

UC SANTA BARBARA

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Poetry and Music

Paco Díez is something of a musical wizard. A multi-instrumentalist, he's one of the great ambassadors of Iberian and Sephardic music. His museum in Mucientes (Valladolid), Spain, holds hundreds of instruments — all of which he can play.

Díez will bring his unique gifts to UC Santa Barbara Tuesday, March 1, from 2 to 4 p.m. at Mosher Alumni Hall for "Love and Other Affairs: Poetry and Music (Spain, Latin America, Latinx US, and Sephardic)."

Díez will be accompanied by Anthony Geist, a professor of Spanish and of comparative literature at the University of Washington, who will introduce the 10 poems Díez will perform.

"Paco is an extraordinarily talented musician who has devoted his life and work to preserving and disseminating traditional music from Spain and Portugal," said Geist, a UCSB alumnus who grew up in Santa Barbara. "He is recognized internationally as one of the greatest performers of Sephardic balladry. This project is a departure from his usual concerts, in that he has read the poems closely and set them to music of his own composition."

Díez and Geist have chosen 10 poems by Spanish, Latin American and Latinx poets, as well as two traditional Sephardic *kantikas*, Geist said.

"I have translated them and will read them in the original Spanish as well as English," Geist said. "All the poems concern love: love for another person, love of a landscape, nostalgia for a lost or distant love."

“The audience will hear a wide array of poems by 20th century poets,” he continued, “which I will introduce and read, and Paco will sing in his captivating baritone voice. We hope they will be moved both by the original texts and the English versions, as well as by their musical interpretation.”

Geist met Díez in Spain about 10 years and the two quickly became good friends. Since then Díez has been an artist in residence at UW’s School of music twice. They conceived this poetry/art project over food and wine, Geist said.

“Poetry carries music in its DNA,” he said. “In a pre-literate world all poems were sung, from Homer’s “Odyssey” up through medieval ballads and into the 20th century in certain parts of the world. Paco is reconnecting these texts to their ancestral musical origins.”

The event is co-sponsored by UCSB’s Department of Spanish and Portuguese, the Department of Global Studies, the Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies, the Marsha and Jay Glazer Endowed Chair in Jewish Studies, the Comparative Literature and Translation Studies Program, the Center for Portuguese Studies, and the Latin American and Iberian Studies Program.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.