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By Alejandro Postigo

Copla

Every time someone asks me what Copla is, I struggle to answer. How can I describe in a few words an art form that is so nuanced, cultural, historical, social, and at the same time, so personal? Without being asked to, I feel compelled to take on the challenge of making people understand and appreciate the little gem that is Copla. This is why I have created Copla: A Spanish Cabaret, a project that's not just a performance but a heartfelt exploration of identity, culture, and the timeless power of music. As a queer migrant artist, my work has always been deeply personal, and Copla: A Spanish Cabaret is no exception. This cabaret is about sharing a part of my heritage with audiences who may have never encountered it before. My hope is that by the end of the evening, you'll not only understand Copla but also feel its emotional resonance, just as I do.



Why Copla matters: Copla is a genre of Spanish music that first captured my imagination because of its ability to express the raw, unfiltered emotions of those who felt they didn't belong. Originating in the early 20th century, Copla became a lifeline for many during Franco's dictatorship – a voice for the repressed, the exiled, and the forgotten. These songs told stories of longing, heartbreak, and resilience, and they were a way for people to hold on to their identities and memories in the face of oppression.

Growing up in Spain I was surrounded by these songs. They were in the background, a part of family gatherings and public celebrations but also a reminder of a painful past. Copla is deeply entwined with the experiences of my ancestors, who lived through dictatorship and displacement. When I moved to the United Kingdom, I found myself missing that connection to home, to the songs that spoke to my heart. That's when I realised that Copla could be more than just a piece of my past—it could be a bridge to connect others to this rich, emotional tradition.

When I perform Copla, I'm not just singing. I'm reliving the stories of those who came before me and I'm sharing a part of myself with you.



Copla as a queer and migrant narrative

The journey of Copla didn't end with Spain's transition to democracy. In fact, it found new life in the hands of drag artists who reimagined these songs as anthems of queer resistance. They took the drama, the intensity, and the defiance of Copla and used it to push back against societal norms, claiming a space for those whose voices had been marginalised. This transformation is what inspired me to bring Copla to a new international audience, to show that these songs are not relics of the past, but living, breathing expressions of what it means to be queer, to be in-between, to be a migrant.

When I perform Copla, I'm not just singing. I'm reliving the stories of those who came before me and I'm sharing a part of myself with you. My alter ego, La Gitana, embodies this journey. She's fierce, she's unapologetic, and she's my way of honouring the resilience of queer migrants everywhere. Through La Gitana, I reinterpret Copla songs in English, breaking down linguistic barriers and inviting everyone, regardless of background, to connect with these powerful narratives.

Overcoming barriers and sharing Copla

I have been bringing Copla to British audiences since 2011, which has been both a challenge and a passion. As a migrant artist, it hasn't always been easy to find the platforms and support needed to showcase this work. Often the theatre industry here can feel very Anglo-centric, and breaking through that can be tough. But every time I see someone in the audience moved by a song, every time a conversation starts because of a performance, it's all worth it.

Copla: A Spanish Cabaret is a response to this challenge. It's about creating a space where queer migrant voices can be heard, where stories that might otherwise be overlooked can take

centre stage. Through live music, narration, and audience interaction, the show explores identity, belonging, and the beauty of being in-between cultures. It's an invitation to see the world through the eyes of those who don't always fit neatly into one box or another.

I want to make you love Copla as much as I do. I want you to feel the passion, the pain, and the joy that these songs carry. I want you to see how they've shaped my own journey as a queer migrant artist and how they continue to resonate with the experiences of so many others. Copla isn't just about nostalgia—it's about connection, resilience, and the courage to be yourself no matter the odds.

An invitation to experience Copla

So, I invite you to join me for Copla: A Spanish Cabaret. Whether you're familiar with Copla or hearing it for the first time, I promise you a night of music, storytelling, and perhaps a little bit of magic. This isn't just a performance—it's a conversation, a shared experience and I would love to have you there.

I've started this journey because I believe so strongly in the power of Copla to connect us. But the journey doesn't end here. I'm determined to keep bringing this project to more venues, to more audiences, because these stories deserve to be told and they deserve to be heard. Come and let's explore Copla together. Let's celebrate the voices that refuse to be silenced, the stories that bridge cultures, and the music that can make us feel a little less alone. I can't wait to share this journey with you.

*To find tour dates and more information about the **Copla Cabaret**, please visit www.thecoplamusical.com*





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