

Pepe Romero Biography

Celebrated worldwide for his dazzling virtuosity, compelling interpretations, and flawless technique, guitarist Pepe Romero is constantly in demand for his solo recitals, performances with orchestras, and with the world famous Romeros Quartet. Born in Málaga, Spain, Pepe Romero is the second son of “The Royal Family of the Guitar,” the Romeros. His father, the legendary Celedonio Romero, was his only guitar teacher; his first professional appearance was in a shared concert with his father in Sevilla’s Teatro Lope de Vega, when Pepe was only seven years old. After relocating to the United States, Pepe, together with his father and brothers, helped establish the Romeros Quartet as the leading guitar ensemble in the world. Although best known for his classical performances, Pepe’s passion for the traditional flamenco of his native Andalucía has never wavered. His first recording, *Flamenco Fenómeno!*, for Contemporary Records, was made when he was only fifteen. Since then, Pepe has made more than sixty recordings, among which are over twenty concertos with the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields conducted by Sir Neville Marriner and Iona Brown, as well as collaborations with many other artists.

In spring, 1992, with Sir Neville Marriner and the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Pepe Romero made a pioneering laser disc of the *Concierto de Aranjuez* and selected solo works by Joaquín Rodrigo. He is also a leading personality in the film documentary *Shadows and Light: Joaquín Rodrigo at 90*, which has received numerous awards, including those from the Chicago International Film Festival, the International Emmy Awards, and the San Francisco International Film Festival. Recently released is a set of Boccherini quintets for guitar and string quartet, recorded for UNICEF, including a new guitar transcription of *Música nocturna de Madrid*.

Mr. Romero’s contributions in the field of classical guitar have inspired a number of distinguished composers to write works specifically for him, including Joaquín Rodrigo, Federico Moreno Torroba, Lorenzo Palomo, Rev. Francisco de Madina, Celedonio Romero, Paul Chihara, Enrique Diemecke, and Ernesto Cordero. Rodrigo wrote his last guitar concerto, *Concierto para una Fiesta*, for Pepe in 1983. Andrés Segovia and composer Federico Moreno Torroba chose Pepe to record the world premiere of *Diálogos entre guitarra y Orquesta*, originally written for Segovia. In January 1996, in Berlin, with Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos conducting, Pepe Romero premiered Lorenzo Palomo’s *Nocturnos de Andalucía* and recorded the same a year later. This recording was released on the series “Spanish Classics” by Naxos in 2006. Following the death of his father, Pepe performed the world premiere of his father’s concerto for guitar and orchestra, *El Cortijo de Don Sancho*, with Michael Palmer conducting the American Sinfonietta. Along with Celin, Lito and Celino Romero he premiered and recorded concerto for four guitars of Lorenzo Palomo, *Concierto de Cienfuegos* with Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos conducting the Real Orquesta Sinfónica de Sevilla. In February 2002, Pepe Romero performed and recorded live the revival of *Metamorfosi de concert* by the great Catalan composer Xavier Montsalvatge with Gianandrea Noseda conducting the Orquesta de Cadaqués. In May 2004, Pepe Romero recorded *Concerto for guitar and orchestra* by Paul Chihara with Sir Neville Marriner and the London Symphony. In June 2005, the Romeros Quartet recorded with the Basque National Orchestra a piece written for them, *Concierto Vasco* by Francisco de Madina that was released by Claves Records in a 2-CD set entitled “Aita Madina.” Also among his latest releases is *Generations: The Romeros*, a recital CD by the Romeros Quartet including a world premiere recording of *Al Maestro* by Jorge Morel, a work dedicated by Celedonio Romero and his own composition, *Recuerdos del pasado*. In spring 2005, a newly recorded recital CD entitled *Corazón Español* was released on CPA Hollywood Records closely followed by another recital entitled *Classic Romero*. In summer 2008, Pepe Romero recorded with soprano Maria Bayo song cycles by Lorenzo Palomo, *Mi jardín solitario* with texts by Celedonio Romero and *Madrigal and Five Sephardic Songs*. In addition, he has premiered major works by such historical composers as Fernando Sor, Mauro Giuliani, Francesco Molino, Ferdinando Carulli, Johann Kaspar Mertz, Luigi Boccherini, and others.

Pepe Romero has been a special guest at the festivals of Salzburg, Israel, Schleswig-Holstein, Menuhin, Osaka, Granada, Istanbul, Ravinia, Garden State, Hollywood Bowl, Blossom, Wolf Trap, and Saratoga. As a member of The Romeros, Pepe has been invited to play at the White House, and at the Vatican for Pope John Paul II; he has also performed for His Royal Highness Prince Charles, Prince of Wales, King Juan Carlos and Queen Sophia of Spain, and Queen Beatrice of Holland. In the United States, he has appeared as the featured soloist with the Philadelphia, Cleveland, Chicago, Houston, Detroit, Pittsburgh, Boston, San Francisco, and Dallas Symphony Orchestras as well as the Orpheus Chamber Ensemble, the New York and Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestras, the Boston Pops Orchestra. In Europe he has appeared with the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, the Dresden Philharmonic, the London Symphony, the Monte Carlo Philharmonic, I Musici, the Zurich Chamber Orchestra, the Philharmonia Hungarica, Solisti di Zagreb, the Hungarian State Orchestra, the Spanish National Orchestra, the Spanish National Radio/Television Orchestra, Norddeutscher Rundfunk, Hamburg Philharmoniker, L'Orchestre de la Suisse-Romande, the Lausanne Chamber Orchestra, the New Moscow Chamber Orchestra, the American Sinfonietta, and the Bournemouth Symphony. He has also toured extensively in Asia and South America both as a recitalist and soloist with many of their finest symphony orchestras. Mr. Romero has collaborated with many of the world's finest conductors, including Eugene Ormandy, Sir Neville Marriner, Christoph Eschenbach, Leonard Slatkin, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, Jesús López-Cobos, Josep Pons, Arthur Fiedler, Lawrence Foster, André Kostelanetz, Philippe Entremont, Morton Gould, Michael Palmer, Guillermo Fuguroa, Miguel Angel Gómez-Martínez, Pedro Halffter and Enrique Jordá.

Pepe Romero is dedicated to passing his art on to future generations. He has served as Professor of Guitar at the University of Southern California, the University of California at San Diego, Southern Methodist University, and the University of San Diego and frequently conducts master classes in the Salzburg Summer Academy, the Schleswig-Holstein Festival, and the Córdoba Guitar Festival. Among his students are first-prize winners in numerous international competitions and several of the most brilliant of the younger generation of professional performers. In 2004, Pepe was invited to be Distinguished Artist in Residence at the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music where he holds master classes and continues his pedagogic tradition.

Pepe Romero holds an honorary doctorate in music from the University of Victoria, British Columbia. In June of 1996, he received the "Premio Andalucía de Música," the highest recognition given by his native land for his contribution to the arts. In addition, His Majesty, King Juan Carlos I of Spain, has knighted Pepe Romero and his brothers, Celin and Angel into the Order of "Isabel la Católica." The official ceremony of this high honor took place at the University of Southern California, February 11, 2000, and included a gala performance by The Romeros. A biographical documentary about the Romero family was made by PBS television, "Los Romeros: Royal Family of the Guitar" and was nationally released on September 14, 2001. NDR, the German television channel, released the documentary "Los Romeros, the Dynasty of the Guitar" in 2005 for viewing throughout Europe. On February 7, 2007 the Romeros, received the Presidents Merit Award from the Recording Academy, producers of the Grammy Awards, for their significant contributions to the music world and professional career achievements.