

# Mexico says last goodbye to legendary singer **Jose Jose**



A microphone and roses are seen on top of the coffin of late Mexican singing legend Jose Jose during a tribute at the Fine Arts Palace in Mexico City. — AFP photos

Thousands of tearful fans said a final goodbye in Mexico City Wednesday to superstar singer Jose Jose, whose death last month triggered national mourning and a family feud worthy of a telenovela. The government said 15,000 people thronged the Palace of Fine Arts in the heart of the Mexican capital to file past a gold-plated coffin and cry for “The Prince of Song,” whose velvety voice and ballads of heartbreak made him one of the most successful Latin American singers of all time.

A Mexican air force plane flew Jose Jose’s ashes—half of them, anyway—to his native Mexico City from Miami, where the musician died of complications from pancreatic cancer on September 28 at age 71. The other half remained in Florida, under a grudging deal negotiated between his eldest children, Jose Joel and Marysol, and their half-sister, Sarita, who lived in Miami with her father and initially resisted plans to bring his body back to Mexico.

In the days after their father’s death, Jose Joel and Marysol accused Sarita of hiding his body, seeking to get rich off his death and “putting on make-up” amid the family’s mourning. They went as far as to file a police report, hire a lawyer and insist on an autopsy, before the Mexican consulate in Miami and President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador himself intervened to mediate.

#### ‘He’s home now’

Under the truce brokered by the Mexican government, half of Jose Jose’s cremated remains stayed in Florida with Sarita and her mother-Cuban national Sara Salazar, who was the singer’s third wife. Jose Joel and Marysol, who were born to Jose Jose’s second wife, took the other half to Mexico. “We have brought back the heart of our beloved Prince of Song, my father. He’s home now,” said Jose Joel at the Mexico City airport, where white-gloved ushers placed Jose Jose’s coffin in a glistening vintage hearse.

Escorted by police, the hearse made its way to the Palace of Fine Arts, where the coffin was placed on a red carpet beneath a giant black-and-white picture of Jose Jose with the words “How sad it was to say goodbye”—the opening lyrics to his most famous song, “El Triste.” “He was one of a kind, unique in all the world. No one can ever, ever replace him,” said Leticia Hernandez, 58, carrying a poster with photographs of the singer, as the National Symphony Orchestra played his classic songs in the background.



The first wife of late Mexican singing legend Jose Jose, Anel Norena, left, and their children Jose Joel, second left, and Marysol, right, stand by the singer’s coffin during a tribute at the Fine Arts Palace in Mexico City.

