

Moving On

Ulrika Frank leaves Atlanta for a new home.

"After nearly five years of teaching students, entertaining audiences and inspiring flamenco across Atlanta, flamenco dancer Ulrika Frank is moving on. She heads for Washington, D.C., at the end of the summer. The Swedish flamenco dancer and instructor says her family is moving to a new home because her husband has a new job. She leaves a legacy that has reshaped Atlanta's flamenco landscape.

Frank moved to Atlanta in 1999, at a time when flamenco dance class attendance and class offerings were low. Her first teaching assignment at the Atlanta Ballet drew new students and increased the number of men and women interested in flamenco dance, music and singing.

Since then, she has taken more and more adults down the exciting road of flamenco learning in dance classes at Emory University and her own dance studio, Casita Flamenca. She spread flamenco through the city by hosting Spanish dancers to teach workshops in Atlanta, training new teachers, and instructing guitar players in addition to dancers.

In addition to teaching, Frank raised participation in flamenco in Atlanta through performances. In 2001, she founded Perla Flamenca dance company, giving her most talented students an opportunity to perform. She led the group in scores of shows at festivals and corporate events, and two major theater productions, the latest of which was a sell out at Emory University.

Frank herself took the stage with *Pasión Flamenca*, a group she helped found shortly after she arrived in Atlanta. For its regular show at Andaluz Tapas Bar, the group of musicians, a singer and Frank, was awarded "Best Entertainment in Atlanta" by Creative Loafing.

Frank met great success in producing two spectaculars in which she appeared in Atlanta theaters. She performed in several Georgia cities in *Pasión Flamenca's* ¡Vivir! in 2001 and 2002. In March of this year, she invited musicians and singers from Spain and around the United States to perform with her in *Flamenco Con Gusto* in Atlanta.

Though always entertaining, it was in the theater that Frank unleashed her finest flamenco talent. She successfully combined influences of contemporary dance and traditional flamenco. She layered dark emotion with intricate footwork, humor and elation, leaving audiences begging for more.

Atlanta will dearly miss Frank's flamenco, but the city says goodbye with mixed emotions. After all, it's impossible to hold back wishes of good luck for a woman that has brought so many great things to Atlanta.

A wave of questions about the future of some of Frank's great things followed her announcement that she would leave Atlanta. For the moment, there are no answers about what will happen with Perla Flamenca and the students under Frank's tutelage. We can only be assured that she is hatching a great plan to keep flamenco thriving long after the moving truck has pulled away."

Written by Julie Galle Baggenstoss for jaleolé in June, 2004.