

thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo: Richard Clark, Philippe Dedryver

Flamenco Whenever, Wherever

by Caedra Scott-Flaherty

It's September, which means the roll-out of pumpkin-spiced everything, cooler nights, and the annual [Philadelphia Fringe Festival](#). For those in the city, there is an overwhelming lineup of exciting dance performances to catch throughout the month. For those who can't make it in-person, there are several shows available to stream on demand, and one to check out is the award-winning [Flamencodanza](#).

The duo performance, with choreography and dance by flamenco artist Aylin Bayaz and flamenco/Brazilian/jazz music by guitarist Raul Mannola, is a 20-minute filmed version of the 60-minute [acclaimed live show](#) which has been performed internationally since 2019.

Flamencodanza begins with Bayaz entering onto a small stage in a silvery-plum dress. Her steps are long and careful, her elbows already cocked behind her back, wrists rolling and fingers spreading open like flowers. You don't have to know much to know she is gearing up for some good old-fashioned flamenco dancing. Mannola's music is another clue: the familiar high strum and [tremolo](#) and the lightning-quick [picado](#) immediately bring to mind a dimly-lit café in Seville. Mannola sits cross-legged in a chair in real tocaor fashion, watching her feet. The bailaora doesn't look back, but her whole body seems to be listening. Her lower back arches in the classical posture as she taps and stomps in her black heels, arms twisting overhead like water snakes in a fluid [braceo](#). She adds in spins and finger snaps, and he occasionally turns his guitar into a drum. It's clear these two artists know exactly what they're doing.

One-third of the way through, the screen blacks out and comes back to Mannola playing solo. I found myself watching the spot-lit empty stage while I listened, and imagining Bayaz there, then remembering there is nothing there, then imagining myself there. It was an unexpected ghostly feeling, and a reminder that flamenco is as much (or more) a transcendent musical experience as a dance performance. Bayaz returns for the last third of the show, resuming their duet.

The energy of live performance is inevitably dulled when viewed on a screen. Would *Flamencodanza* be better in person? Of course.

Most performance is. And luckily Bayaz will be performing it live with Anthony "Tiriti" Tran on [September 21 at Prism Arts](#). But if you can't make that or want to watch an introduction to the genre by two very skilled artists, the 20-minute online version will do.

[Flamencodanza](#), Aylin Bayaz and Raul Mannola with C ARTS, Philadelphia Fringe Digital, September 1-30.

Image Description: *Aylin Bayaz stares fiercely into the camera as her arm whips behind her head, the large red and gold fringed fabric she holds billowing out in front of her, completely hiding her lower body. To her right, Raul Mannola sits in a black suit strumming a guitar, his eyes closed as he listens to the music.*

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