

DANCE REVIEW

Flamenco troupe
stokes fiery flame

Conte de Loyo and
dancers in rare form

By Margaret Putnam

Special Contributor to The Dallas Morning News

To all the dance companies that complain of Dallas' neglect, Conte de Loyo Flamenco Theatre must be something of an embarrassment.

Lacking sponsors, money, even a board of directors, the company managed Tuesday night to do what you expect from a company: dance with style and verve.

And its reward was a large, loud and enthusiastic audience at the Dallas Museum of Art's Horchow Auditorium.

It took only about two minutes for the company to establish its authority. On one side of the stage, Jason McGuire and Felipe Tomas strummed fine, complicated rhythms on their guitars, and in the center Debla Mora and Julia Alcantara undulated torsos, wrists and arms, their feet stamping a counter rhythm.

Minutes later Ms. de Loyo entered, a tall, striking woman in a form-fitting polka-dot dress, and seized attention with a mere look.

Her brief solo turned out to be a lesson in the subtleties of flamenco. Moving hands in constant curlicues around her body, she put everything else into play — feet, hips, shoulders, head, wrists — each delineating a separate, distinct and evocative pattern.

Though Ms. de Loyo is clearly the troupe's star, the other dancers were impressive, especially considering the brief time they've studied flamenco. (Some, like Julia Alcantara, for only two years.) They were deft, stylish and very musical, backed up by very able musicians, who also included percussionist Greg Beck.

It would be hard to single out

any one dance — or even one instrumental work — as outstanding, but perhaps the most unusual was Ms. Alcantara's solo, *Zambra*. Sitting on the floor with her back to the audience, she stretched her arms above her head, weaving and bending them far back with luxurious, sensual ease before finally rising to her feet.

There, she continued the curvy, undulating movements, broke abruptly into a quick fusillade of stamping, and then into a fiery whirlwind of kicks and turns. She was a small firestorm that subsided as quickly and surprisingly as it erupted.

In a memorable tribute to Lola Flores, a famous Spanish flamenco artist who died recently, Ms. de Loyo took sensuality and confidence to a new height in *Solea por Medio*. Wearing a black dress that cascaded into green ruffles along the floor, Ms. de Loyo glided and kicked and swayed across the stage, castanets clicking and murmuring in a steady torrent of sound. Her body taut and alive, she slowed down to the point that you were not sure she was moving, like oil spreading over glass. Then another torrent of feet stamping, and she disappeared from view, the guitar music trailing after her.

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Greg Watermann

STYLISH TURN: Conte de Loyo led a dramatic show Tuesday night.