



Aguilar
Cuarteto

Almost 100 years of the Aguilar Quartet

In 1923, Paco, Ezequiel, Pepe and Elisa, four of Dr. Francisco Aguilar's six sons, start a Spanish Lute quartet, encouraged by their father. Soon, they receive wide recognition in Europe and America, and composers like Strawinsky, Halffter and Turina write for them. They reach more than two hundred concerts in a single year.

As musicologist Jorge de Persia states: "The Aguilar Quartet, in spite of having a brief life, since the Spanish history marked their way leading them to exile because of the Civil War, was an absolutely important experience in the XX century's musical history". When in the 40's the quartet dissolves, Paco on his own, accompanied on the piano by Donato Colacelli, keeps on giving concerts.

With the illusion and enthusiasm of continuing this story, many years later, in 1986, Antonio Navarro, Esther Casado, Luis Miguel Lara and Pilar Barón, re-found the *Aguilar Quartet*. Thanks to Antonio Navarro's researches for writing his book 'Plucked String Instruments in Spain' (*"Los instrumentos de púa en España"*), the original instruments were recovered, and the Quartet actually uses them.

In 1995, at the Centro Cultural del Conde Duque, Madrid, they premiere the work 'Five Studies' (*"Cinco estudios"*), composed and dedicated to them by José Luis Turina. And on account of the 50th Anniversary of Joaquin Turina's Death they participate, together with José María Gallardo del Rey, in the program 'The sounds of Spain: the guitar and the Aguilar Quartet' (*"Los sonidos de España: la guitarra y el Cuarteto Aguilar"*). At the Conde Duque they also perform in musical cycles like 'The Aguilar in America' (*"los Aguilar en América"*), part of the acts held by Madrid, Ibero-American Capital of Culture, and 'Dialogs and Tributes' (*"Diálogos y tributos"*), relative to the Generation of 1927.

They are hired by the Fundación Juan March to give a concert cycle: 'The Generation of 1927, Joaquín Turina and Music of the XX Century (Igor Strawinsky, Claudio Prieto, Valentín Ruiz and José Luis Turina)' (*The Generation of 1927, Joaquín Turina y la música del siglo XX*). These performances, as well as the concert held at the Museo Reina Sofía, part of a cycle about XX Century Music, were recorded and broadcasted by Radio Clásica – RNE. As part of the acts for *España Nuevo Milenio*, they share program at Madrid's Teatro Real with the Orquesta de Cámara Reina Sofía conducted by Nicolás Chumachenco, with Rodolfo Mederos playing the bandoneon. They open the show with the piece 'The Bullfighter's Prayer' (*"La oración del torero"*), composed by Joaquin Turina and dedicated to the Aguilar Quartet by the author himself.

'Invitation to a Sound Journey' (*"Invitación a un viaje sonoro"*) is a cantata for verse and lute created by Rafael Alberti and Paco Aguilar in 1942. By performing this cantata, together with José Luis Pellicena, they pay homage to Rafael Alberti at the International Festival of Music and Dance of Granada, at the Court of the Myrtles. Also, the Autumn Festival of the Community of Madrid, the Fundación Alberti and, more recently, the Ra del Rey Gallery have been witnesses of this Invitation.

The Quarter has collaborated with Olivier Salazar-Ferrer in researching and recovering the film '*Tararira*', directed by Benjamín Fondane in 1936, and starred by the Aguilar Brothers.

As a fruit of this research, they record the original score, written for this film, and used in several exhibitions, memorials and in a program dedicated to it, made by Radio France.

Composer Jorge Grundman dedicates them the exclusive version of his quarter 'Surviving a Son's Suicide', released in 2014, and a year later writes for them 'The Propagation of Faith' ("*La propagación de la fe*").

Currently, they collaborate with plastic artist Ángel Aragonés in different projects. They continue their researching task for instruments, strings and plectra, in search of a singular sonority and filling.

Antonio Navarro – Bandurria

He studied at Madrid Conservatory and took plectrum studies with Roberto Grandío. He was the Conductor of the Plectrum Orchestras "Roberto Grandío" and "Gaspar Sanz". With the "Grandío" Quartet and poet Rafael Alberti he performed the show "Invitation to a Sound Journey" ("*Invitación a un viaje sonoro*"). He has collaborated with the Spanish National Orchestra. National Plectrum Award in 1977, Superior Professor for bandurria from the Liceo of Barcelona. He collaborates with luthier Ángel Benito in researching about the sonority of these instruments.

He published in 1993, with musicologist J.J. Rey, the book "Plucked String Instruments in Spain" ("*Instrumentos de púa en España*").



Plucked String Instruments in Spain Bandurria, citole and "Spanish lutes"

Juan José Rey – Antonio Navarro
Alianza Editorial. Colección Alianza Música
nº 64, 1993
ISBN 84-206-8564-X

At the moment is out of sale but it can be found in
Libraries.

This work filled a void in the researching of Plucked String Instruments in Spain. This void was completely unjustifiable because of the long tradition that there is in our country and the existence of renowned quality plectrum groups

Juan José Rey, musicologist, and Antonio Navarro, instrumentalist and expert on the "Spanish lutes", trace with the utmost rigour the history of these instruments, from the investigation of their origins to the Baroque era, ending with the formation of the most important plectrum associations of our time. The volume is enriched with other sections of great utility covering aspects as construction, methodology, didactics, repertory, biographical sketches and a catalogue of preserved instruments. Finally, an appendix of fully transcribed documents provides the reader with direct information about the subject.



The bandurria played by him belonged to Ezequiel Aguilar and was built in 1922 by Domingo Esteso.

Luis Miguel Lara - Laudete

He attended musical studies at Madrid's Conservatory and Plectrum studies at the Liceo in Barcelona. He was a member of the "Gaspar Sanz" Orchestra and the "Francisco Salinas" Chamber Group.

The laudete belonged to José Aguilar and was built by Domingo Esteso in 1929.

Pilar Barón - Lute

She did Guitar studies at Madrid's Conservatory and Lute studies with Antonio Navarro. She was member of the "Francisco Salinas" Chamber Group. She has collaborated as a guitar professor in different Cultural Centres of the Community of Madrid.

The lute was built by Domingo Esteso in 1941.

Esther Casado - Laudón

She studied at Madrid's Conservatory. She was a Roberto Grandío's Disciple. She was part of the "Roberto Grandío" Orchestra and the "Grandío" Quartet, also performing with poet from Cadiz, Rafael Alberti. She rediscovered the use of the laudón in Spain.

The instrument that she plays is Paco Aguilar's original. Dates from 1928 and was built by Domingo Esteso.

Knowing its qualities and gathering information for my book *Plectrum String Instruments in Spain* (“Los instrumentos de púa en España”), I managed to contact in Madrid with a nephew of the Aguilar. Thanks to him I learnt that a great part of the archives and its instruments were found in the cellar of a house in Buenos Aires. We carried out the appropriate arrangements to get this valuable treasure out of its silent loneliness. Since then, our goals were to recover the instruments for its use (actually we play the ‘laudete’ and ‘laudón’) and to be able to listen again their works.

Their importance is widely known. Who hasn’t ever listened the famous ‘Bullfighter’s prayer’ (“*La oración del torero*”)? Many have had the chance, but very few have done it in its original version with the instruments that inspired to Joaquín Turina in 1925. The friendship and collaboration among the Aguilar and Turina resulted in exclusive versions like ‘Remembrances of Old Spain’ (“*Recuerdos de la Antigua España*”), ‘Two popular Spanish dances’ (“*Dos danzas populares españolas*”), ‘Lead Soldiers Parade’ (“*Desfile de soldados de plomo*”), ‘Moorish Party in Tangier’ (“*Fiesta mora en Tánger*”), etc.

Since the renowned quality of the group –formed by Spanish plectrum instruments: ‘laudín’ or bandurria (Ezequiel Aguilar), ‘laudete’ (Pepe Aguilar), lute (Elisa Aguilar) and ‘laudón’ (Paco Aguilar)-, the filling, together with the great span of effects and articulations, were so interesting and attractive that the composers of that time wrote and adapted numerous scores for this group. One of these appreciations was the welcoming that Manuel de Falla gave them at his house in Granada. They played an adaptation of ‘The Bewitched Love’ (“*El Amor Brujo*”), which was approved by the maestro.

Regarding several composers, who started their creations in the mid-20’s, as the Generation of 1927, similar to the homonym literary one, we can find some authors that composed for the Aguilar: Federico Elizalde dedicates them his ‘Negresca’; Antonio José, composer from Burgos, adapts for them his ‘Childish Romance’ (“*Romance infantil*”) and his ‘Ill Dance from Burgos’ (“*Danza burgalesa III*”) between 1925 and 1928; Germán Álvarez Beigbeder dedicates them his ‘Spanish Improvisations’ (“*Improvisaciones españolas*”); María Rodrigo, from Madrid, composes ‘Gavotte’ (“*Gavota*”), and adapts ‘The intruding copla’ (“*La copla intrusa*”); Juan Bautista Plaza dedicates them ‘Fugue’ (“*Fuga*”) in 1935.

Disgracefully, the Civil War and the exile made that the works of these musicians were scattered around, thus being deficiently known and very little played.

In 1928, The Aguilar Quartet started taking their art throughout the world. Polemics and controversies arise upon the origin of the so called Spanish Lute and its importance in contemporary music. These polemics were brilliantly countered by musicologists, composers and critics like Rafael Mitjana, Joaquín Nin and Adolfo Salazar. Nin received the Quartet in Paris stating: “You don’t need anybody’s protection; we the composers are who need performers like you”. He did several original versions of his works like ‘El Vito’, ‘Murcian cloth’ (“*Paño murciano*”), ‘From Andalusia’ (“*De Andalucía*”), ‘Song of the lost girl’ (“*Canción de la niña perdida*”) and ‘Minuet in the old style’ (“*Minué en el estilo antiguo*”). Adolfo Salazar also dedicates them ‘Two impromptus’ (“*Dos improntus*”) and adapts his ‘Little Romance’ (“*Romancillo*”).

The Generation of 1927 shows more clearly the parallelism between writers and musicians,

based in working and friendship relations. A clear example of this is found in Ernesto Halffter. Inspired by Rafael Aberti's poems 'The doe roe deer' ("*La corza*") and 'The girl' ("*La niña*"), wrote two scores that adapted in 1933 for the Aguilar. In 1928, he had already done for them two exclusive versions of the 'Dance of the Shepherdess' ("*Danza de la pastora*") and the 'Dance of the Gypsy Woman' ("*Danza de la gitana*").

The Quartet travelled all over the world in concert halls with unusual instruments, regarded as unable of satisfying a remarkable musical exigency. With their music, they show the other way round. While they were in Los Angeles (USA), Stravinsky wanted to meet and listen to them, researching with them the possibilities and sound effects of the Spanish lutes. During those encounters he supervises and authorises the exclusive version of his 'Eight Pieces' ("*Ocho piezas*") for Spanish lute quartet. They were, as well, related to great men of that time, such as: Rubinstein, Iturbi, Lily Pons, etc. Writer and historian Salvador de Madariaga dedicates them a small poem:

Virtuous with virtues	<i>Virtuosos de virtudes</i>
They leave sound echoes	<i>dejan sonoros ecos</i>
Four lutes,	<i>cuatro laúdes,</i>
A Velazquez and three Grecos	<i>un Velázquez y tres Grecos.</i>

During the Civil War and their involuntary exile in Argentina, the Aguilar kept on working. Ezequiel composed for the group 'Petenera' and 'Response for a ghost' ("*Responso a un fantasma*"); Paco composed 'rondino', 'Coloured badge' ("*Escarapela de colores*"), 'Tocatina in B Mayor' ("*Tocatina en Sí mayor*") and 'Galician Suite' ("*suite gallega*") among others.

The *Aguilar Quartet* has among its objectives to promulgate all this forgotten and unknown music as well as promote the creation of new works by actual composers. It is a hard and difficult task but with work and patience we succeed in it.

Antonio Navarro

Repertoire

The *Aguilar* Quartet repertoire consists of original works and/or exclusive versions of the following composers:

Ezequiel Aguilar

Paco Aguilar

Humberto Allende

G. Álvarez Beigbeder

F. Elizalde

Manuel de Falla

Ernesto Halffter

Antonio José

Miguel Ángel Martín Lladó

John McEwen

Luis Pedro Mondino

Joaquín Nin

Carlos Pedrell

Claudio Prieto

María Rodrigo

Jorge Grundman

Valentín Ruiz

Adolfo Salazar

Igor Stravinsky

Joaquín Turina

José Luis Turina

Heitor Villalobos

Amadeo Roldán

The Aguilar Quartet and the Generation of 1927

(This program consists of original works and/or exclusive versions made by the authors for the Aguilar Quartet)

I

Joaquín Nin (1879-1949)

Song of the lost girl
Minuet in the old style
Murcian Tune

María Rodrigo (1888-1967)

Gavotte
The intruding copla

Ernesto Halffter (1905-1989)

Dance of the Shepherdess
Dance of the Gypsy Woman
Fandango

II

Joaquín Turina (1882-1949)

Chained Seguidillas
The Bullfighter's prayer
Moorish party in Tangier

Ezequiel Aguilar (1901-1961)

Petenera

Paco Aguilar (1897-1947)

Rondino
Coloured Badge
Green - Blue - Yellow – Purple – Red

The Aguilar Quartet and the Generation of 1927

Comments to the program

The works by Nin, are author-exclusive versions, and are dated in Paris, between 1928 and 1933. The first two belong to the collection 'Seven ancient Spanish lyric chants' ("*Siete cantos líricos españoles antiguos*"). The 'Murcian Tune' ("*Tonada murciana*") is based on songs of that zone.

Gavotte ("*Gavota*") is dedicated by Maria Rodrigo to the Aguilar Quartet in 1925. About 'The intruding copla' ("*La copla intrusa*"), her other work, the author expresses herself this way:

In an Andalusian inn, a daring song is heard, sang by an Aragonese. The intruder is welcomed, and the soul of both regions melts in a single rhythm.

Ernesto Halffter's *Dance of the Shepherdess* ("*Danza de la pastora*") and *Dance of the Gypsy Woman* ("*Danza de la gitana*") belong to his ballet *Sonatine* ("*sonatina*") and the *Fandango to The maidens* ("*Las doncellas*"). They all are exclusive versions of the author for the Aguilar arranged in Buenos Aires.

Joaquín Turina's *Chained Seguidillas* ("*Cadena de seguidillas*") belong to the 'Two popular Spanish dances' ("*dos danzas populares españolas*"). Author's version dated in Madrid, in 1926. Concerning *The Bullfighter's Prayer* ("*La oración del torero*"), maybe one of the best works of the Sevillian composer, was written on request of the Aguilar Quartet in 1925. Joaquín Turina himself tells how this score aroused:

That rumour enlightened by the sunlight glow, boosted by the music of pasodobles and the sound of clarions influenced me. I had many times felt the temptation of putting into music all the impression that the multiple voice of the party produced in me, yet I was also attracted by the deep and suggestive aspects of the popular religious emotion, especially in Andalusia. A bullfighting afternoon at the Plaza de Madrid, that old gracious harmonic bullring, I visualized my piece. I was at the horse playground. There, behind a small door, was the chapel fill with unction, where the bullfighters came to pray just a moment before facing death. I was gifted with that subjective musical and expressive contrast in his plenitude: the distant bustle in the arena, made by the public awaiting for the party to begin, and the unction of those who, at that poor and tender poetry-filled shrine, came to pray God for their lives, maybe for their souls, their pain, their illusions and hope that perhaps were to be left forever, a few moments later, in that arena filled with music and sunlight.

Moorish Party in Tangier ("*Fiesta mora en Tánger*") is the No. 5 in the Sevillian composer's score "Album of travel" ("*Álbum de viaje*"). It was adapted for the Aguilar Quartet in 1924. The setting is as follows:

A dance rhythm by gusles and rebecs marks the start of the shawms generating a sensation of stunning and hubble-bubble, soon turned into a suggestive and cadenced dance. The intervention of the atabales and whimsical rhythms excite the mood of the dancers, who, in a joyful paroxysm, dance with a mad frenzy, until their flexible bodies, exhausted, fall over to the floor.

When Turina listened to the performance of this score by the Aguilar in 1924 said: 'I won't play this work on piano anymore'.

The program ends with three original works written by Ezequiel and Paco Aguilar. *Petenera* is a score of delicate elaboration and technical difficulty, where typical resources and effects of plectrum instruments are used. Following a funny *Rondino*, the work *Coloured Badge* ("*Escarapela de colores*") shows one of the very few occasions where the senses of sight and sound have been melted by the composers. Each colour can suggest the following associations: *Green* (Zambra), *Blue* (Sea), *Yellow* (Merry-go-round music), *Purple* (Holy Week) and *Red* (foot-tapping).

Music of the XX Century

(This program consists of original works and/or exclusive versions made by the authors for the Aguilar Quartet)

I

Eight Pieces

March

Waltz

Polka

Igor Stravinsky

Andante

Spanish

Balalaika

Neapolitan

Galop

John McEwen

March of the little folk Red Murdoch

Five Studies (D'Aprés Valéry)

La naissance du vent

José Luis Turina

Le Secret Changement

La Vague en Poudre

Chanterez-Vous Quand Serez Vaporeuse?

Toujours Recommencée

II

Claudio Prieto

Serenade for Lutes

Heitor Villalobos

Saudade da selva brasileira

Dance of the Three Captive Princesses

Zoraida (Saracen)

Carlos Pedrell

Doña Mencía (Christian)

Betsabé (Judaic)

Música del siglo XX

Comments to the program

The *Eight Pieces* (“*Ocho piezas*”) correspond in reality to two works of the Russian-born composer, named *3 and 5 easy works piano for four hands* (“*3 y 5 piezas fáciles para piano a cuatro manos*”). This adaptation for the Quartet was arranged by Ezequiel Aguilar and revised in 1935 by Igor Stravinsky, in Los Angeles (USA), according to the parts dedicated by the author.

José Luis Turina, a highly-refined creative personality composer, studied at Madrid’s Conservatory and in Italy, and was awarded with several prizes. He composed in 1993 this *Five Studies* (“*Cinco estudios*”), dedicated to the Aguilar Quartet. The work is inspired by some poems found in French author Paul Valéry’s *Sea Cemetery* (“*Le cimetière marin*”). Each study shows one of the essential elements of music. *La naissance du vent* (The wind’s birth) is about the Agogics (changes in the tempo) and the Dynamics (sound intensity). *Le Secret Changement* (The secret moving) is a harmonic sketch with notes belonging to Federico García Lorca’s “Romance of Don Boyso” (*Romance de Don Boyso*). The third study, *La Vague en Poudre* (The wave in ashes), has a timbric character and plectrum is not used. *Chanterez-Vous Quand Serez Vaporouse?* (Will you sing when you’re a spirit?) is a Renascent *ricercar* and a study about the counterpoint. *Toujours Recommencée* (Always recommencing), of a metric character has a Rondo construction (chorus and coplas).

Serenade for Lutes (“*Serenata para laúdes*”) is a work of composer Claudio Prieto, born in Palencia. He is capable of establishing an intellectual and sensitive communication with a lively audience. Maestro of unquestionable relevance (National Music Award Reina Sofía, 1984), he obtained the Composition Prize for Lute Quartet with this work in 1982. The work is structured in two wide strokes, conformed by melodic and rhythmic arabesques which, besides, characterise the unitary and groupal thinking.

Saudade da selva brasileira is played in the version that the author made for the Aguilar Quartet in Mexico, 1934.

In 1930, The Aguilar Quartet performs in Paris, *Dances of the Three Captive Princesses* (“*Danzas de last res princesas cautivas*”), by Uruguayan composer Carlos Pedrell, strict contemporary of Falla and Turina.

Joaquín Turina

(This program consists of original works and/or exclusive versions made by the authors for the Aguilar Quartet)

Remembrances of Old Spain op.48

The eternal Carmen

Habanera

Estudiantina

Childish things op. 21

Prelude and fugue

Lead Soldiers Parade

Jeux

Serenade op.87

Gypsy Dances op.55 1st series

Zambra

Seductive dance

Ritual Dance

Generalife

Sacro-monte

Moorish Party in Tangiers op.15

The Bullfighter's Prayer op.34

Joaquín Turina

Comments to the program

Remembrances of Old Spain (“Recuerdos de la Antigua España”)

As commented by Alfredo Morán, this suite was orchestrated for lute quartet by Turina, except for the Third Movement *Don Juan*, and was premiered by the Aguilar Lute Quartet at the Gaveau Hall in Paris, on the 4th of June, 1932.

Lead soldiers parade (“Desfile de soldados de plomo”)

In a program of a concert by the Aguilar Quartet, held at the Odeon Theatre in Buenos Aires, on the 16th of July, 1929, the following annotation can be read:

A tiny army of toys serves the great composer Joaquín Turina as entertainment; one day, in the author’s imagination, the lead soldiers come to life and, with an ornamental indiscipline, start their march, rigid and encompassed, walking triumphantly by galleries and halls.

The Bullfighter’s Prayer (“La oración del torero”)

Just a comment on what we know about *the Bullfighter’s Prayer*, maybe one the best works of the Sevillian composer. It was written in 1925 by request of the Aguilar Quartet. Joaquín Turina himself tells how this score aroused:

That rumour enlightened by the sunlight glow, boosted by the music of pasodobles and the sound of clarions influenced me. I had many times felt the temptation of putting into music all the impression that the multiple voice of the party produced in me, yet I was also attracted by the deep and suggestive aspects of the popular religious emotion, especially in Andalusia. A bullfighting afternoon at the Plaza de Madrid, that old gracious harmonic bullring, I visualized my piece. I was at the horse playground. There, behind a small door, was the chapel fill with unction, where the bullfighters came to pray just a moment before facing death. I was gifted with that subjective musical and expressive contrast in his plenitude: the distant bustle in the arena, made by the public awaiting for the party to begin, and the unction of those who, at that poor and tender poetry-filled shrine, came to pray God for their lives, maybe for their souls, their pain, their illusions and hope that perhaps were to be left forever, a few moments later, in that arena filled with music and sunlight.

The part of this work for the laudón says, hand-written by Paco Aguilar:

It is a feast day at the Bullring and there’s very little time left for the beginning of the bullfight. In a lonely zone of the Chapel a man prays, prostrated at the shrine; he is the matador, whose spirit flows with religious faith and indomitable gallantly. The prayer is interrupted by the echo of a cheerful pasodoble and the humble-bumble of the public who impatiently awaits the apparition of the bullfighter. The time for the bullfighting is near and the Chapel goes back to his solitude silence.

The hand-written part by Joaquín Turina to each of the Aguilar, show affectionately, the following dedications:

A Ezequielote, la estrella del Cuarteto Aguilar To Ezequielote, star of the Aguilar Quartet



A Joselito, el administraó del Cuarteto Aguilar To Joselito, Aguilar Quartet administrator

*A la comadre Elisa, en honor de nuestra
ahijada la Orgía*

To comrade Elisa, honouring our goddaughter
La Orgía

*A Paquello, el más flamenco del Cuarteto
Aguilar*

To Paquello, the most flamenco of the Aguilar
Quartet

Moorish Party in Tangier (“Fiesta mora en Tánger”)

Moorish Party in Tangier is the No. 5 in the Sevillian composer’s score “Album of travel” (“*Álbum de viaje*”). It was adapted for the Aguilar Quartet in 1924. The setting is as follows:

A dance rhythm by gusles and rebecs marks the start of the shawms generating a sensation of stunning and hubble-bubble, soon turned into a suggestive and cadenced dance. The intervention of the atabales and whimsical rhythms excite the mood of the dancers, who, in a joyful paroxysm, dance with a mad frenzy, until their flexible bodies, exhausted, fall over to the floor.

When Turina listened to the performance of this score by the Aguilar in 1924 said:

I won’t play this work on piano anymore.

Iberoamerican Music

(This program consists of original works and/or exclusive versions made by the authors for the Aguilar Quartet)

I

<i>The firmness</i>	Argentina	Gilardo Gilardi
<i>Quechuan Evocation</i> <i>Indian Air</i>		Eduardo Caba
<i>Chacarera</i>		Pascual de Rogatis
<i>Saudade da selva brasileira</i>	Brazil	Heitor Villalobos
<i>Coloured Badge</i>	Spain	Paco Aguilar

II

<i>Fugue on an air of a Venezuelan</i> <i>Joropo</i>	Venezuela	Juan Bautista Plaza
<i>Tune</i>	Cuba	Joaquín Nin
<i>Serranilla</i>	Chile	Humberto Allende
<i>Pastoral</i>		
<i>Danzatine</i>	Mexico	G. Baqueiro Foster
<i>Dance of the Three Captive</i> <i>Princesses</i>	Uruguay	Carlos Pedrell

Iberoamerican Music

Comments to the program

The **Aguilar Quartet** was a clear example of union among Spain and Europe. The four Aguilar brothers, born in Moratalla (Murcia) between 1897 and 1906 moved to Madrid and formed the Quartet in 1923. They are soon known and admired by composers like **Manuel de Falla** and **Joaquín Turina**. So, in 1925, Turina writes for them the famous *Bullfighter's Prayer* (“*La oración del torero*”).

The Thirties would mean a new advance towards success for the Quartet, touring all Europe and America. The Civil War surprises them while they are in Buenos Aires and they decide to move there. From Argentina and Uruguay, they went through all America giving concerts with a great success. They had then the occasion of contacting musicians of that era who, either composed for them, or made exclusive versions for them.

Salvador de Madariaga dedicates them a poem when he meets them in Chile:

Virtuous with virtues
They leave sound echoes
Four lutes,
A Velazquez and three Grecos

*Virtuosos de virtudes
dejan sonoros ecos
cuatro laúdes,
un Velázquez y tres Grecos.*

Chilean composer Humberto Allende also dedicates them *Serranilla* and *Pastoral* (“*Pastoril*”) (Santiago de Chile, 1935). To name, among others, the Argentineans **Eduardo Caba**, **Julián Aguirre** and **Gilardo Gilardi**, who dedicates them *Quechuan Evocation* (“*Evocación Quichua*”) (composed as homage to the Aguilar brothers and dedicated to them as a memory of their brilliant artistic performing in the Argentinean Buenos Aires (in September, 1929).

Mexican **Gerónimo Baquero Foster** writes *Danzatine* (“*Danzatina*”) for them. **Juan Bautista Plaza** composes *Fugue on an air of a Venezuelan joropo* (“*Fuga sobre un aire de joropo venezolano*”), dedicated in Caracas, 10th of June, 1935. **Heitor Villalobos** composes for them a version of his *Saudade da Selva Brasileira*, dated in Mexico, 1934.

Inspired in the Medieval Spain, which hosted the three religions, the Uruguayan **Carlos Pedrell** dedicates them *Dance of the Three Captive Princesses* (“*Danzas de las tres princesas cautivas*”), where each movement represents one of them: *Zoraida* (Muslim), *Doña Mencía* (Christian) and *Betsabé* (Judaic).

Let's caption as an anecdote the annotations of a part of the score: *On board of the Eubée, between Spain and America, 25th May, 1929*. Two of the Aguilar brothers, Ezequiel and Paco, composed for the Quartet (*Coloured Badge* - “*Escarapela de colores*”, dated in Buenos Aires, 1939). Once the Quartet dissolved, Paco continued his artistic labour giving concerts and composing. He wrote the book *On the Shores of Music* (“*A orillas de la Música*”), published in Buenos Aires by Editorial Losada.



Many years later, in 1983, it was celebrated at Madrid's Ateneo, an homage to the Aguilar Quartet. Argentinean writer **Julio Cortázar** sent a telegram of support with this words:

“Chance does things correctly, as always. Arriving to Madrid and knowing of this homage to the Aguilar Quartet forms part of that kind of coincidences which only fools consider casual. In a very far time, the Aguilar filled with music the Buenos Aires of my youth. That music is still alive and present in my memory and it seems to me that it is not only a duty but also a joy to express here and today my gratitude, the gratitude of all my people.”

Invitation to a Sound Journey

Cantata for verse y lute

XIII Century	Spain	ALPHONSO Xth	<i>Cantiga</i>
XV Century	Spain	JUAN DEL ENCINA	<i>Canticle</i>
XVI Century	France	LULLY RAMEAU	<i>The Carnival</i> <i>Minuet</i>
XVIII Century	England	CROFT	<i>Sarabande</i>
	Italy	SCARLATTI	<i>Sonata</i>
	Germany	BACH	<i>Aria</i>
	Austria	MOZART	<i>Rondo</i>
XX Century	Andalusia	ALBENIZ	<i>Granada</i>
	Aragon	FALLA	<i>Jota</i>
	Galicia	AGUILAR	<i>Muñeira</i>
	Castile	HALFFTER	<i>Dance of the Shepherdess</i>
	Andalusia	TURINA	<i>The Bullfighter's Prayer</i>

Invitation to a Sound Journey

Comments to the program

José Luis Pellicena - reciter
Aguilar Quartet
Antonio Navarro - bandurria
Luis Miguel Lara - laudete
Pilar Barón - lute
Esther Casado - laudón



The Aguilar Quartet

Founded in 1986, the ensemble uses four Spanish lutes: bandurria, laudete, tenor lute and laudón. It is a pioneer group in our country upon recovering the use of nylon in the strings, in an attempt to emulate the original sonority of the historic Aguilar Quartet. They are remarkable their performing in the National Arte Museum Reina Sofía, The Fundación Juan March, The Centro Cultural Conde Duque, The Casa de America, the Royal Theatre, Leon's Music Festival and Granada's Music and Dance Festival. Actual composers like Claudio Prieto or José Luis Turina have composed for them.

José Luis Pellicena

Born in Zaragoza, soon he directed his actor passion towards the theatre stage, playing his debut at *Ana Frank's Diary*. He has been directed by many of the most important people of the Spanish stage, such as José Tamayo, José Luis Alonso, Adolfo Marsillach, José Carlos Plaza or Lluís Pascual. He has played not only the classics but also the contemporary authors. The theatre, with capitals, has been the field where he has been an actor, at titles like *Life is a Dream* ("La vida es sueño") (Calderón de la Barca), *Justice Without Revenge* ("El castigo sin venganza") (Lope de Vega), *King Lear* (Shakespeare), *Edward the Second* (Marlowe), *Death of a Salesman* (Miller), *Dirty hands* ("Les mains sales") (Sartre), *Yerma* (García Lorca), *Don't blame anybody about my life* ("No se culpe a nadie de mi vida") (upon a Julio Cortazar's text). Even though his filmography is not that wide, it covers an extended period of time, from 1961 when we find films like *Cariño Mío* and *Usted puede ser un asesino*, to 2002 in José Luis Acosta's *No dejaré que no me quieras*. In the recent months he has been collaborating with Actress Nuria Espert in poetical recitals dedicated to the poet from Cadiz Rafael Alberti on account of the one hundred years of his birth. Pellicena also had payed attention



years before with the very successful theatrical production *Entre las ramas de la arboleda perdida*, based on the poet memories.

Virtuous with virtues
They leave sound echoes
Four lutes,
A Velazquez and three Grecos

*Virtuosos de virtudes
dejan sonoros ecos
cuatro laúdes,
un Velázquez y tres Grecos.*

This small poem was dedicated to the Aguilar Quartet by Salvador de Madariaga. It was started in 1923 by four of the Aguilar brothers: Ezequiel (bandurria), Pepe (laudete), Elisa (lute) and Paco (laudón), and they rehearsed in Europe and America with a great success. Composers such as Joaquín Turina, Ernesto Halffter or Igor Strawinsky wrote or adapted some of his works for them. The Spanish Civil War and, lately, the II World War, force the Quartet to install in Argentina, reducing their artistic projection, and ending their history in 1941. Nevertheless in 1942, Paco (1897-1947), who continues giving recitals, suggests to the poet Rafael Alberti, also exiled in Buenos Aires, the creation of a poetic-musical spectacle; this is the origin of *Invitation to a Sound Journey*. This cantata for verse and lute is specifically dedicated to Paco Aguilar and appears in the book *High tide* (Pleamar) of the Cadiz-born poet. Rafael Alberti and Paco Aguilar, together with pianist Óscar Colacelli, offered more than seventy recitals all through the Hispanic America.

“Verses were written seeking to be the most rhythmical, exact oral expression, sometimes aerial and almost elusive, of the works, after being listened and studied by my with the utmost attention, keeping, if possible, to the musical accent of each style”

“...lute was dissolved in the most limpid springs and games which an anonymous Arabic Spanish fantasized in the XIV Century. It is found later in Juan de la Encina and his torn canticle upon the death of the Queen Elizabeth of Castile and in the crowed Pavana of Diego Pisador. All the cantata seemed submerged under the transparency of a haven of water. You could sense it dancing lost among the foggy cry vapours; curly, whispering, fugitive; between light and gloom folds (Croft); suddenly emerged in cheerful golden bubbles (Scarlatti); jumpy and broken as if it were suspended with a thread (Mozart) or wide whirlwind, sunk in the deepest before going up again in an infinite high tide”.

Rafael Alberti

In Thursday, 26th of May, 1983, it was celebrated at Madrid’s Ateneo an homage concert, where the Cantata was offered. Together with Alberti, the Quartet and The Grandío Orchestra took part. As members of the public there were Ernesto Halffter, Obdulia Turina and Pepe Aguilar, among others. Words of adhesion to the act were sent by Manuel de Falla’s niece and Argentinean writer Julio Cortázar.

Alberti read Cortazar’s following note:

“Chance does things correctly, as always. Arriving to Madrid and knowing of this homage to the Aguilar Quartet forms part of that kind of coincidences which only fools consider casual. In a very far time, the Aguilar filled with music the Buenos Aires of my youth. That music is still alive and present in my memory and it seems to me that it is not only a duty but also a joy to express here and today my gratitude, the gratitude of all my people.

Antonio Navarro, Plucked String Instruments in Spain

(“Los instrumentos de púa en España”)

Forty years later, Pepe Aguilar (nephew of the famous Quartet), thought as adequate to revive the Invitation to a Sound Journey, asking the poet for permission. In this 1983's Invitation to a Sound Journey (*“Invitación a un viaje sonoro”*), Rafael modifies the second part completing the journey: Granada, with a poem by Juan Ramón Jiménez, and the famous Bullfighter's Prayer (*“La oración del torero”*) with his poem dedicated to the death of “Joselito”. Rafael with the Grandío Quarter play it in several places of Spain until 1985: Zaragoza's Teatro Principal, Madrid's Teatro María Guerrero, Santander's International Festival, Navarra Festivals, etc.

“The plastic and rhythmic strength of Alberti's poem faces the rococo swerve (He saw, I saw. Air in a foot, flower in no time), Scarlatti's Madrilian clavichord (trills the air, arpeggiates the water, tremulous glasses smooth the strings of the sonatas), the soft Sarabande (so mild, that I'm nothing)”.

Enrique Franco. *El País*, may 1983



Para contactar con el Cuarteto, puedes escribirnos a cuartetoaguilar@gmail.com

Si deseas contactar con alguno de nosotros, puedes hacerlo en estas direcciones:

Antonio Navarro - anavarro1955@gmail.com
Luis Miguel Lara - luismiguel.lara@gmail.com
Pilar Barón - piluca.baron@gmail.com
Esther Casado - jaulitoesta@gmail.com

Síguenos en facebook, éste es nuestro [muro](#).

Contacto y contrataciones:

616 21 86 09
722 19 29 15