**The Flamenco Key – Phrygian Mode, Andalucian Cadence, and Cambios**

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While several flamenco forms, such as those in the *cantiñas* family, are in a familiar major key, with a common three-chord accompaniment, the most characteristic forms – e.g. *soleares*, *bulerías*, and *tangos* – are in what is sometimes called the ‘flamenco key’ or the Phrygian mode.[[1]](#footnote-1) Here we will explore the structure of three common flamenco key forms. Aside from a similar key, these forms make use of the Andalucian cadence and often include a “*cambio*” in the penultimate line.

*The Flamenco key and the Andalucian cadence*

The flamenco key is based on the Phrygian mode. This later is a particular type of scale – For example, the Phrygian mode based on E involves all the white keys on the piano starting and ending in E. Here it is, played on the guitar:

(1) Phrygian mode (E – *por arriba*)

a. [E F G A B C D E](http://idiom.ucsd.edu/~moore/blog-music/phryg/phryscale-ar.mp3)

b. [Alternating chords: E – F – E](http://idiom.ucsd.edu/~moore/blog-music/phryg/e-f-e.mp3)

Note the small space between E and F (a half-step) – this helps give the key its distinctive, vaguely Middle Eastern character. Indeed the chords used to accompany Phrygian melodies often alternate between a basic E chord and the neighboring F chord, as illustrated in (1b)

The example in (1) assumes the guitar is playing in E (*por arriba*); the Phrygian mode can be based on other keys – most common (in fact, more common than E) is A Phrygian, with a base chord of A alternating with B-flat (*por medio*):

(2) Phrygian mode (A – *por medio*)

a. [A Bb C D E F G A](http://idiom.ucsd.edu/~moore/blog-music/phryg/phrygscale-med.mp3)

b. [Alternating chords: A – Bb – A](http://idiom.ucsd.edu/~moore/blog-music/phryg/a-bf-a.mp3)

The flamenco key consists of essentially these (plus a few other) flamenco scales, with some variation; for example, the third note (e.g. G in (1)) is sometimes replaced with a sharp (G#).

The F chord in (1) and the Bb chord in (2) are played with some open strings, leading to the characteristic discordant quality of flamenco guitar. The chords could be played as full chords (3), but the sound is not particularly flamenco – rather, this sounds like “fake” Spanish music:

(3) Alternating chords without open strings:

a. [E – F – E](http://idiom.ucsd.edu/~moore/blog-music/phryg/e-f-e2.mp3)

b. [A – Bb - A](http://idiom.ucsd.edu/~moore/blog-music/phryg/a-bf-a2.mp3)

While there are three chords used in accompanying major-key forms such as those from the *cantiñas* family (the tonic, dominant, and sub-dominant), there are four chords used to accompany flamenco key forms. These are chords associated with the first four notes of the key; they are traditionally given in descending order, starting with a minor chord based on the forth note, a major chord based on the third (sometimes 7th), a major chord (with open strings) based on the second, and finally, the base chord based on the first note. This chord progression is called the Andalucian cadence:

(4) Andalucian cadence

a. [Am – G(7) – F – E E-position (*por arriba*)](http://idiom.ucsd.edu/~moore/blog-music/phryg/ac-ar.mp3)

b. [Dm – C(7) – Bb – A A-position (*por medio*)](http://idiom.ucsd.edu/~moore/blog-music/phryg/ac-med.mp3)

iv III(7) II I

The notation iv-III-II-I is used to identify these chords, independent of the key, so Am and Dm are the iv chords for their respective keys, G and C the III, etc. The lower case ‘iv indicates a minor chord, while the uppercase ‘III’, etc. indicate major chords.[[2]](#footnote-2)

When accompanying a form in the flamenco key, it is common to alternate between I and II, then, at some point, pass to vi and then descend down the Andalucian cadence:

(5) Typical flamenco key chord pattern:

a. [F E F E Am G F E *por arriba*](http://idiom.ucsd.edu/~moore/blog-music/phryg/phry-ar.mp3)

b. [Bb A Bb A Dm C Bb A *por medio*](http://idiom.ucsd.edu/~moore/blog-music/phryg/phry-med.mp3)

II I II I iv III II I

*Cambio*

Forms that use the flamenco key include *soleares*, *bulerías*, *soleá por bulerías*, *tientos*, *tangos*, and *siguiriyas*. With the possible exception of *siguiriyas*, each of these forms has a point in the *cante* where the guitar plays a *cambio* ‘change’.[[3]](#footnote-3) The *cambio* accentuates the climax of the verse – usually the penultimate line. It often breaks the descent of the Andalucian cadence by adding a chord that is a third higher than the III chord (the ‘VI’ chord):

(6) *Cambio*

a. [F E F E Am Am G-C Am G(7) F E *por arriba*](http://idiom.ucsd.edu/~moore/blog-music/phryg/cambio-ar.mp3)

b. [Bb A Bb A Dm Dm C -F Dm C Bb A *por medio*](http://idiom.ucsd.edu/~moore/blog-music/phryg/cambio-med.mp3)

II I II I iv iv III-VI iv III II I

*cambio*

The placement of the *cambio* varies from form to form and within a single form according to the verse’s melody. Some singers will play with the placement of the *cambio* – either for effect or due to a less developed sense of timing. The guitarist must carefully listen to the *cante* in order to catch the *cambio* at the right moment. Because the *cambio* marks the climax of a verse, dancers often accentuate it with movement and/or footwork. Therefore, effective dancing to *cante* requires that the dancer be tuned into the *cante* in order to mark the *cambio*. The following sections will explore the structure of three flamenco key forms with emphasis on the placement of the *cambio*.

*Soleares*

*Soleares* (singular *soleá*) represents one of the most fundamental forms in flamenco. They are performed with a fairly slow twelve-beat tempo and are considered *cante jondo* (‘deep song’). While dancers tend to favor a slow tempo, allowing for a variety of movements and footwork, the tempo tends to be closer to *andante* when sung without dance.[[4]](#footnote-4) There are many *soleares* styles; some of the variation is regional (e.g. *soleares* from Cádiz versus *soleares* from Triana), while variation can be due to the singer who created (or is associated with) the style (e.g. *soleares* *de Paquirri* versus *soleares* *del Mellizo* – both singers from Cádiz). An extensive discussion of dozens of styles, along with their structures and accompaniments is found on Norman Kliman’s excellent website (see footnote 2).

*Soleares* can be played in the E position (*por arriba*) or the A position (*por medio*). There is a tendency to favor the E position, even though this often means putting the *cejilla* on a high fret. Dancers are used to a chord progression during footwork that really only works in the E position:

(8) [footwork chord progression, *por arriba* (F-C-F-E)](http://idiom.ucsd.edu/~moore/blog-music/phryg/esc-ar.mp3)

When playing in the A position, this progression doesn’t sound the same, so guitarists typically play some version of the Andalucian cadence during footwork:

(9) [Andalucian cadence foot work progression, *por medio* (Dm-C-Bb-A)](http://idiom.ucsd.edu/~moore/blog-music/phryg/esc-med.mp3)

Some people believe that *soleares* is always *por arriba* and when played *por medio*, it becomes *soleá por bulerías*. This is not true – the *soleá cante* can be accompanied in either position, according to the singer’s range and where the guitarist can place the *cejilla*. We will see that *soleá por bulerías* is a different form below and that it, too, can be played either *por medio* or *por arriba*,

*Soleares* verses consist of either three or four lines of approximately eight syllables. Each line tends to correspond to a single twelve-beat measure. While there is a range of variation, repetitions generally yield approximately eight measures. There are several ways the singer can repeat lines (again, see Kliman’s webpage). For example, the four-line verse in (10) is sung as in (11), with repetitions yielding six measures:

(10) Por mala lengua que tienes Because of your bad mouth

al infierno irás a parar you’ll end up in Hell

que sólo dices mentiras you only tell lies

y dudas de la verdad and doubt the truth

(11) [*Soleá de Alcalá* – Camarón](http://idiom.ucsd.edu/~moore/blog-music/phryg/camaron-solea.mp3), A position (*cejilla* on 5)

Por mala lengua que tienes Because of your bad mouth

al infierno irás a parar you’ll end up in Hell

- Free measure -

al infierno irás a parar you’ll end up in Hell

y al infierno irás a parar you’ll end up in Hell

que sólo dices mentiras you only tell lies

y dudas de la verdad and doubt the truth

Note that this *soleá* is accompanied by Paco de Lucía in the A position (*por medio*), with the *cejilla* on the 5th fret – this is because Camarón, particularly when young, had a very high voice for a man. In order to achieve the same key *por arriba*, Paco would have had to put the *cejilla* on the 10th fret, which leaves very little room to play. The melody is a very standard style associated with the town of Alcalá, in the province of Sevilla – hence, this is an example of *soleá de Alcalá*.

The verse can be broken into two parts – the pre-*cambio* and the *cambio*-resolution. In (11) the pre-*cambio* consists of the first four lines – there we find a melodic line sung twice; the accompaniment for this is shown in (12):

(12) pre-*cambio* chords

I7 iv

iv III II I

- free measure -

I7 iv

iv III II I

Note that the melody begins with a 7th chord based in the I chord (A7, in this case), passing to the iv chord (Dm); this is followed by the Andalucian cadence. Notice also that the singer leaves a measure free between the repetitions. The free measure between the second and third measures, while not obligatory, is very common. Dancers often make use of this for a *remate* or *contestación*; however, if the dancer wants to be sure there is such a free measure, s/he should let the singer know beforehand.

The remaining two measures included the *cambio* and the resolution. The *cambio* occurs around the 8-9-10 beats of the fifth line. This is followed by another Andalucian cadence. It is very common to repeat the *cambio*-resolution (most *soleá* choreographies assume this will happen), but in this case, Camarón sings the *cambio*-resolution only once.

The next example is a *soleá de Cádiz*, associated with the 19th century singer, Enrique del Mellizo (1848-1906). Here the pre-*cambio* section does not go to the iv chord; rather, the accompaniment alternates between the II and I chords. Unlike the last example, there is no free measure between the second and third measures. In addition, the pre-*cambio* section consists of only three measures. The *cambio*, again, on 8-9-10 of the fifth measure (“*a voces*”). Here, though, the singer repeats the *cambio*-resolution, for a total of seven measures. This is a three-line verse (given in 13); notice how the lines are distributed in (14); in particular, the second *cambio*-resolution adds a filler line (“*mamaita de mi alma*”) and then repeats the first line of the verse. These filler lines are very common.

(13) Dime dónde estas metida Tell me where you are

que yo te llamaba a voces I called out to you

que tú no me respondía and you didn’t respond

(14*)* [*Soleá de Cádiz* – Manolo Vargas](http://idiom.ucsd.edu/~moore/blog-music/phryg/solea-vargas.mp3), E position (*cejilla* on 4)

¿Dónde estaba metida? Where were you?

dime dónde estas metida, ay ay tell me where you are

que dime dónde estas metida tell me where you are

que yo te llamaba a voces, ay I called out to you

que tú no me respondía and you didn’t respond

mamaita de me alma mother of my soul

ay que dime dónde estas metida tell me where you are

Up until now we have seen the *cambio* on beats 8-9-10. However, it is possible to put it earlier in the measure. In the next example, a *soleá* style from Jerez, the singer begins the *cambio* line early – at the end of the previous measure – the *cambio* itself, then, falls on 1-2-3 of the next measure (“*tú vales*”). The repeat of the *cambio* reverts to the familiar 8-9-10 beats. The pre-*cambio* portion of this verse is accompanied by I7 to iv, but this first line is sung over two measures, followed by a free measure. The line is repeated with the I-iv, before moving to the *cambio*. Notice that there is no Andalucian cadence after the I7 to iv, (as there was in the example in 11). Also note that the repeat of the *cambio* uses different words, so the poetry, while on the four-line model, has alternative endings.

(15) [*Soleá* – David Lagos](http://idiom.ucsd.edu/~moore/blog-music/phryg/solea-lagos.mp3), E position (*cejilla* on 7)

Yo pago con mi dinero I pay with my own money (2 measures)

- free measure -

yo pago con mi dinero I pay with my own money

ay ay debe ser lo que tú vales only what it is that you’re worth

porque soy un caballero because I’m a gentleman

y no vengas pidiéndome cuentas so don’t come asking for more

que soy un caballero I’m doing the gentlemanly thing

Probably most, if not all, choreographies assume a *cambio* on 8-9-10, so any time a *cambio* occurs earlier, the choreography will not match the *cante*. These examples illustrate some of the possible variation found in *soleares* verses. By listening for the pre-*cambio* and *cambio*-resolution parts of the *cante*, dancers can adapt their choreography in a way that complements the singing. Given the several parameters of possible variation, however, it is important to have listened to a lot of examples in order to have an idea of what might sung in any given moment.

*Bulerías*

Bulerías is probably the most popular flamenco form and also perhaps the most complicated. It has a twelve-beat pattern, but this sometimes alternates with a six-beat pattern (there can even occasionally be an ‘extra’ six). Since it probably evolved from *soleares*, it is generally in the flamenco key; however, it also has origins with *cantiñas* so it can show up in the major key. Finally, *bulerías* has been a magnet for popular songs, so it can be in practically any key.

Dancers tend to learn *bulerías* in shorter segments – this is because it is generally not danced as a stand-alone solo. Rather, dancers each come out to do a short (and it should be short!) piece – usually to one or two verses. Given the wide range of variation in *bulerías* verses, it is important to have heard as many as possible to have an idea of what is coming next. Many *bulerías* are structured as three-line verses, similar to *soleares*, with both pre-*cambio* and *cambio*-resolution sections. These tend to alternate between II and I chords or pass from I to iv. The *cambio* is similar to what we find in *soleares*, but at a quicker tempo. Finally, as with *soleares*, there are many ways that the lines are repeated. Bulerías can be accompanied *por medio* or *por arriba*. Probably *por medio* is more common. There is a good deal of dance lore as what to do during the *cambio* of a *bulería* – e.g. should there be a *desplante*, a *pillizco*, etc.? I have seen many successful approaches – most of them finding some way to accentuate the *cambio* in some way.

The first example comes from a 1970 recording of La Fernanda de Utrera with Juan Maya “Marote” on the guitar. Marote was an exceedingly strong guitarist and chose to accompany *por arriba*, even though this meant having to put the *cejilla* on the 9th fret (this is equivalent to the 4th fret *por medio*). Not only does this leave very little room to play, but it is difficult to get good sound in this position. It is a testimony to Marote’s strength that he was able to pull this off with finesse.

The pre-*cambio* section alternates between II and I, with two free measures before a repetition of the first line. The *cambio* is on 8-9-10 (“*mi camino*”), followed by a quick resolution.

(16) [*Bulerías* – La Fernanda de Utrera](http://idiom.ucsd.edu/~moore/blog-music/phryg/fer-bul-1.mp3), E position (*cejilla* on 9)

A Dios le pido yo un favor I’m asking God a favor

- 2 free measures –

a Dios le pido yo un favor I’m asking God a favor

que te quite de mi camino that he get you out of my life

vas a ser mi perdición you’ll be my downfall

This next example, from the same recording, is accompanied with a I7 to iv pattern, repeated after free measures. It goes into the *cambio* on “*abrirme*”:

(17) [*Bulerías* – La Fernanda de Utrera](http://idiom.ucsd.edu/~moore/blog-music/phryg/fer-bul-2.mp3), E position (*cejilla* on 9)

¿Te acuerdas cuando entonces? Do you remember back when?

- 2 free measures –

¿tú no te acuerdas cuando entonces? you don’t remember back when

bajabas descalcito a abrirme you came to me barefoot

y ahora ya no me conoces and now you pretend

not to recognize me

In the next example, Fernanda hangs onto a note accompanied by a I7 chord for almost two measures before resolving to iv. The *cambio*-resolution, sung twice, follows immediately; there are no free measures. Immediately after the verse, there is a *coletilla*, which alternates between I and II chords in the accompaniment. This is a fairly standard type of *coletilla* for *bulerías*.

(18) [*Bulerías* – La Fernanda de Utrera](http://idiom.ucsd.edu/~moore/blog-music/phryg/fer-bul3.mp3), E position (*cejilla* on 9)

*verse*:

La gran fantasia, ay (I have) a fantasy (2 measures)

como mi hermanita Bernarda that like my sister Bernarda

nadie cantara en su vida no one will ever sing

como mi hermanita Bernarda that like my sister Bernarda

nadie cantara en su vida no one will ever sing

*coletilla*:

Esta noche no pido posada I don’t need lodging tonight

hasta mañana a la madrugada I’ll be staying up all night

hasta mañana a la madrugada I’ll be staying up all night

In each example (16-18) the verse has a total of six measures, including free measures and repetitions. The *coletilla* is four measures, which yields a total of ten. This is approximately the range of variation a dancer can expect in a *bulerás* verse. However, a three-line verse can be sung with just three measures – this is typical in Jerez, where these are referred to as “*bulerías cortas*” (‘short *bulerías’*). In the following example, we find a new melodic pattern. The first line modulates to the major key – so instead of using a iv chord, the guitarist goes to the dominant cord of the major key (B7, in this case). However, then the accompaniment returns to the flamenco key with a typical *cambio*. This use of the major is an alternative to the I to iv pattern – indeed, verses are often sung either way. In some cases, the singer will repeat the first line, going to iv first and then to the dominant in the repetition.

(19) [*Bulería corta* - Luis Zambo](http://idiom.ucsd.edu/~moore/blog-music/phryg/zambo-bul.mp3) , E position (*cejilla* on 4)

Te tiene que faltar You must be lacking

la alegría y el dinero joy, money,

y la salud y la libertad health, and freedom

Not all *bulerías* have a *cambio*. Even some in the flamenco key simply make use of common flamenco key alternations and the Andalucian cadence. In the following example, we see an alternation between the II and I chords on lines 1-2 and then 3-4. This is followed by a *coletilla* that descends through the Andalucian cadence.

(20) [*Bulerías* without *cambio* – La Fernanda de Utrera](http://idiom.ucsd.edu/~moore/blog-music/phryg/fer-bul-4.mp3), E position (*cejilla* on 9)

*verse*:

Cuando se entera el sultan When the sultan realizes

- free measure -

de lo que han hecho las moras what his women have done

- free measure -

que han dejao morería they all left the harem

para cantarle a la novia to sing for the bride

*coletilla*:

Ay gitana, tu eres mora Gypsy, you’re a Moor

mora de la morería a Moor from the Moorish quarter

As mentioned above, several styles of *bulerías* are in the major key. Some of these are in the form of *coletillas*. In the following example, from a classic 1967 recording of Jerez singers, el Romerito (the father of LA-based singer Antonio de Jerez) sings a major key *coletilla* that alternates between the tonic and dominant chords. This is also an example of a six beat rhythm that is used to create tension – often on a repeated *coletilla* - to resolve to the twelve beat pattern, relieving the tension.

(21) [*Bulerías coletilla* (major key)](http://idiom.ucsd.edu/~moore/blog-music/phryg/fiesta-jerez1.mp3) – Romerito, A position (*cejilla* on 4)

Dices que te quiero poco You say I don’t love you much

dices que te quiero poco you say I don’t love you much

tu gente lo que camela[[5]](#footnote-5) what your family wants

es que yo me volviera loco is for me to go crazy

Another common major key Jerez *bulerías*, from the same recording, is a style associated with the singer Niño Gloria (1893-1954). This rather rambling verse makes effective use a six beat pattern, alternating between the tonic and dominant chords. There is a both a verse and a major key *coletilla*:

(22) [*Bulerías de Jerez* (Niño Gloria, major key) – El Diamante](http://idiom.ucsd.edu/~moore/blog-music/phryg/fiesta-jerez2.mp3) Negro, A position (*cejilla* on 4)

*verse*:

mi amante es pajarero My lover is a birdkeeper

me trajo un loro and brought me a parrot

- Free measure -

ay me trajo un loro he brought me a parrot

con las alas dorados with golden wings

y el pico de oro and a beak of gold

con las alas dorados with golden wings

y el pico de oro and a beak of gold

*coletilla*:

Ay madre, madre Mother, Mother

ay madre, madre Mother, Mother

yo creí que llovía I thought it was raining

y agua no cae but no water falls

y agua no cae no water falls

y agua no cae … no water falls …

Most dancers will be familiar with the *bulerías de Cádiz*, which is commonly sung at the end of an *alegrías* choreography. These major key *bulerías* actually have their origin in the *tanguillos* traditionally sung during Carnival. In Cádiz, Carnival is a huge event with scores of costumed singing groups singing satirical verses – often spoofing local politics. In the following example we see a public works theme – they are putting up a nice illuminated fountain in Puerto Chico, while in Plaza de las Canastas (in the Gypsy neighborhood of Santa María) they have to make do with makeshift oil lamps (*mariposas*, literally ‘butterflies’, are a type of oil lamp consisting of a saucer of oil and a wick). In the Balón neighborhood, they are putting up a monument with a statue of María Bastón – a famous street person/beggar from the late 19th to early 20th century. Finally, the last verse notes that despite the poverty associated with Cádiz (continues to have nearly 50% unemployment), they love a good joke – indeed Cádiz is famous for its sense of humor. For more discussion of flamenco and Carnival in Cádiz, including the 19th century origin of these verses, see

<http://www.pubwages.com/06/carnival-and-flamenco>

Dancers will recognize the melody of the second and third verses – the first is a bit different, but similar – this was an earlier version of the verse now days sung as “*Dicen que van a poner …*” (‘they say they’re putting up …’). Note the passing of a tonic 7th chord on the way to the sub-dominant on “*van a poner monumento*” (second verse) and “*ni las hambres las vamos a sentir*” (third verse).

(23) [*Bulerás de Cádiz* – Chano Lobato](http://idiom.ucsd.edu/~moore/blog-music/phryg/cadiz-bul.mp3), E position (*cejilla* on 2)

Van a poner en Puerto Chico In Puerto Chico they’re putting up

- Free measure -

una Fuente, prima, luminosa an illuminated fountain

y en la Plaza de las Canastas but in the Plaza de las Canastas

se alumbran con mariposas they have to use oil lamps

Según me ha dicho mi prima According to my cousin

Ay que la del barrio del balón the one from the Balón neighborhood

van a poner un monumento they’re putting up a monument

y encima María Bastón with María Bastón on top

Con el caray, caray, caray , caray Caray[[6]](#footnote-6)

que mira qué de cosas que pasan en Cádiz look what goes on in Cádiz

ay que ni las hambres las vamos a sentir we don’t even feel the hunger

que mire usted que gracia see what a sense of humor

que mire usted que gracia see what a sense of humor

que mire usted que gracia tiene este país see what a sense of humor we

have in this town

Because *bulerías* has become a magnate for popular songs, the range of possibilities is very large; often these popular songs are referred to as *cuplés*; these are not usually sung for dance, but might be.[[7]](#footnote-7) More common, however, are compositions that are used as choruses – particularly for the end of another dance, such as a *soleá*. The following example from a recording from the mid-1980s, is the chorus from a popular song that La Susi sings *por bulerías*. I have heard this chorus used to sing a dancer off stage at the end of a *soleá* choreography. Notice that it simply cycles through the Andalucian cadence:

(24) [*La brisa de la mañana* - La Susi](http://idiom.ucsd.edu/~moore/blog-music/phryg/brisa.mp3), A position (*cejilla* on 5)

Yo quisiera ser I’d like to be

ay como la brisa de la mañana like the morning breeze

que entra por mi ventana that comes in my window

ole, ole, que entra por mi ventana ole, ole, that comes in my window

As must be clear, the range of possible *bulerías* is quite vast, encompassing different keys and different rhythms. While the standard *bulerías* tend to retain the pre-*cambio*/*cambio*-resolution structure of *soleares*, there are many other styles that might be sung for dance. Hence, the dancer who knows when and where to expect a *cambio* will be able to take full advantage of the *cante*. Furthermore, there are some types of *bulerías* that are sung in very specific dance contexts (e.g. the *bulerías de Cádiz* at the end of an *alegrías*, chorus sung at the end of a *soleares* choreography, etc.). As with all forms, but even more so for *bulerías*, extensive listening and absorbing will be essential.

*Soleá por Bulerías*

*Soleá por bulerías* has evolved as a form of *soleares* that has a quicker, *andante* tempo. It turns out the rhythm and tempo is essentially identical to that of *alegrías* – this fact is obscured by the different keys, but it should be the case that marking steps for the two forms are interchangeable. The idea that *soleá por bulerías* is a separate form is a relatively recent phenomenon (perhaps dating to the second half of the 20th century – I have not researched this). Before this, one found *bulerías por soleá*, which was a shorter, three-line *bulerías* verse sung with a *soleá* accompaniment (in Jerez, this is still referred to as “*bulerías para escuchar*”, ‘*bulerías* for listening’ – as opposed to dancing). Over time, the tempo quickened a bit (but, remember, *soleá* without dancing tends to have a quicker tempo), and the form took on a life of its own, with the new name *soleá por bulerías*.

Because of the three line *bulerías* origin, *soleá por bulerías* tend to have three lines, although four line verses are also possible. The structure – repetitions, free measures, and *cambios*, are very similar to those found in *soleares*.

It is more common for *soleá por bulerías* to be accompanied *por medio* than *por arriba*, although we will see examples of both.

In (25) we have an example of a three line verse sung *por medio*. The first line goes from I7 to iv, and then directly to the *cambio*-resolution, which is repeated. The *cambio* is on 8-9-10 (“*que to di*”):

(25) [*Soleá por Bulerías* – La Maquinita](http://idiom.ucsd.edu/~moore/blog-music/phryg/maq-spb2.mp3), A position (*cejilla* on 6)

Tú me dijiste que te quería You said that you loved me  
 por un beso que te di just because of the way I kissed you  
 junto a la orilla del rio by the riverbank

por un beso que te di just because of the way I kissed you  
 junto a la orilla del rio by the riverbank

The example in (26) illustrates a four line verse. Here we find the I7 to iv pattern in the pre-*cambio* section, followed by a descent through the Andalucian cadence. After a free measure, the first line is repeated, again passing from I7 to iv, but with a different melody and no Andalucian cadence. The *cambio*, on 8-9-10 (“*comprenderás*”), is repeated, along with the resolution:

(26) [*Soleá por Bulerías* – La Maquinita](http://idiom.ucsd.edu/~moore/blog-music/phryg/maq-spb1.mp3), A position (*cejilla* on 6)

Permita Dios y te enamores May God allow you to fall in love  
 de quien a ti no te quiera with someone who doesn’t love you

- Free measure –

de quien a ti no te quiera with someone who doesn’t love you  
 y entonces comprenderás then you’ll understand  
 lo grande que son mis penas the depth of my sorrow

y entonces comprenderás then you’ll understand  
 lo grande que son mis penas the depth of my sorrow

These two verses show five to eight measures; as with *soleares* and *bulerías*, there is a fairly wide range of variation in length.

The following example, a four line verse, is in a high key that would normally be accompanied *por medio*. However, as we saw in (16-18), Juan Maya chooses to put the *cejilla* on 9 and play *por arriba*. The first line resolves on iv, followed by an Andalucian cadence. This melody is repeated after a free measure, and then a single *cambio*-resolution, with the *cambio* on 8-9-10:

(27) [*Soleá por Bulerías* – La Bernarda de Utrera](http://idiom.ucsd.edu/~moore/blog-music/phryg/ber-spb1.mp3), E position (*cejilla* on 9)

Creí que el querer I thought that love  
 que era cosita de juguete was just a plaything

- free measure –

cosa de juguete a plaything

era cosa de juguete it was just a plaything  
 y ahora veo que se pasa, ay but now I see that you suffer  
 las fatigas de la muerte the pain of death

In (28), there is another three line verse, with the first line resolving on iv, and then going directly to the *cambio*-resolution. The *cambio*-resolution is repeated, using a filler phrase (“*primo mío de mi alma*” ‘cousin of my soul’):

(28) [*Soleá por Bulerías* – La Bernarda de Utrera](http://idiom.ucsd.edu/~moore/blog-music/phryg/ber-spb2.mp3), E position (*cejilla* on 9)

En una maceta In a flowerpot  
 la semilla del encanto the enchanted seed  
 me salió una violeta came up a violet

primo mío de mi alma cousin of my soul

me salió una violeta it came up a violet

In (15) we saw an example of a *soleá* that aligns the *cambio* on beats 1-2-3. This can happen in *soleá por bulerías* as well. In this example, Jerez singer Juana de la Pipa sings a three line verse:

(29) A la calle me salí I went out on the street

a todo el mundo que veía and everyone I saw

les preguntaba por ti I asked about you

The pre-*cambio* section, which consists only of the first line, repeated and separated by a free measure, alternates between the II and I chords. The first *cambio*-resolution section starts with the second line of the verse (“*a todo el mundo que veía*”) it ends on the III chord. The next measure is a filler (“*porque yo bien te camelo*”) hangs on the III chord until executing the *cambio* on 8-9-10, just as the word “*camelo*” ends. The resolution descends through the Andalucian cadence on the third line of the verse. On the repeat of the *cambio*-resolution, the second line is as before, but the filler and the third line are fit into a single measure, where the *cambio* happens on the 1-2-3 beats; this last line spills into one more measure.

(30) [*Soleá por Bulerías* – Juana de la Pipa](http://idiom.ucsd.edu/~moore/blog-music/phryg/pipa-spb1.mp3), A position (*cejilla* on 4)

A la calle me salí I went out on the street

- free measure -

a la calle me salí I went out on the street

a todo el mundo que veía and everyone I saw

porque yo bien te camelo because I love you so much

les preguntaba por ti I asked about you

a todo el mundo que pasaba and everyone who passed by

porque yo bien te camelo because I love you so much

les preguntaba port ti I asked about you

Again, we see a range of variation –based on melody, length, and placement of the *cambio*.

While the range of variation found in these forms may seem daunting, some understanding of the structure and types of melodies can be helpful in navigating the relationship between dance and *cante* in these quintessential flamenco forms.

1. Interestingly, relatively few flamenco forms are in the minor key, these include *farruca* and *peteneras*. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. I’m following Norman Kliman’s notation for representing chords based on the position in the Phrygian Mode (see <http://canteytoque.es/soleares.htm>). Elsewhere there is a tradition of using vi-V-IV-III to represent the Andalucian cadence. The reason is that the Phrygian mode is based on notes from a related major scale; for example, E Phrygian uses the notes from a C major scale (i.e. the white keys on the piano). E is the third note in the C major scale, so the chord associated with E is notated ‘III’. Similarly for A Phrygian, which is based on the F major scale. It may be that this latter notation is more common, but Kliman’s notation is more transparent. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Sometimes a *cambio* is used in the accompaniment of *siguiriyas*, but it is less common and optional. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The terms “*cante p’delante*” ‘singing up front’ and “*cante p’atrás*” ‘singing from behind’ refer to singing without and with dance, respectively. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The Gypsy verb *camelar* (equivalent to Spanish *querer*) can mean ‘love’ or ‘want’; its origin is in the Sanskrit root *kam*- ‘love’. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. *Caray* is a euphemism for *carajo*, an expletive that literally means ‘penis’. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. A wonderful example with Miguel Poveda and Buika singing the *cuplé* “*Se nos rompió el amor*”, with Eva Yerbabuena dancing, can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kxijbzqLMHw> . [↑](#footnote-ref-7)