

DANCE REVIEW; A Rhythmic Flamenco Hybrid

By Jennifer Dunning

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Flamenco Latino's "From Jondo to Sabroso" got off to so slow a start on Saturday afternoon that it seemed dead on arrival. The opening half of the program, presented at the Duke, was devoted to flamenco that for the most part was so poorly performed it was an insult to that honorable Gypsy art.

For the second half, however, the dancers looked as if they had just been let out of school, offering a selection of happy, sizzling Latin dances choreographed by Eddie Torres, by two company members, Jenny Bascos and Yvonne Gutierrez, and by Aurora Reyes, who founded and directs the troupe with the musician Basilio Georges.

There were traces of flamenco to be seen, as well as modern dance. But rhythm pulsed through the five dancers' bodies with an ease that was missing before. One highlight was "El Yoyo," a slyly exuberant mambo danced by Ms. Reyes and Fran Chesleigh, a big shambling bear of a veteran percussionist who charmingly became a dance-floor lothario in lilting, flowing moves and flirty gestures.

Ms. Bascos was revealed as an accomplished flamenco stylist in her "Soleá por Bulerías," a crisply performed solo that successfully blended a variety of dance influences. The knife-sharp Greg de Silva came into his own in "Más Allá Que el Danzón Chá," a sexy duet performed with Ms. Gutierrez, his extra-juicy partner. And Yloy Ybarra was a treat in a teasing solo in "We Ain't Doin' Nothin' New," embodying a great deal of New York's Hispanic culture in his dancing body.

Another highlight was a musical interlude in which the demure-looking guitarist and percussionist Marta Topferova suddenly burst into husky sensuous song, subtly accompanied by the musicians Sean Kupicz, Miguel Martiz and Mr. Georges. Ms. Topferova is a Czech-born singer who has just cut a record of Spanish songs. Only in New York.