

Biography of Toti Soler

To feel beauty, we should pause and take the time to tune into life's pulsating rhythm. To sense beauty, we should respond to the vibrating soul in everything that surrounds us. Yet if this task seems too vast and difficult there is someone who could bring us closer to beauty and its simplicity. Toti Soler - composer, guitarist, singer and arranger - is a person who perceives beauty instinctively and transforms it into music. Each one of his compositions, to the listener, is therefore a reflection of his depth of feeling.

Born in Vilassar de Dalt (nr. Barcelona) in 1949, he began his musical training in 1965 in the Conservatori Municipal de Música de Barcelona, and in 1969, furthered his knowledge in the Spanish Guitar Centre in London. This initial classical education has always been present in his work but is by no means the only influence. In 1971 he met the American blues musician Taj Mahal and by learning from each other, and sharing the power of emotion made music, they performed a number of moving concerts together. This was only the beginning of a long learning journey. Captivated by the gypsy wisdom of the purest flamenco, he travelled to Andalusia in 1972 where he integrated into his music, all the knowledge acquired from the legendary flamenco guitarist, Diego del Gastor.

The sensitivity and intuition of Toti Soler's musical interpretations soon led to work with other artists of international renown. In 1980, the Italian actor and director, Ugo Tognazzi, asked him to compose the soundtrack to the film, *I viaggiatori della sera*. Then in the same year the genius of Léo Ferré found in Toti Soler the ideal accompanist for his intense - and often improvised - performances. Together, they gave live recitals, as well as recording in Milan the record - Léo Ferré: *ludwig - l'imaginaire - le bateau ivre*.

In 1984, loyal to the musical style he had discovered 10 years previously, Toti Soler took part in the Bienal de Arte flamenco de Sevilla 'El Toque', and in 1989 was invited to participate in the Festival Internacional de Guitarra de Córdoba. During the early 90s, he continued to perfect his flamenco technique with the Sevillian maestro José Manuel Roldán. Now well-known as a composer and performer of his generation, assembling a diversity of traditional rhymes and melodies, Toti Soler took on the challenge of returning to his classical beginnings by participating in 1996 in the VII Festival de Guitarra de Barcelona; he appeared for the first time in public as a classical musician, giving a concert that was dedicated solely to J. S. Bach.

The same year, he received the best Catalan record award 'Premi al Millor Disc Català de l'Any', for the anthology recorded in Switzerland, Lydda. In 2000, Toti Soler recorded 19 songs that entered the country's poetic consciousness; the record *Cançons* is a gift from a magical performer who always surprises and captivates the audience with his gentle voice and lightness of touch. The record brought him back to the Catalan stage as a solo performer, participating in the Festival d' Estiu de Barcelona, 'Grec' 2001, and deservedly earned him two prestigious awards within the Catalan song genre - the 'Premi Altaveu de Sant Boi de Llobregat' and the 'Premi a la Popularitat' - awarded by the radio station, Radio 4 of Barcelona.

During the year 2002, Toti Soler recorded at home, *Vita Nuova*, a collection that embodies the musical and poetic wisdom of years; every piece is a treasure from a

musician who can transform something intimate and personal into something universally shared. *Vita Nuova* was presented to the public in the Palau de la Música de Barcelona and received an award from the Sociedad General de Autores y Editores (SGAE) in the category of 'Nuevas Musicas' in the year 2003.

In 2006 the "Generalitat de Catalunya" granted to him the "Creu de Sant Jordi", maximum award that the Catalan Government grants to the most out-standing personalities and entities.

Toti Soler is an exceptional composer and performer. His music is able to flow through time, reflecting the richness of the age. He is innovative, yet timeless.