



JANUARY 2004 articles | [Voice of Flamenco](#) | [Search for Spirit](#) | [Burning Dinner](#)

Voice of Flamenco

Welcome to jaleolé.com, Atlanta's voice of flamenco.
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Beginning January 27, 2004, jaleolé.com delivers news about flamenco in and around Atlanta. Connect monthly with the local flamenco community through articles focused on local issues, or share your story by becoming a contributor. jaleolé.com is the one-stop spot for everyone who is part of flamenco in Atlanta. Learn about upcoming classes and performances, read reviews of previous events, and shop for treasures in the classifieds.

jaleolé.com is the product of flamenco dancers/instructors Rina Menosky and Julie Galle Baggenstoss, who strive to connect people who share their love of the art. "It's like a warm cup of coffee. It's friendly and open, and reflects our rich flamenco community," says Menosky. In its first edition, jaleolé.com profiles a first-year flamenco dance student discovering the wonder of the art. Watch for more exciting articles, including interviews with performers and travel guides for flamenco vacation spots.

Join the jaleolé.com mailing list to be notified by e-mail when a new edition is published. mailinglist@jaleole.com

[Back to Top](#)

Search for spirit

A neophyte discovers the wonder of flamenco isn't limited to the body.

Visit a flamenco class at this time of year, and you'll feel more than the rumble of footwork and snap of skirts. You'll feel the electricity of dancers ready for a semester of new movement, music and knowledge.

First-year flamenco dance student Molly Simmons is one of those students, yearning for what lies ahead in the deep, rich art of flamenco. Less than six months into her flamenco education, Simmons says she's hooked on a dance that connects her to herself, her long-standing interest in Spanish culture and the future.

"I expected it would be like a class that I would take for a couple of months,

then I would go off and do something else. But, I really became totally absorbed by it," said Simmons.

Simmons, a Spanish major, was drawn into flamenco during classes by more than dance movements. "There's this whole cultural, historical background to it that I had no idea existed. I thought it was just traditional Spanish dance. The music also, there's a whole realm of music that is out there that I didn't know about."

Simmons found flamenco while searching for a form of exercise that had a spiritual element. "[In class], we get a lot about the spirit, the duende, behind flamenco," she explained. Expressing spirit through dance is one of the forces that draws Simmons to flamenco. Through that, she has come to better understand herself.

Simmons finds flamenco to be less rigid than other forms of dance, allowing for more individuality. "More so than other kinds of dance, flamenco seems to be about displaying your personality, and, or even flaunting it."

And she did flaunt it.

Simmons improvised dances before audiences at Flamenco Friday and a flamenco show at Balance Restaurant during the fall of 2003. She says it was the pinnacle of her first semester of flamenco lessons. "So many things that I thought would be goals that I would put off, I have already achieved to a small degree. I would have never thought I would have gotten up in front of people who I didn't know... and just made up stuff on the spot," she said.

Simmons attributes her accomplishments to an open mind and being eager to learn. Now, those same qualities push her into a second semester of flamenco dance lessons.

Simmons realizes flamenco may not be for everyone, but she encourages everyone who dreams of it to explore its unknown depth. "Without attending class, you could miss something. It could be an important part of your life and you wouldn't know it."

Flamenco classes are currently underway across Atlanta. [Contact teachers for schedules.](#)

[Back to Top](#)

Burning Dinner

Get a treat with dinner once a month in 2004.

Flamenco group Caló Gitano will appear monthly at Balance Restaurant. The group's engaging shows in 2003 paved the way for it to become a regular at the Midtown dinner spot. During their most recent performance, guitarist Fernando and dancer/singer Malita captured the audience with flamenco favorites of alegrías, farruca and more. They opened their stage to two talented musicians in the audience: Washington, D.C., based guitarist/singer Gerard Moreno and

local percussionist Jerry Fields. The expanded group treated a small crowd to an improvised jam session, complete with dancers improvising their own



tangos and bulerias.

Fernando and Malita have worked together for three years, and have decades of experience between them. Malita is a Venezuelan native who has danced flamenco for nearly 20 years. Fernando is Persian, and

has played flamenco guitar professionally in Spain and Germany. Caló Gitano's next show at Balance Restaurant will be on Thursday, February 26 at 8:30 p.m. Admission is free, and dinner reservations are strongly suggested. Call 404-870-9881 for more details.



Jerry Fields (left) and Gerard Moreno (right) join Fernando of Caló Gitano for an after-show jam session.

[Back to Archive main page](#)