

Spanish Poetry and Music. A Recital by Amancio Prada.

Amancio Prada is one of the most original and productive Spanish singer-writers alive. In his recordings and performances he combines his work as a musicologist,



poet, gifted guitarist, composer, and cultural historian to recover poetry from the Spanish canon and bring it back to life in its most lyrical vein. Thanks to the initiative of the Spanish Consulate in Seattle and its very active Honorary Consul, Fernando L. Esteban, and the help and support of several units across campus – the Oregon Cultural Forum and the Oregon Humanities Center – Romance Languages was able to host Amancio Prada at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art. It was a packed, intense, and beautiful concert featuring eighteen different poems adapted to the guitar by Prada. The eclectic repertoire spanned several centuries, and it included songs from the medieval Spanish ballad tradition, mystic poetry, Galician poetry of migration, poems by Lorca, Miguel Hernández, García Calvo,

and others, as well as a translation of French singer-writer Léo Ferré into Spanish. This vertiginous evocation of Spanish lyrical production (with ramifications to Galicia and France) demonstrated once more the cultural centrality of poetry and music in the constitution and emergence of a Romance space. Prada – who donated three of his CD albums as well as two of his most recent CD books to the Knight library – carefully explained and contextualized each of the pieces to the audience with a mixture of humor, personable irony, and subtlety. The concert was a unique experience for the audience, who learned not only about the history of peninsular poetry and its contemporary reception, but also about the personal history of Prada's lifelong quest as a musician and poet. His musical renderings filled the museum and engaged a fascinated public who waited in line to have the program signed by the musician at the end of the recital. As an encore performance, Prada



played a medieval instrument, the hurdy-gurdy (*Zanfona* in Spanish, *Vielle à roue* in French), which belonged to the world of troubadours and pilgrims of medieval Spain.

The bilingual program was the result of a close collaboration among RL faculty and graduate students who first researched (special thanks go to RL MA, Iñaki Gonzalo) and then translated or revised previously published translations of the repertoire. Like his public, Prada was extremely happy with his visit, and will be using our translations in future performances in the English-speaking world. For our part, we were very happy to have him and look forward to a future visit. In the meantime, we can listen to his records and be immersed in the lyrical worlds he so effectively evokes.

