

SPECIAL FEATURE on RAFAEL RAMOS

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Birth: 18th December 1947 - Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain

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He began his musical studies at the Conservatoire of the Canary Islands 'Las Palmas Philharmonic Society' studying cello with an important regional cellist Rafael Jámez Medina. Rafael Ramos, even in his student days, was given the role of principal cellist of the conservatoire orchestra. He then took the bold step of moving to France, and to the National Superior Conservatoire of Music in Paris, where his teachers were Pierre Pasquier and Bernard Michelin, as well as with the pianist Monique Deschaussès. He was there during seven years, and was able to receive additional guidance from R. Jáimez, R. Flachot, A. Navarra, M. Cervera and R. Aldulescu. Reine Flachot exerted a lasting influence on his musical style. In 1967 he won the first Prize for Chamber Music at the Paris Conservatory, and two years later the prize for the cello. In 1970 he obtained the 'License de Concert', the highest award from the Ecole Normale de Musique, prepared by the great cellist Reine Flachot. With such an exalted studentship it should not come of surprise that in that same year - 1970 - he gained the position of principal cello in the Spanish National Orchestra in Madrid.

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From this moment, he came to prominence on the Spanish national scene. Among the many awards with which Rafael Ramos has been distinguished with, I could mention the first medal of the Chamber Music Competition 'María Canals de Barcelona (1972) and the first prize ' Memorial López Chavarri-Marcos 'of Valencia (1975) .

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He has given recitals and concerts with orchestras in Europe, Asia and America, among which are those in Athens, Paris, Beirut, Amsterdam, Madrid, Hong-Kong, Bombay, Osaka, Sydney, etc. On his first tour of the US with the pianist Josep Colom (1982) he achieved resounding successes, highlighted by critics in New York, San Francisco and New Orleans.

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His important duo recital album, the first worldwide recording in 1985 dedicated to the work of the great Spanish cellist Gaspar Cassadó, has been valued by specialized critics as one of the great record contributions to the current cello. Naturally it was a national award winner. Later he recorded for the RACBA, accompanied by the also Corresponding Academician of our corporation Pedro Espinosa, an LP with the great sonata for cello and piano by the Tenerife composer Manuel Bonín.

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In more recent times, Rafael Ramos has appeared as a soloist and as a member of small chamber groups in numerous public concerts. He was for many years a cello professor in the Madrid Superior Conservatoire and principal cello of the Madrid Symphony Orchestra. So many musicians gladly criticize other musicians but I would like to tell you all about my special experience with Rafael. In the late 1980s I had a girlfriend in Salamanca, so in the early 1990s I decided to take a sabbatical year in Spain. On arriving, and contacting with various cellists and pianists - I knew hardly anybody - most, well nearly all, were “too busy” to even meet me or even requested money for meetings! There were two great exceptions; the cellist Rafael Ramos and the pianist Jesús Amigo (later better known as a conductor). Both of them most willingly gave me their time so freely and both tried to advise me the best way to move in Spain. If it weren't for these two artists I probably would not even be in Spain now! So thanks very much, dear Rafael!!



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