

Observer

Gypsies, Stomps and Beads

Most people don't watch Jennifer Lopez to check out how accurate her flamenco dance steps are. We doubt they even notice her feet. Still, Dallas flamenco dancer and promoter Julia Alcántara believes anything—even a scantily clad pop singer—that draws attention to the ancient and constantly maturing Spanish gypsy art is positive. Even better if it convinces people that dance isn't boring. "People are mistaken when they think, 'Ugh, we have to sit through some cultural event,'" Alcántara says. "We're not in a theater. You can smoke. You can drink. You can get up and move around. It's fun."

Alcántara performs with and is the artistic director of **Ida y Vuelta Flamenco Dance Company**, which, besides having local singers, dancers, drummers and guitarists, imports contemporary artists from Spain, other countries and across the United States for classes and concerts. The next concert features gypsy singer Cristo Cortes from Spain and guitarist Ricardo Diaz and dancer Monica Bermudez from San Francisco. It also serves as the first fund-raiser for Alcántara's next project, La Cantera Arts Conservatory, a center that will provide long-term opportunities for international flamenco artists, after-school programs for community kids and dance therapy for victims of domestic abuse. "I want to make a place where people who really need flamenco can get it," she says.

Along with a dance concert by **Ida y Vuelta Flamenco Dance Company** and guests, the La Cantera benefit will also feature models displaying flamenco costumes from vintage to modern, meaning a range from ruffles and long skirts to daring slits and fancy beadwork. All of which, Alcántara says, shows what a sensual and vibrant art form flamenco is. "It's a hot show," she says. "People are screaming; people are clapping and yelling. It's not a sit down and watch kind of show. Bring a date because you're going to be hot and bothered by the time you leave." —Shannon Suttler

Ida y Vuelta Flamenco Dance Company with guests will perform at 8 p.m. Saturday at Red Jacket, 3606 Greenville Ave. Tickets are \$15 for standing room or \$25 for reserved seating. Call Red Jacket at 214-823-8333.

JENNIFER



From here to Uranus: Cosmic Voyage travels the galaxy.