a national identity based on Catholicism and traditional folklore, denying readings of Spanish identity that invoked the country’s heterogeneous past. However, the captivating and exotic character of flamenco was a suitable vehicle for the construction of an exportable image of Spain. During the 1950s and 60s, Spain entered a new era of economic development partly due to its alliance with the United States during the Cold War and the burgeoning tourism industry. The nationalization of flamenco played a key role in tourism, as this exotic and seemingly “non-European” tradition encapsulated the regime’s tourist slogan “España es diferente” (Spain is different). During this time a number of flamenco venues emerged (often referred to as *tablaos*) that started to spread across Spain, mainly although not exclusively catering to the tourism industry. As Heffner Hayes states, the “official versio[n] of flamenco de-emphasized regional tensions and captured all of the accessible tourist images of Spain in light-hearted, entertainment-orientated stage shows for the *tablaos*” (2009: 125).

Flamenco and the Tourism Industry Today

Following Franco’s death in 1975 and with the creation of the new Spanish Constitution in 1978, Spain entered an era of democracy and modernization. An integral component of this “new” Spain was the decentralization of power to the seventeen autonomous regions (*comunidades autónomas*).⁷ Since the constitution was implemented, culture has become an important tool for the representation of regional identities and the development of regional economies. In Andalusia, the regional government has monopolized the flamenco industry in the service of a somewhat controversial project of regional identity building.⁸ Here, flamenco is being developed by the Andalusian Government as a powerful emblem of regional identity and an ambassador for Andalusian culture abroad. While flamenco may serve the political interests of an autonomous region, it cannot be

⁷ Andalusia gained its autonomy in 1981. For a thorough analysis of Andalusian regionalism and political autonomy, see Cortes Peña (1994, 2001); Gilmore (1981); Moreno Navarro (1977, 1993) and Newton (1982).

⁸ Elsewhere I explore the “regionalisation” of flamenco at length, discussing some of the ways in which this process has been received and contested in Andalusia (Machin-Autenrieth 2014). Also see Washabaugh (2012: 81–104).

divorced from the wider process of globalization as evidenced by its close relationship with tourism. The economic geographer Yuko Aoyama (2009) argues that tourism has had a notable impact on flamenco as a regionally embedded culture industry. Paradoxically, flamenco is used to demarcate a distinct regional identity as a response to globalization, while also functioning as a form of regional promotion in global circuits and tourism (Aix Gracia 2014: 337). For Andalusia, flamenco is a profitable culture industry that contributes to the economic development of the region and thus institutions have paid attention towards the development of the tourist circuit, particularly in terms of large-scale festivals. Moreover, for many artists and private flamenco venues tourism is an important means of making a living, particularly in a region that has such a high rate of unemployment currently running at 35%.⁹

While flamenco is also to be found on the beaches of Southern Spain thus capitalizing on exportable images of sun and sand, the majority of flamenco tourism takes place in Andalusian cities and their historical centers (such as Córdoba, Granada, Jerez de la Frontera and Seville). In fact, Aoyama (2009) argues that the development of city-based flamenco tourism was part of a general shift in Andalusia from mass, beach tourism to an emphasis on cultural and niche tourism in the historical centers of the region. In his analysis, Aoyama describes the range of contexts in which flamenco and the tourism industry combine including performance venues (*tablaos* and sometimes more traditional venues such as *peñas*), festivals, shops, museums, cultural centers and schools (Aoyama 2009). Flamenco is also involved in a range of touristic activities such as mass/leisure tourism and niche tourism where people come to learn flamenco in the numerous schools set up for visitors (Aoyama 2009; Connell and Gibson 2005).

Through the tourism industry, Aoyama (2009) argues that flamenco is a prominent economic driver in the region. According to a document published by the Junta de Andalucía in

⁹ Figure taken from <https://ec.europa.eu/eures/main.jsp?catId=452&acro=Imi&lang=en&countryId=ES®ionId=ES6&nuts2Code=ES61&nuts3Code=null®ionName=Andaluc%C3%ADa> (accessed 12 May, 2015). This figure is difficult to verify, however, given that many people in Andalusia work in irregular or un-registered positions (so-called, ‘trabajo negro’).

2004, 626,000 tourists travelled to Andalusia in that year with flamenco as their principle motive generating revenues of over 540 million euros or 3.8% of the total income from tourism in the region. This amount included not only money spent on flamenco activities, but also accommodation, leisure, food and so on. While a modest figure, it is important to note that this document refers to flamenco tourists specifically and not ‘conventional’ tourists who visit Andalusia for other reasons, but who may nonetheless engage in flamenco tourism during their stay. It is far harder to determine the exact figures of this type of tourist, but from my own research in Córdoba, Granada and Seville venues that offer flamenco performances to tourists often maintain a healthy business despite the low wages offered to many artists.

Since the publication of this document in 2004, flamenco tourism continues to increase and helps to raise awareness of regional culture and to bolster the Andalusian economy. In particular, two events have impacted on this development: the inclusion of flamenco in the Andalusian Statute of Autonomy (Junta de Andalucía 2007; Machin-Autenrieth 2015) in 2007 and its inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2010.¹⁰ As a result, flamenco schools/academies for foreign and native students are expanding, as well as the number of festivals and performance venues. Of course, it is important to recognize that the global economic crisis has dramatically impacted on Andalusia affecting both unemployment rates and increasing levels of migration from Andalusia. However, tourism remains one of the region’s most prominent forms of income and one need only spend a couple of days in Seville or Granada to see the close relationship flamenco has with the industry. Not only does the growth of flamenco tourism contribute to the economic development of the region, it also emphasizes Andalusian autonomy and cultural self-determination both within the region and beyond its borders. There is a certain fetishization of place with Andalusia being situated as an authentic homeland, a site of musical

¹⁰ For a comprehensive overview of the impact these declarations have had on flamenco policy, see the Instituto Andaluz del Flamenco’s (Andalusian Institute of Flamenco) own document *Libro blanco del flamenco* (White Paper of Flamenco) (2012), which aims to maintain an on-going and critical observation of the flamenco industry. The Andalusian Institute of Flamenco is a governmental organization committed to the development of flamenco within and outside of the region. In a recent article, Cruces Roldán (2014) has examined the impact of the UNESCO inscription on flamenco and the genre’s status as heritage.

pilgrimage for tourists in search of “true” flamenco (Aoyama 2009; Connell and Gibson 2005; Giguère 2010).

The literature on flamenco tourism in the context of cultural and political autonomy is relatively limited (Aoyama 2009; Calado Olivo 2007; Washabaugh 2012: 89–92). As has already been discussed, Aoyama (2009) has examined in detail the economic dimension of flamenco tourism, exploring how local and regional institutions impact on this “regionally-embedded” culture industry. For Aoyama, “Flamenco might not have survived if it were not for the multiple and overlapping attempts to develop a site of staged authenticity by businesses, artists and the state, and to cater to the broader international audience” (2009: 98). Here, Aoyama draws upon MacCannell’s (1973) theory of “staged authenticity” to theorize the construction of flamenco tourist settings that give the illusion of authenticity and cultural reality. However, such an approach does not take into account the discursive dimension of flamenco tourism at an ethnographic level. How do flamenco artists negotiate discourses of authenticity? What role does flamenco tourism play in local conceptions of identity? Much of the existing literature on flamenco tourism focuses on top-down approaches and the political/economic characteristics of the industry. Besides from the work of Giguère (2010) who explores the commercialization of local heritage in Jerez de la Frontera (namely, flamenco and wine), however, the impact of tourism on flamenco discourse and practice in local communities is less understood.

Ethnomusicologists are well positioned to deal with discourses of authenticity, identity and place in music tourism given their emphasis on ethnographic research and the tendency to focus on grass-roots musical practice (Krüger and Trandafoiu 2013). Here, it is necessary to offer a few comments on how authenticity can be conceptualized in the flamenco context and in theoretical terms. In flamenco, authenticity is often rooted in an idealized notion of purity in performance that was first propagated by Federico García Lorca (1898–1936) and Manuel de Falla (1876–1946) in the early-twentieth century and reached its zenith with the discourse of *mairenismo* in the 1960s/70s, a term referring to the ideology of gypsy singer/writer Antonio Mairena (1909–83). For

Mairena, authenticity in flamenco performance was linked to particular repertoire choices (such as the *cante jondo* or ‘deep song’ repertoire) and an austere, passionate and rough performance style that usually focuses on the musical interactions between singers and guitarists.¹¹ Moreover, Mairena viewed the *gitano* community as central to flamenco authenticity, often disregarding the stylistic contributions of *payos* (non-Gypsies). Washabaugh (2012) argues that Andalusian institutions tend to perpetuate somewhat historically rooted notions of flamenco style even if they do depart from a *gitano*-centric position and try to embrace innovation in current artistic projects.

However, authenticity in flamenco performance as in any cultural performance tradition is multifaceted, fluid and ever contested. Different groups and artists often present different discourses of authenticity dependent on their own social and geographical positions in the flamenco tradition. Like Weiss (2014: 519), I believe that “contrary to the usual construction of authenticity as true to type, genuine, conforming to an original in style and/or methods, believable, or trustworthy, I argue that authenticity is a relative, flexible, and malleable concept. Any construction of authenticity is persistently emergent.”¹² As Giguère (2010) has noted in the context of Jerez de la Frontera, it could be argued that authenticity in the *zambra* of Granada is based on four factors that differ from populist understandings of “authentic” flamenco: uniqueness of the *zambra* itself as a context and genre; the relations between different gypsy and non-gypsy social networks/family lineages; particular geographical spaces and places (i.e., the caves of Sacromonte and neighborhood itself); and emotional attachment to and nostalgia for the *zambra*. However, what interests me is how tourism influences these constructions of authenticity in Sacromonte and responses to the *zambra* amongst the wider flamenco community in Granada.

Music’s uneasy relationship with tourism often complicates notions of authenticity in particular localities. As a point of comparison, I draw upon the work of Jennifer Ryan (2011) regarding blues tourism in Beale Street. Ryan explores how musicians negotiate discourses of

¹¹ While flamenco dance is, of course, central to flamenco artistry, in a somewhat “orthodox” reading of flamenco authenticity it occupies a secondary position when compared to song.

¹² For more on authenticity, see Aubert (2007: 23–33).

authenticity surrounding the blues; discourses that tend to view tourism as a corrupting force that belies idealized concepts of poverty and transcendentalism. She approaches tourism in Beale Street from the perspective of labor and professionalism, where musicians traverse the essentialized discourses of authenticity that are placed upon them. In a similar fashion, I believe that the *zambra* is suitable for discussing contested notions of authenticity and the complicated relationship between tourism and local identity. Rather than treating flamenco as a unified phenomenon, I hone in on one specific manifestation that is locally embedded and largely separate from institutional intervention. As such, the *zambra* provides a suitable case study for exploring grass roots responses to flamenco tourism in Andalusia.

Flamenco Tourism in Granada

The *zambra* is perhaps Granada's most famous musical phenomenon and has played an integral role in the development of flamenco in the city, both as a lived tradition and as a tourism industry. However, it is important to recognize that the *zambra* is located almost exclusively in the *gitano* neighborhood of Sacromonte high in the eastern edge of the city. Thus, before focusing on the *zambra* it is important to contextualize the geography of flamenco tourism in Granada. The city is one of the most popular historic tourist sites in Spain, famous for its Islamic architectural legacy embodied in the Alhambra Palace and the winding streets of the Albaicín. The legacy of Islamic Spain and the arguably mythical notion of *convivencia* (peaceful coexistence between Christians, Jews and Muslims) are defining features of the tourism industry in Granada.¹³ Tourists come to relish in a reconstructed version of Granada's Moorish past and idealized visions of al-Andalus (Calderwood 2014).

Flamenco plays an important role in this romanticized portrayal of Granada's history. In historical narratives, Granada is seen as a key site for interactions between *moriscos* and *gitanos*

¹³ The notion of *convivencia* has been subjected to intense scholarly criticism, both as a historical concept and as a model for contemporary multiculturalism. For more information, see Aidi (2005); Calderwood (2014); Fernández-Morera (2006); Flesler and Melegosa (2010); Menocal (2002); Glick, Mann and Dodds (1992); Rogozen-Soltar (2007).

that allegedly formed the basis for flamenco (Bäcker 2005; Blas Infante 2010[1923–33]; Cruces Roldán 2003; Gelardo-Navarro 1996; Grande 1979). In addition, the “oriental” characteristics of flamenco’s melodic structure, vocal style and dance mean that it provides a suitable soundscape for tourism narratives. Throughout Granada, flamenco can be found in a variety of contexts that attract both tourists and locals.¹⁴ The city has an annual cycle of eight festivals that generate significant income. During my last field trip in Granada, on my arrival into the bus station from Málaga, which is a common route for many tourists, I noticed a large poster advertising one of the current festivals. The city also has a well-established infrastructure of flamenco establishments, ranging from tourist *tablaos*, shops and schools to more “private” venues such as the Peña la Platería. The latter is a traditional context usually reserved for aficionados and paying members (*socios*). However, on Thursdays the Platería opens its doors to tourists who watch traditional performances in a seemingly “authentic” setting.¹⁵

The Sacromonte neighborhood, however, is perhaps the most popular flamenco context topping the itineraries of most tourists visiting Granada. This traditionally *gitano* neighborhood slightly isolated from the urban center, stages *zambras* for tourists nearly every night of the year. The *zambra* is both a context of performance and a genre that is unique to Granada; it exists nowhere else in Andalusia and thus offers a distinctly local reading of flamenco as a tourism industry. As a context, the *zambra* refers to one of a number of caves in Sacromonte that traditionally functioned both as homes and businesses for the *gitano* community (Pérez Casas 1982). These caves are famed for the performances that take place inside, providing an intimate and seemingly authentic context for the consumption of touristic spectacles. As a genre, the *zambra gitana* (Gypsy *zambra*) refers to a distinct form of flamenco that is based on traditional *gitano* wedding rituals. Nowadays, it is occasionally performed as a re-enactment of the wedding ritual,

¹⁴ For a useful overview of all the flamenco contexts and performances in Granada, see <http://www.granadaesflamenco.com> (accessed January 22, 2015).

¹⁵ Peñas are actually a relatively new performance context, the Platería being the first to open in 1949. However, they have come to embody traditional flamenco values and aesthetics. As such, some peñas never open their doors to tourists, maintaining their reputation as private and orthodox settings (Malefyt 1997, 1998).

consisting of a number of choreographed dance routines including the *alboreá*, *cachucha*, *fandango del Albaicín*, *mosca*, *tana* and *tango de la flor*. One characteristic that distinguishes the *zambra gitana* from other flamenco styles is the presence of group dancing, with some of the forms consisting of stylized, circle dances. Moreover, the *zambra gitana*'s basis in folk tradition in terms of melodic form, meter, song style and instrumental style is more notable than in the majority of flamenco forms. Traditionally, the *zambra gitana* also made use of the *bandurria* a mandolin-type instrument that has fallen out of use since the 1960s.

The Origins and Development of the *Zambra*

The origins of the *zambra* are not well documented and its seemingly peripheral position in flamenco means that it has received less academic attention. Nonetheless, a handful of scholars and aficionados have sought to examine the *zambra*'s historical development as a distinct form of local heritage (Albaicín 2011; Cabrero Palomares 2009; Molina Fajardo 1974; Lorente Rivas 2007; Martos Sánchez 2008; Navarro García 1993). The word *zambra* allegedly stems from Arabic and first referred to festive rituals of music and dance that existed in Islamic Spain. Following the reconquest of Granada in 1492, Muslims were forced to convert to Christianity and many were moved to the outskirts of the city, in places such as Sacromonte. These *moriscos* were initially allowed to continue their traditions and cultural festivities. However, in 1567 a notable leader of the *morisco* community Francisco Núñez Muley (c.1490–c.1568) contested a new law that banished *morisco* traditions, including the *zambra* (Albaicín 2011; Cabrero Palomares 2009; Molina Fajardo 1974). What allegedly makes Granada unique is the presence of a *gitano* community in the late-fifteenth century that occupied cave dwellings in Sacromonte. Therefore, some writers argue that *moriscos* and *gitanos* engaged in some sort of cultural exchange given their shared position of social marginality (Albacín 2011; Gelardo Navarro 1996), an idea originally proposed by the “father” of Andalusian regionalism Blas Infante (2010[1923–33]). By the time *moriscos* had been

expelled from Spain in 1609,¹⁶ scholars argue that many of their customs and traditions were subsumed into the *gitano* community. Therefore, in terms of the *zambra gitana* Molina Fajardo argues that “only in Granada did the optimum circumstances emerge for the birth of this genuine folk art” (1974: 16).¹⁷ While such a narrative is difficult to prove historically, it is prominent in Granada’s flamenco scene and provides a somewhat romantic portrayal of the *zambra*’s historical development.

The word *zambra* did not reappear until the mid-nineteenth century when the term *zambra gitana granadina* was coined by Antonio Torcuato Martín “el Cujón” in 1840 (Cabrero Palomares 2009). This referred to a group of dances based on the *gitano* wedding that incorporated other folkloric and flamenco styles. Since the late-eighteenth century, travel writers had been fascinated with Granada as a site of exoticism and romanticism steeped in Islamic history and inhabited by “primitive” figures such as *gitanos*. Scholars argue that “el Cujón” capitalized upon the influx of foreign visitors who were in search of exotic representations of Spanish-ness (Cabrero Palomares 2009; Navarro García 1993). The *zambra* was seemingly rooted in Spain’s Islamic history and awakened a romantic desire for the primitive and exotic. From the mid-nineteenth century, these *zambras* were performed in locations that embodied Granada’s Islamic heritage, most notably the Alhambra. In 1881, however, the first cave in Sacromonte was opened to the public called the Zambra de los Amaya. By the end of the century, the *zambra* had become a popular phenomenon in Granada and continued to attract foreigners. In the context of European romanticism and early tourism, an exoticized perception of Andalusia became the baseline for representations of Spanish-ness as discussed above (Fernández Cifuentes 2007). I argue that Granada, its Gypsies and its *zambras* were central to these perceptions of Andalusia and its conflation with Spanish identity.

During the first decades of the twentieth century, a number of *zambras* opened in Sacromonte that took advantage of the growing tourism industry and the visits of prominent

¹⁶ It is important to recognize that many *moriscos* in fact remained even following their official expulsion. In Granada, some are believed to have “camouflaged” themselves amongst the *gitano* community.

¹⁷ All translations from Spanish are my own.

political and royal figures from around the globe.¹⁸ Here, the *zambra* entered its so-called golden age. At its height in the early 1950s, there were 3,682 caves inhabited in Sacromonte with the majority of the population being *gitanos* (Pérez Casas 1982) and flamenco was a prominent feature of the soundscape of the neighborhood.¹⁹ However, in 1963 a period of floods in the area irreconcilably changed the neighborhood and its *zambras*. Following the floods, the majority of *gitano* families moved to other areas of Andalusia (most notably Almería and Málaga) or Madrid either voluntarily or more commonly they were forced to move by local authorities (Albaicín 2011). This echoed a wider process of so-called “urban development” during the 1960s, which saw the removal of *gitano* communities in other parts of Spain most notably the Triana neighborhood of Seville. Those that had been flamenco performers in Sacromonte started working in *tablaos* on the Costa del Sol or in Madrid, taking advantage of the dramatic increase in tourism during the 1960s (Lorente Rivas 2007). Although there were attempts to rekindle the neighborhood and its *zambras* during the late 1960s, Sacromonte entered a period of decline and in the 1970s many of the caves were taken over by discos (Lorente Rivas 2007).

In the 1980s, Sacromonte began to open up to tourism again with some *gitano* families moving back into the area to reinvigorate flamenco tourism. The model of the *zambra* had changed, however. Despite attempts to revive the traditional *zambra gitana*, the repertoire of the *zambra* shifted to the model of the *tablaos* that was popular across Spain.²⁰ As Lorente Rivas states: “Attempts to revitalize the traditional *zambra* at the end of the 80s were doomed to failure; the performers were very old and lived outside of the neighborhood, and the economy and model of the *tablaos* and festivals had taken over the *zambra sacromontana*” (2007: 15). As this quotation shows, the reasons for this shift were multiple. The lines of transmission that once supported the *zambra*

¹⁸ Albaicín gives a comprehensive overview of the appearance and disappearance of *zambras* in Sacromonte (2011: 73–83).

¹⁹ Alan Lomax recorded the *zambra* in Sacromonte during his tour of Spain in 1952–3. For an example, see <http://research.culturalequity.org/get-audio-detailed-recording.do?recordingId=22351#> (accessed January 22, 2015).

²⁰ Broadly speaking, the repertoire in *tablaos* performances consists of typical *palos* that are considered the core repertoire of flamenco. Usually, performers will focus on lighter more festive *palos* (such as *bulería*, *alegrías* and *tangos*) in order to fulfill the tastes of a predominantly tourist audience.

gitana had been broken following the floods, with younger artists training in modern styles of flamenco outside of the familial environment. Moreover, these artists were attracted by the growing international popularity of flamenco as a world music genre, spearheaded by innovative artists such as Paco de Lucía (1947–2014). Therefore, the successful model of the *tablaos* that had originated during the Franco regime proved to be a more profitable and artistically attractive option. Young artists were less inclined to continue the folk-based and perceivably simplistic styles of the *zambra gitana*, instead opting for the virtuosic and individualistic characteristics of modern flamenco that emerged in the late 1970s. These factors had an irreversible effect on the *zambra gitana* to the extent that its survival as a distinct genre is in doubt.

The *Zambra* as a Tourist Spectacle

While the repertoire of the *zambra* may have changed, it is still a successful economic enterprise that is inextricably linked to the tourism industry. More than a century of interaction between tourists and *gitano* performers has left an indelible mark on the *zambra*, such that tourism is engrained in its social and performative structure. As Connell and Gibson (2005: 148–9) argue, tourism can be part of so-called traditional practice in music and not simply a superficial industry that obscures private socio-musical life. This is certainly true of the *zambra*. Even until the floods in 1963, tourism and daily social life in Sacromonte were inseparable. Recent demographic changes have meant that performers tend to work in Sacromonte and live elsewhere. Nonetheless, the structure of the *zambra* as a performative industry is impossible to understand without tourism.

Today, there are four main, privately-owned *zambras* that continue to offer performances: Cueva de la Rocío, Venta el Gallo, Cuevas los Tarantos and *Zambra de María la Canastera*.²¹ In order to understand the make up of the flamenco tourism industry in Sacromonte, it is worth discussing each of these caves in turn. The Cueva de la Rocío is perhaps one of the most well

²¹ There are other caves in Sacromonte that offer different types of flamenco events or *tablaos*-inspired performances. La Bulería, for example, is a flamenco “club” that opens late after the *zambras* have finished and attracts a mix of locals and tourists. At times this venue will break into a spontaneous *juerga* (a spontaneous flamenco session). Some caves also offer private performances for organized groups or special occasions.

known caves in Sacromonte having opened in 1952 and belonging to the Mayas, a prestigious *gitano* family in Granada. The cave has also been visited by a number of famous figures such as Michelle Obama in 2010. Venta el Gallo is positioned higher up in Sacromonte and actually advertises itself as a *tablao* rather than a *zambra*, perhaps because there is a stage for performance (normally artists perform in the middle of the cave). Cuevas los Tarantos is another well-known *zambra* founded in 1972 that gained popularity during the 1990s. This cave occupies a prime position at the entrance point to Sacromonte and so is the first that tourists encounter. Finally, the Zambra María la Canastera founded in 1954 is best known for its supposedly “authentic” interpretation of the *zambra gitana*, incorporating original wedding dances into its repertoire (discussed in detail below).

All of these *zambras* follow a similar model in the experience that they offer to tourists. The performances are usually part of a wider package that includes transport, dinner and a drink. Typically, tourists are picked up from their hotel and taken up the steep road leading to Sacromonte. Some will then be treated to a dinner with specialties from Granada and then the show usually lasts around an hour with a drink offered half way through. The Venta el Gallo also offers a night-time tour of Sacromonte following the performance. The *zambra* experience takes place in a particularly felicitous setting, with the backdrop of the Alhambra lit up against the night sky and is often regarded as one of the highlights of a trip to Granada. The profile of tourists who attend these performances is wide ranging and when I visited the caves there were a number of different nationalities present, including American, British, French, Japanese and South American.

As Aubert (2007) argues, the tourists who attend these events are often in search of an authentic cultural experience that allows them to transcend their own value systems and cultural perceptions. Aubert (2007: 24–29) identifies four different “categories of the authentic” (art genres, ritual genres, folk genres and ethnic genres) in his discussion of staged performances of traditional musics, particularly in concert settings. According to his categories, the *zambra* would uneasily fall somewhere between a folk genre that embraces festivity and harks back to a golden age (i.e.,

wedding festivities), and an “ethnic” genre that celebrates a cultural Other, in this case the valorization of a Gypsy ethnicity (2007: 27). While Aubert does not address tourism per se, he does acknowledge the constructions of authenticity that surround these different categories of musical performance that can be applied to the *zambra*. Indeed, the caves’ marketing strategies are aimed at constructing a particular vision of the *zambra* based on typical stereotypes of place (the idealized, “oriental” connotations of Sacromonte and the Alhambra) and “primitive” representations of Gypsy ethnicity. For example, the website of the Cuevas los Tarantos states: “Enjoy an unforgettable evening at Cuevas los Tarantos. Meet an authentic Gypsy Zambra. Flamenco full of purity and feeling, in an incomparable place The Sacromonte Caves.”²²

The performance setting is also carefully orchestrated to provide spectators with a representation of reality or what Debord (1994) has described as the “society of spectacle”. When tourists enter the caves, the appearance of their surroundings immediately conjures ideas of a cultural authenticity rooted in idealized notions of place, history and ethnicity. Here, it is useful to revisit MacCannell’s (1973) notion of staged authenticity, itself based on Goffman’s (1959) theorization of front and back social regions. According to MacCannell, tourist contexts often construct front regions (i.e., public meeting places for hosts and guests) in the image of back regions (i.e., private spaces where “authentic” social practice occurs). This spatial transformation fulfills the touristic desire to enter back regions, which they view as spaces of authentic experience. The *zambra* is an interesting case in point when interpreted according to MacCannell’s theory. On the one hand, these caves and the performances in them have been set up to maximize the touristic experience and thus economic revenue. The caves are carefully adorned with photographs of famous visitors, paraphernalia, pots and garments to give the impression of a so-called back region – or in this instance a place in which *gitanos* perhaps live and work.

However, the differentiation between front and back regions is problematic when the very nature of the *zambra* cannot be divorced from tourism. These caves and their performances have

²² See <http://www.cuevaslostarantos.com/> (accessed January 22, 2015).

been intrinsic to *gitano* social life and cultural identity in Sacromonte for many years. They are inscribed with local history and heritage. Indeed, the images that adorn the walls are sources of local pride and not simply tourist magnets, and therefore it is impossible to disentangle touristic perceptions and the cultural significance of these images and artifacts for the artists themselves. While few *gitanos* live in the caves nowadays, they *were* the homes and places of work for many *gitano* families. Therefore, at least from a historical perspective, it is impossible to separate tourism and the *zambra* from so-called authentic cultural life in Sacromonte. In a sense then, tourists are entering the shadow of a “back” region or what Baudrillard (1994) has described as a simulacrum – a representation or copy of a social reality that no longer exists as it once did. These caves, then, can be viewed as reincarnations of a local context that invoke a nostalgic past before the floods and migrations that irreconcilably altered the Sacromonte neighborhood.

The performances themselves are structured in such a way that tourists are offered a unique experience unlike any other in Andalusia, even if the music performed in the majority of the caves is the same as in any *tablao*. The set up of the performances in each cave tends to follow the same format.²³ With the exception of the Venta el Gallo that has a stage at the back, performances take place in the middle of the cave with audience members sat along the edge of the cave wall and the performers in the middle or to the sides. This means that audience members are in amongst the artists, adding to a constructed atmosphere of privacy and intimacy. Usually, there is a small ensemble sat close to the audience members consisting of a guitarist, a singer and two people clapping. Forming the centerpiece and always the focal point for audience members is the dancer, and these shows consist of solo dances performed in turn by a male and female dancer. The female dancer is usually dressed in a typical ruffled, flowing flamenco dress that continues stereotypical representations of the female, gypsy figure in flamenco. As is normal in flamenco performances, the dancers perform on wooden boards thus contributing to the percussive sound of the footwork and

²³ For a depiction of a typical performance in one of the caves, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tKCzYhAJmW0&spfreload=10> (accessed 13 May, 2015). This video was taken in the Cueva de los Tarantos and is a performance of a *tangos*.

slightly deadening the overall volume given the acoustic nature of such an enclosed space. The singers and guitarists are usually amplified, a non-traditional practice in the *zambra* that is of particular benefit to the guitarist as it allows him to perform more virtuosic material and extended *falsetas* (melodic passages in guitar performance).²⁴ As discussed above, the typical repertoire of these *zambras* is usually that which can be found in any *tablaos* and includes more accessible, energetic *palos* (such as *bulerías* and *tangos*) and the profounder *palos* (such as *soleá*).

At the end of the performance, audience members are usually invited to dance with the performers enabling them to interact with the artists on a more emotional level. Overall, the performances are intimate, loud and flamboyant offering a unique experience to audience members. The physical closeness between audience and performer and the lack of conventional rowed, concert seating adds to an almost communal atmosphere that contributes to a sense of cultural authenticity. Audience members are able to get closer to the artists than in any other performance in the intimate and richly decorated setting of the cave, a stark departure from the somewhat “sterile” and familiar setting of conventional concert venues or *tablaos*. As Aubert (2007: 32) notes, the performances here can be read as a “game of mirrors” as audiences and performers “each looks to the other for the reflection of his or her own ideal”: for tourists, the search for an authentic cultural experience in the “back region” as a form of entertainment and cultural voyeurism; and for performers, an opportunity to present and valorize their cultural traditions and to earn a living. Yet, the relevance of the *zambra* for the local community is often contested, as the commercial nature of the *zambra* is brought to the foreground in differing perceptions of what constitutes flamenco authenticity.

²⁴ I note the use of “him” here. I only met one female guitarist in Granada and all of the guitarists I am aware of in the *zambras* are male. For more on the flamenco guitar and gender, see Lorenzo Arribas (2011). For issues of gender in relation to flamenco song, see Chuse (2003).

The *Zambra* in Local Discourse

In her article, Ryan (2011) teases out some of the dominant narratives that characterize folkloric and purist representations of the blues as a counteraction to tourism in Beale Street. Here, the blues is tied to essentialized discourses of the “black experience” such as slavery, poverty, rurality, non-commercialism and authentic performance venues. According to these narratives, blues musicians in Beale Street are abandoning authenticity in search of commercial gain. In other words, they are sacrificing their art for the superficial tastes of tourists. Yet, Ryan uncovers a schism between the discourses of non-musicians versus the reality of musicians who do not necessarily seek authenticity in the first place. Rather, musicians use tourist contexts as a source of regular income and even as a means for developing musicianship and virtuosity. However, she argues that the “decoupling of musical authenticity and labor has led to situations in which folkloric authenticity seems to be used as an excuse to pay musicians less” in what she calls the “fetishization of poverty” (Ryan 2011: 496). While I am not approaching the *zambra* from the perspectives of economics and labor, similar discourses of commercialism and authenticity characterize responses to flamenco tourism in Sacromonte. Moreover, similar discursive divisions exist between commentators and musicians. My interactions with aficionados, producers and journalists sometimes revealed negative responses to the *zambra*’s close relationship with tourism.

The flamencologist Manuel Lorente Rivas (2007) has also conducted research regarding touristic perceptions of the *zambra*. He argues that for some people in the flamenco community (particularly aficionados) tourism is the “enemy” of traditional flamenco. Heffner Hayes (2009) has arrived at a similar conclusion, arguing that purists believe flamenco is being tainted by tourism. In Granada, this disregard for tourism has manifested itself in the notion that artists involved in tourist *tablaos* and *zambras* are somehow second-rate (Lorente Rivas 2007), an opinion that was replicated in my own fieldwork. However, for an artist to be second-rate there needs to be a point of comparison. Arguably, this point of comparison, at least in Granada, is the performances that occur

in *peñas* and most notably the Platería.²⁵ Some scholars have illustrated how *peñas* are sites for the continuation of orthodox conceptualizations of flamenco artistry, often rooted in ideological narrative of *mairénismo* and favoritism towards the more profound *palos* (the *cante jondo* repertoire) particularly through song (Lorente Rivas 2007; Malefyt 1997, 1998). In a sense these venues are similar to the juke joints that Ryan (2011) describes as contexts for the so-called “real” blues.

Peñas are usually membership based and attract aficionados who are well versed in the flamenco repertoire and valorize traditional song and its guitar accompaniment. Dance is usually, although not always, seen as less important and more associated with commercial and/or touristic flamenco. Therefore, performances in *peñas* are usually more introvert, traditional and based on faithfulness to repertoire and traditional aesthetics (emotion, embodiment in song, vocal style and guitaristic restraint). Given a lack of space, generalizations are necessary of the type of flamenco that is performed in *peñas* and how aficionados view the tradition. I can think of a number of exceptions in my own fieldwork that took place in the *peñas* that challenge these orthodox practices. However, for my purposes here they illustrate an important point – the *zambra* and its role in tourism is often seen as a departure from the practices that characterize so-called authentic flamenco artistry in contexts such as the *peña*. Indeed, when I spoke to a lady in Granada’s tourism office she instantly marked out the *zambras* and *tablaos* as touristic and the Platería as authentic. It is not surprising, therefore, that a number of aficionados I spoke to inside and outside of the *peñas* viewed the *zambra* as a commercial enterprise that exists only for tourism and that represents the degradation of Sacromonte.

However, a contradictory discourse that characterizes perceptions of the *zambra* was a certain sense of nostalgia and loss. While this particular group of interlocutors (i.e., aficionados,

²⁵ Malefyt (1998) explores the role of *peñas* in the socialization of traditional flamenco, contrasting them with commercial contexts such as the *tablaos*. According to him, aficionados view *peñas* as “inside” spaces, whereas *tablaos* and tourist flamenco are constructed as “public”/“outside” spaces. While providing a space to distance flamenco from commercial ventures, Malefyt argues that *peñas* are also gendered, male spaces that underscore social distinctions between men and women in Southern Spain. Although I find Malefyt’s binary of public and private spaces problematic, some of his findings echo my own research experience in Granada.

journalists and producers) mostly had no familial link with Sacromonte, they still felt that the neighborhood had lost something of its flamenco artistry. Here, they were referring to the *zambra gitana* as a traditional representation of *gitano* culture and a locally embedded manifestation of flamenco found nowhere else in the world. People talked negatively of the *zambra* nowadays, but nostalgically of its past thus linking the genre with notions of cultural memory and heritage. One local flamenco aficionado told me: “Let’s remain clear, the genuine *zambra granadina* died, sadly it died...it died during the floods in Granada” (personal communication, May 2, 2012). This quotation reflects the sad loss of an integral part of Granada’s flamenco artistry, which is here described as the *zambra granadina* rather than the *zambra gitana*, thus privileging local identity over ethnicity. This sense of nostalgia is curious given that the *zambra gitana* itself as it existed in Sacromonte’s so-called golden age was just as implicated in tourism as the contemporary *zambra* is now. However, the difference lies in the fact that the city has lost a unique form of local heritage. As such, significant musical and social change in the *zambra* has given way to the alleged commercialization of flamenco in the model of an overarching regional and international style.

With reference to the work of Fox Gotham (2002), Aoyama argues that “tourism can be a force of heterogeneity that enhances place distinctiveness as much as it is also a force of standardization that eradicates local cultures and traditions” (Aoyama 2009: 83). This tension pervades the *zambra*, but needs to be understood in a temporal frame. According to these discourses of authenticity, the *zambra*’s past emphasizes place distinctiveness (through the *zambra gitana*) and its present represents the replacement of local heritage with a commercialized form of flamenco tourism. Both the *zambra*’s past and present are inseparable from tourism, but in the eyes of many aficionados its past holds value over its present. In the next section, I will explore the discourses that emerged from my interactions with musicians and members of the Sacromonte community. While they may share similar notions of nostalgia and loss, many still viewed Sacromonte as an important site of local identity and a crucible of artistic talent. Moreover, attempts are being made to reconcile the past with the present by reinterpreting the *zambra gitana* in certain contexts.

Reconciling the Past and the Present: Revisiting the *Zambra Gitana*

During my time in Granada, I was able to meet with the singer and writer Curro Albaicín, one of the most prolific figures and gatekeepers of the Sacromonte community. He was born in 1948 to a family of flamenco artists who had performed in the *zambras* of Sacromonte for many years. His nostalgia for the neighborhood is particularly profound and captures the idea of a golden age prior to the floods when thousands of *gitanos* lived and performed in Sacromonte. I asked him to describe his memory of the place:

It was a neighborhood where people lived, where 6,000 people lived who all learnt flamenco, forging, basket making...but they dedicated themselves to flamenco. [...] It was beautiful because it was our home, children slept in the streets at night and all the tourists that came up the hill stayed to see how we lived...it was beautiful (personal communication, May 9, 2012).

What is particularly revealing about this quotation is the role of tourism, which is seen as inextricably linked to local life at this time. Indeed, many artists I spoke with were not necessarily critical of tourism – quite the contrary; they often viewed it as an intrinsic element of the social history of Sacromonte. When I asked Curro how the neighborhood has changed, he spoke negatively and drew attention to the sheer number of families who left or were forced out of Sacromonte. This altered the ways in which families learnt flamenco and thus broke the line of transmission for the *zambra gitana*. He is still proud of his neighborhood and its close link to local and ethnic identity, but his sense of loss and nostalgia is palpable. Nonetheless, tourism was not a culprit here, but rather a given element of Sacromonte's past and present. Instead, Curro was critical of institutional intervention and its ambivalence to the *zambra* as a form of local heritage. My guitar teacher, Melchor Córdoba Santiago, also felt this sense of loss in relation to the social environment of Sacromonte and the decline of the *zambra gitana*. Like Curro, he was raised performing flamenco in the *zambras* of Sacromonte, but moved to Málaga following the floods to perform in the *tablaos*.

Beyond the realm of discourse, the caves themselves are also repositories of local memory and heritage. Upon entering Curro's cave I was struck by the number of photographs and newspaper clips documenting the local performers and famous visitors that had visited the cave. This cave once offered *zambras*, but now only holds private events and is being turned into an archive and museum. This memorialization of local heritage is part of a wider sense of local pride. People I spoke to talked of the famous figures that had visited the caves such as heads of state or film stars. However, these discourses of nostalgia and pride are not only rooted in the past with a distinct sense of loss dominating the present. Musicians and performers recognize that tourism in Sacromonte is still an integral component of the neighborhood even if an older way of life and musical transmission may have changed. Tourism is crucial to the development of Sacromonte and provides economic stability for its performers, as well as an opportunity to display and valorize what is left of Sacromonte's flamenco heritage. Pride is also prominent in terms of Sacromonte's artistic legacy, both past and present. Many people often talked to me about the number of famous artists who had trained in the *zambras* and then took Granada's flamenco to the rest of the world.²⁶ The artistic quality of performers from Granada and specifically those who trained in Sacromonte counteracts the notion that touristic performers are "second rate" as discussed above. Here, local pride for the artistic legacy of Sacromonte is entangled in a wider discourse of marginalization. During my research, both musicians and non-musicians often reported to me that Granada's artistic contributions were forgotten and suppressed in the wider Andalusian flamenco scene, expressing another example of the notion of uniqueness or singularity.

There are also attempts to revive the traditional, localized forms of the *zambra gitana* as a way of invoking the golden age of Sacromonte. Interestingly, some of these attempts are occurring as private initiatives that are not targeted at the tourist trade. For example, Curro Albaicín is

²⁶ Artists famous to Sacromonte and Granada include the Habichuelas, Enrique and Estrella Morente, Juan Andres Maya, Mario Maya and Manolete.

involved in private events where artists are contracted to perform the *zambra gitana*.²⁷ Even the Platería has become involved in the preservation of the *zambra gitana* with it recently holding a course in collaboration with Curro where the traditional dances of the *zambra* were taught to students.²⁸ However, the revival of the *zambra gitana* is also evident in the tourism sector and the Zambra María la Canastera prides itself in being the only cave to offer “authentic” renditions of the *zambra gitana*.

Figure 1: Inside the Zambra María la Canastera.²⁹

This cave was founded by María “la Canastera” Cortés Heredia (1914–66) in 1954 and gained immense popularity during the early 1960s (Figure 2), even surviving the floods. Today, the cave is managed by her son Enrique “el Canastero” and as well as holding regular performances it also operates as a small museum. Its website gives a good indication of the importance placed on the historical legacy of the cave and its continuation of the *zambra gitana*.³⁰ The website contains information regarding the traditional format of the *zambra gitana*, photos of famous visitors and the history of the cave. The cave itself is also a site of local memory with pictures, memorabilia, copper pots and bowls covering the walls and ceiling. A CD is also available of María “la Canastera” and her group recorded in 1966 performing traditional forms from the *zambra gitana*.

Figure 2: Performance in the Zambra María la Canastera

²⁷ Curro was also involved in the filming of a documentary regarding Sacromonte and its history, people and music. For a trailer, see <http://www.deflamenco.com/revista/noticias/sacromonte-los-sabios-de-la-tribu-de-chus-gutierrez-1.html> (accessed January 21, 2015).

²⁸ See <http://www.laplateria.org.es/8-de-noviembre-curso-de-introduccion-los-bailes-de-la-zambra-del-sacromonte-granadino/> (accessed January 21, 2015). The course took place in November and December, 2014.

²⁹ All photographs were taken by the author. I would like to thank Enrique “el Canastero” for allowing me to take and reproduce photographs of the Zambra María la Canastera (Figures 1 and 2).

³⁰ See <http://www.marialacanastera.com> (accessed January 26, 2015).

Beyond these material items, it is interesting how a different form of authenticity rooted in a so-called stylistic “purity” is constructed for tourists in the Zambra María la Canastera framed by discourses of local identity and nostalgia. The artists interpret traditional group dances unique to the *zambra gitana* and dancers perform on the cave floor, not on wooden *tablaos* as in the other *zambras*.³¹ Moreover, the guitarists and singers do not use amplification unlike in some of the other caves. The traditional guitar parts, based largely on strummed chord patterns, are loud enough to cut through the clatter of heels on the cave floor and the sound of clapping (*palmas*). When I spoke with Enrique, he emphasized the authentic nature of the performances in his cave and almost welcomed the role of tourism, although he did speak negatively of the lack of local audience members (personal communication, May 6, 2012). Enrique also highlighted the familial form of transmission that still occurs in the *zambra*. I took lessons with one of the cave’s guitarists, Antonio Heredia, who also spoke of his musical formation in the cave amongst family members. While he now plays other modern styles, he did not train in conservatoires or academies, having learnt his trade in the familial environment.

This analysis of the Zambra María la Canastera clashes with dominant discourses regarding the loss of tradition and transmission, nostalgia and the rejection of Sacromonte’s contemporary tourism industry. Seemingly, this *zambra* continues the practices of the 1950s and 60s prior to the floods, maintaining both the traditional forms of the *zambra gitana* and its transmission practices. However, such an interpretation needs to be approached with caution. When I discussed the Zambra María la Canastera with other musicians and aficionados, many disregarded its narrative of authenticity claiming that only loose renditions of the *zambra gitana* are performed. Indeed, when comparing the dances performed in the cave with those presented in a promotional video of the *zambra gitana* produced in 1991 (see footnote 31), what is now performed in the Zambra María la

³¹ For a video depicting the *zambra gitana* as traditionally performed in the Zambra María la Canastera, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c78fzmRXOtg&spfreload=10> (accessed 13 May, 2015). This video is actually a performance recorded for Canal Sur Televisión in 1991 and so does not depict the tourist performance offered nowadays. I was not permitted to record during the performance I attended and other Youtube videos are not representative of the *zambra gitana*. However, this video should give an idea of three of the key dances: the *alboreá*, the *cachucha* and the *mosca*.

Canastera is a stripped down version of the *zambra gitana* with less dancers and combined with “conventional” flamenco *palos* (such as *soleá* or *alegrías*) performed by solo dancers. Arguably then, the notion of stylistic authenticity is located in the past because for some people, the Zambra María la Canastera only pays lip service to traditional practices. Nonetheless, Enrique (like Curro) is striving to represent the *zambra gitana* beyond Sacromonte, having recently presented a proposal to the Andalusian Institute of Flamenco to include a performance of the *zambra gitana* by artists of the Zambra María la Canastera as part of the festival circuit *Flamenco viene del sur*. Time will tell as to whether the proposal is successful.

In sum, the Zambra María la Canastera perhaps remains as a shadow of a former era when music, *gitano* socio-cultural life and tourism seemed to interact and coexist. Discourses of nostalgia and local identity are intrinsic to how the *zambra* (as a context and genre) is understood in Sacromonte despite its reliance on the tourism industry. Although the *zambra gitana* as a distinct genre appears to continue in some form or other, its survival remains in doubt. In this article I have argued that the *zambra* cannot simply be interpreted from the perspective of staged authenticity, packaged for the consumption of tourists. While some may criticize the *zambra* as a commercialized touristic display that is detached from “true” flamenco, tourism *is* in fact its authenticity. The *zambra* both in its idealized past and its contested present cannot be divorced from its relationship with tourism. Yet, it remains an important marker of local/ethnic identity and a fruitful economic enterprise for its exponents. The *zambra*, therefore, is a pertinent case study for understanding the complex relationship between music and tourism, encouraging scholars to look beyond the notion of the corrupting impact of tourism on musical practice.

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