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DANCE REVIEW

Ida y Vuelta, guests in their element

Flamenco company takes Venetian Room by storm

By Margaret Putnam

Special Contributor to The Dallas Morning News

Ida y Vuelta Flamenco Dance Company made an assault on the Venetian Room on Friday night, causing candles to flicker and wine to slosh gently inside goblets. The tiny tempest in crystal was nothing, however, to the tempest on the postage-stamp-size stage.

There, Julia Alcántara gave a rousing imitation of an ocean squall, kicking up whitecaps and churning with repressed fury. Dressed in yards and yards of white, she looked like a cross between a romance-novel heroine and a froufrou bride. She prowled, she stamped, she glowered, throwing up an arm impetuously so that her face was all but hidden behind full sleeves. She gathered skirts up behind her, exposing her legs, bent over in half and fell into a fit. The froufrou hair ornaments flew off

one by one as she whipped and lashed and stormed and then subsided with a final scowl.

The next onslaught came late, with Mariano Cruceta. A well-known Spanish soloist with his own company, he dominated the opening Alegrias with no effort. The four women flanking him, brightly outfitted and smoldering, couldn't begin to compete. Volatile, angular and intense, he made every articulated curl of wrist and sudden thrust of leg a fascinating drama.

But that introduction barely hinted at the fury he was capable of in a solo performed well into the program. Accompanied by percussionist Greg Beck, guitarist Jason McGuire and singer Jesus Montoya, Mr. Cruceta ascended the few steps to the stage with head down, walking slowly and deliberately like a man with much on his mind. Tall and lanky, his outfit — scarf, vest, black pants and no shirt — exaggerated his length and made even more striking the extravagant angles of legs and arms.

By the time he reached the far end of the stage, he had abandoned calm. Feet struck the floor like a torrent, moving blindingly fast. Power and anguish

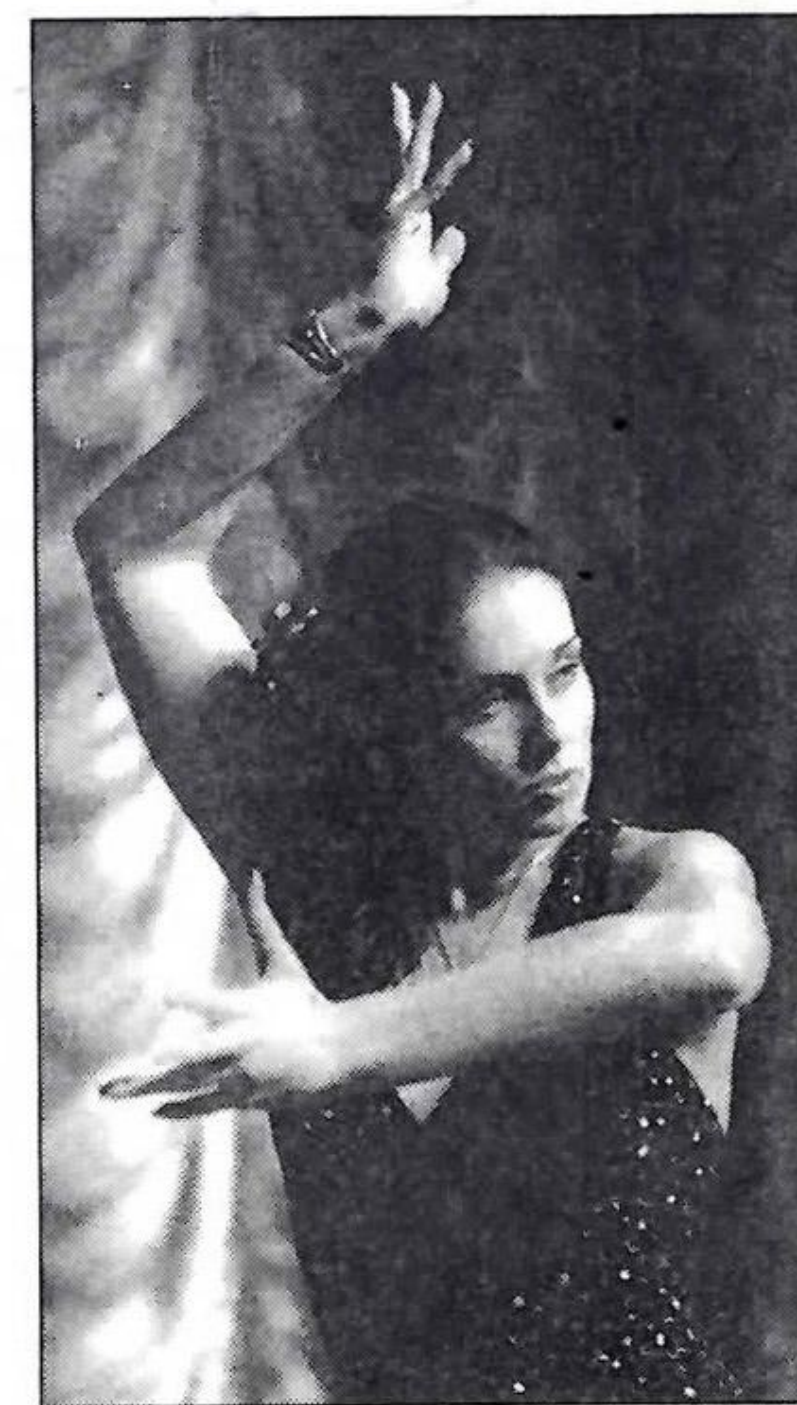
coalesced, legs shot out rapierlike, hair fell into his face, arms twisted. Then, almost as abruptly, the fury ended. Mr. Cruceta straightened up, lifted his eyes from the floor and stared impassively into space.

Again and again, he worked himself up into a passion, more raw and impetuous each time and yet always stiletto clear. The musicians egged him on, offered solace, teased and coaxed. He charged, calmed down, gave up. At the end, he was so exhausted he stood in the center of the stage, shuddering, heaving, head bent down. All he could manage was to walk to the edge, where he sat slumped over as the audience roared its admiration.

Margaret Putnam writes about dance for The Dallas Morning News.

■ **PERFORMANCE INFORMATION**

Ida y Vuelta Flamenco Dance Company, with guest artists Mariano Cruceta and Jesus Montoya, performs at 8 p.m. Saturday at the Venetian Room in the Fairmont Hotel, 1717 N. Akard. Admission \$50, includes one drink. Call 972-660-8300 or 1-888-597-STAR (toll free).



The Dallas Morning News: Kim Ritzenhaler
Julia Alcántara rode waves of fury Friday.