

# sf flamenco

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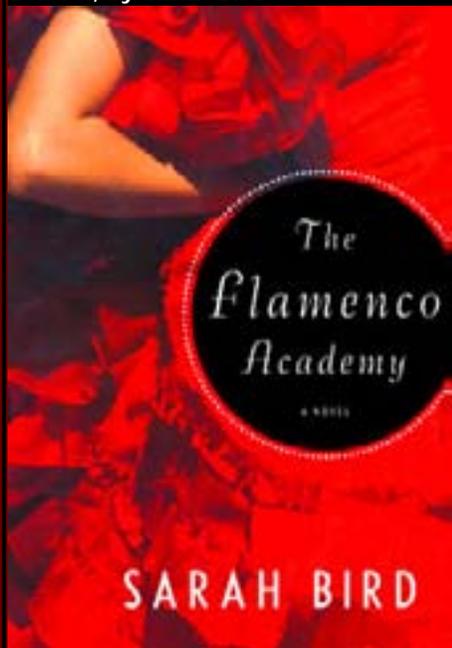
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**San Francisco Bay Area's Online Flamenco Magazine**  
**June 2006**

**THE FLAMENCO ACADEMY**  
a novel, by Sarah Bird



Knopf (400 pp.) \$25.00  
Kirkus Starred Review  
\*

The author of five previous novels (The Yokota Officers Club, 2001, etc.) that center around romance, friendship, career, art, motherhood and personal appearance here writes compellingly of a love triangle. The menage a trois consists of best friends Didi and Rae, and the hunky hypotenuse they fall for-Tomas, a flamenco guitarist. The setting is the American southwest, and the style is an incongruous but successful blend of the flippant and ultra-gorgeous romantic. The outrageous Didi, for example, describes the bonnet-

## FEATURE ARTIST

**La Tania**



## UPCOMING SHOWS

Click on the show for calendar details. Check show information with venue.

+ [May - July](#)  
[Jason Engelund, el Pintor](#)



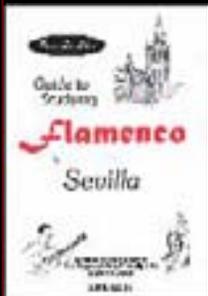
[Paintings on display now at the ThirstyBear's Flamenco Room. 661 Howard St., San Francisco.](#)

+ [June 2](#)  
[AN EVENING OF FLAMENCO in WEST MARIN brings International Flamenco Artists from the U.S, the Middle East, and Latin America. We](#)

wearing adherents of a cultish religion that Rae's mother joins as "Amish wannabes." Elsewhere, a besotted character describes Tomas by saying, "He is air and rain and gold dust and all others are mud." Rae is a shy, studious pale blonde; Didi is flamboyant, sexy, self-absorbed, ambitious and assured. The two meet when their fathers, dying of cancer, visit the same oncologist. Their mothers cope badly with their husbands' deaths, and the girls have only each other. Their friendship is the strongest and best-realized portion of the novel. Didi is magnetic-the cool friend who idles through her shift at the Pup y Taco while sitting on an overturned bucket, pulls the best finds from the thrift-store rack, charges into the hotel rooms of rock musicians. A telling moment comes when Rae bumps into the lonely, drab girl who was her high-school lab partner and thinks that "was the fate Didi saved me from." In gratitude, Rae shoulders all the work of their relationship, while Didi reaps the benefits; the reader can anticipate what will happen when Rae meets the sexiest man either has ever encountered. For Tomas's sake, both women study flamenco, the bitter, staccato gypsy art. The story concludes not with blood and tragedy but the stuff bestsellers are made of. Funny and beautifully structured to create anticipation and suspense, with lush moments of romance and a surprisingly sturdy backbone.

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Paco Sevilla's  
Guide to Studying  
Flamenco in Sevilla



Study flamenco in Spain cheaply and efficiently with Paco Sevilla's new

## ~ An interview with La Tania ~

Jason Engelund:

Hey La Tania, it's great to finally be able to do this interview. We've been talking about it for a little while now and luckily the time has come. So a lot of people don't know yet but you're now settled in San Francisco. People thought you were moving to Spain, and before that you were up north in Willits but now you're in the city. What do you have planned now that you're here in SF?

La Tania:

I'm starting out by getting my teaching going again here in the Bay Area. I had let go of the studio slots I used to have and now I'm having a hard time finding decent studio space which is making me think maybe of opening my own studio if I find an adequate space. Then I'm planning on getting things going with performing again. I have a few shows at the end of September in San Francisco and San Jose. Once I decide how to proceed with the performance aspect then I will need to find an agent to start booking performances again. Those are my plans for now.

Jason

This isn't your first time moving into San Francisco. Tell us the whole story. I enjoy hearing about it, and I know a lot of readers will. Start from the top. You were born in France, but grew up in southern Spain, then eventually moved here...

Tania

I was born in Arles France in 1963 to a California born mother, Julie and a French father, Maurice. My grandmother (my mother's mother) Judith who is a painter moved to France, Paris and Arles, to be part of the artist scene. This was in the 60s. My mother fell in love and I was born. Then Judith was attracted to Flamenco and the Gypsy culture of Southern Spain and we ended up in Moron de la Frontera, I was two years old. My grandmother bought Esparteros, a finca (farm house) on the outskirts of Moron and it became a gathering place for flamenco artists such as Diego del Gaster, Agustin Rios, Joselero de Moron, Fernanda de Utrera and many more who were attracted by the energy my grandmother created. We had horses too (they gave me the donkey though). Eventually Judith had to sell the country house and we moved to town.

My mother Julie in the meantime took up Flamenco dance and performed in Sevilla and also in Granada in Sacromonte the Gypsy quarter where we lived for a while. Then we moved back and forth from Moron to Sevilla and in between we traveled to Morocco, Senegal, Ireland, England. I can't remember the exact dates. Morocco and Senegal hold a very special place in my heart. We were living in Sevilla when we first came to the US. The move was unexpected though and was due to the death of my mother Julie, I was 13. We moved to California. I had been dancing all the while in Spain from being surrounded by Flamenco from a very young age and was invited by Isa Mura to perform with her group, I think I was 15, and did a few other things but not much.

Just before turning 17 I got an opportunity to dance in a company in Mallorca, Spain. So I moved back to Spain. I stayed for four years in

will celebrate Cante Jondo (deep song) with singer Roberto Zamora, Flamenco dancer Carola Zertuche and "La Miri", guitarist Ricardo Diaz, cellist Jessie Wolf, and percussionist Rami Ziadeh. Dance Reyes; 8 p.m. \$12 general, \$10 seniors, \$5 youth

+ June 3

Cue Productions presents

**Carolina Lugo's**  
**Brisas de España**  
Flamenco Dance Company



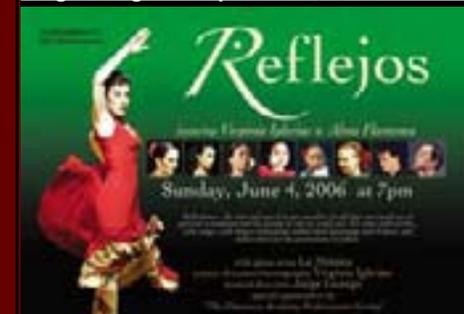
Cue Productions Live  
1835 Colfax Street  
Downtown Concord  
call 925-798-1300

Flamenco

Cabaret Nights Featuring  
Carolina Lugo's Brisas de Espana Flamenco  
Dance Company. 8:00 PM

+ June 4

Virginia Iglesias presents... REFLEJOS



\$18 General Admission / \$12 Children 12 and  
under. Virginia Iglesias artistic director,  
choreographer/dancer presents her new  
production "REFLEJOS", an evening of  
premiere works showcasing "Alma Flamenca"  
performance company. This vibrant ensemble

**Guide to Studying Flamenco in Sevilla.** This eighty-four-page book is packed with information, giving you the best deals in lodging, dining, and shopping, as well as a complete guide to dance, guitar, and cante instruction. It includes an extensive list of Internet cafes, hints on how to find telephones, buses, and restrooms, and suggestions on how to travel safely. A chapter on "Finding Your Way Around" (complete with maps) will help you plan your trip and save you a great deal of time and effort. Much of this information will be found nowhere else, and it is all explained in Paco's entertaining writing style, with lots of extra tips. This book will save you money and make your trip more fun.  
[www.flamencobooks.com](http://www.flamencobooks.com)

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**Mónica**  
**Flamenco Dance Class**



**Summer 2006**

June 19 ~ August 28, 2006

\*Excluding July 3, 2006

(10 weeks)

Mondays evenings at the

San Francisco Dance Center

6:00-7:00 p.m. ~ Intro to Flamenco

7:00-8:00 p.m. ~ Beginning II

8:00-9:00 p.m. ~ Intermediate/  
 Advanced

Mallorca. I was lucky to work with great people there like Raul, and Alberto Lorca. I danced Flamenco, Classical Spanish and many other regional dances. This gave me a really strong foundation as a dancer. When I was 23 I moved to Madrid and started working in the Tablao Canasteros. From there went to Corral de la Moreria where eventually I performed as the main attraction and Zambra where I also was a featured dancer. I worked with different companies such as Paco Pena (dancing alongside Juana Amaya), Mario Maya (where I shared the stage with Belen Maya, El Mistela, Torombo). I was invited to be in a two month run of Los Flamencos Somos Asi in Madrid billed alongside Alejandro Granados, Lola Greco, Joaquin Ruiz etc. I had the pleasure to dance to the singing of El Indio Gitano, El Cigala, Guadiana and many more. I did various commercials for French, Japanese and Dutch Television. My main teachers were Cristobal Reyes and Ciro. I also studied some with Merche Esmaralda and Tati. It was an incredibly rich time of my life, so much was going on that my whole life was about dance. I would study when I could in Amor de dios, perform every night in a tablao and rehearse with a company for some tour or production. Touring, I got to know many countries such as Greece, Italy, Holland, Japan, Mauritania etc....I don't know how I managed with so much. I was so lucky to be exposed to such great flamenco artists.

In 1992 I went to Japan for a contract and after that moved to California, little did I know how long I was going to stay. I lived in Willits, a small Northern California town and I started teaching at the San Francisco Dance Center in 1993, I believe, and did my first concert. At the time Rosa Montoya had a school and Miguel Santos was the only other teacher in the San Francisco Dance Center. I met my first agent Rhoda Teplow and started touring. I thought it was important to bring more outside influences into the Bay Area so I included in my performances wonderful artists that live here in the US such as Chuscales, Jesus Montoya, Antonio de Jerez, Pedro Cortes and Roberto Castellon and also started bringing artists from Spain to do my tours and teach workshops. Andres Marin came for 4 years in a row, then I also brought Rafael Campallo, Juan antonio Suarez "Canito" and Belen Maya among others. In 1999 I did my last big project due to the sudden death of my second agent Darlene Neel who was a very good agent and believed in my work, she was definitely a driving force. I was so overwhelmed that I couldn't seem to find the energy to start up all over again. So from then on I toured less and started doing guest appearances with other companies, such as Maria Benitez and doing a few of my own things sporadically. Since I had more freedom I decided that moving back to Spain would be a possibility which I attempted but decided it wasn't the right timing so I've settled in San Francisco.

**Jason**

Can you tell us more about your family life there? You all were really accepted and strong active members of the flamenco community there. That was the mid 1960s. What was it like to be a part of the community there?

**Tania**

I can speak more of later 60's to mid 70's. Well first of all it Franco was ruling at the time. I was a kid so I didn't notice much except that when people wanted to talk politics all the doors and shutters were well closed, it was dangerous to talk about Franco in public. Life was simple, we didn't have television or washing machines (we had to wash by hand) and sometimes no running water. The major entertainment was flamenco. In those times in the professional Flamenco World there weren't many

of dancers and musicians will carry you away with dynamic choreographies and all the passion, color and excitement of flamenco rhythms. Original musical scores by composer Jorge Liceaga. Special appearance by the "Flamenco Academy Performance Group". 40 artists fill the stage to create an unforgettable evening of music and dance!

+ June 4

The Flamenco Room at the ThirstyBear Two cuadro-style flamenco shows at 7:15 & 8:30. Featuring: Roberto Zamora, Keni El Lebrijano, Melissa Cruz and Kerensa DeMars

+ June 4

LA MIRI & AZAFRAN FLAMENCO at Sabor of Spain's Vinoteca. Join us for a passionate evening of live flamenco dance and music with Bay Area premier artists while enjoying Sabor of Spain's Vinoteca "alta cocina" tapas menu and sipping one of over 175 Spanish only wines! Bold Flamenco at its Best. Juan del Valle & Miriam "La Miri" (dancers), Katia Mejia (singer), Ricardo Diaz (guitarist)

+ June 9

Arte y Pureza Pasión por el Baile y José Roldán



Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 8:00pm, Mountain View, CA

+ June 11

The Flamenco Room at the ThirstyBear Two cuadro-style flamenco shows at 7:15 & 8:30. Featuring: Roberto Zamora, David Gutierrez, La Fibi and La Mora

+ June 18

The Flamenco Room at the ThirstyBear Two

For more information & registration ~  
(415) 330-9075  
E-mail: [MoBermudez@aol.com](mailto:MoBermudez@aol.com)  
LINK: [www.flamenco-dance.com](http://www.flamenco-dance.com)

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Miriam 'La Miri'  
Flamenco Dance Classes



Summer 2006 in Marin County  
June 20 ~ August 15, 2006  
\*Excluding July 4, 2006  
(8 weeks)  
Tuesday evenings in San Rafael  
6:30-7:30 p.m. ~ Castanet Workshop  
7:30-9:00 p.m. ~ Beg/Intermediate  
For more information & registration ~  
(415) 383-6395  
E-mail: [LaMiriFlamenco@hotmail.com](mailto:LaMiriFlamenco@hotmail.com)

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David Jenkins  
Flamenco Event Bookings  
and Guitar Instruction

foreigners dancing in Spain. My mother was able to perform and generally didn't have much of a problem except for one occasion as I recall. One anecdote I remember was when my mother was dancing in the Gypsy Caves of Granada, in Sacromonte. The tourists really loved her dancing and one time a tourist gave my mother a big tip and one of the Gypsy women did not like that an "extranjera" got such big tips and tried to pick a fight with her. Generally speaking though we got along well with the Gypsy/Flamenco scene in Spain.

Jason

I was joking around about palmas with you last we talked. As a painter, I don't necessarily have the same type of "rhythm" and I have to use my spell check even just to type it out... But whenever I take friends to a show who have never seen flamenco before or know nothing about it I usually tell them "you wouldn't take a drum set to a rock show, so please don't try to clap along." Tell us about the etiquette and social graces in flamenco. Tell us a bit about how a juerga or fiesta actually works.

Tania

A lot of people don't realize that palmas (hand clapping) is an art form too. It's the percussion of traditional flamenco. They are actually quite complicated and take a long time to do right. You need to understand how the music and singing works. Sometimes I announce to my class that we are going to learn palmas and they get surprised that they actually have to learn them. It's a very important tool if you want to be a flamenco dancer, guitarist and singer. The etiquette for Fiesta/Juerga is first of all if you don't know how to clap you must refrain from it until you learn. If you think you have the basics well enough to participate but still have insecurity then do them softly and observe somebody that really knows. The wrong kind of clapping can really interfere with the evening. I have seen many times a fiesta/juerga end because someone wasn't respecting what was going on. Another important aspect is to share. A guitarist will do a song or two but then should pass the guitar to another guitarist. The dancers should dance short and give the space to another dancer and let it go around. By observing one can learn a lot more than by interfering.

Jason

What were some of your struggles and how many years do you feel it took before you came to a comfortable space in your career? A lot of artists wonder if they can make it in the flamenco world and wonder about what they may face if they were not born into it. Any thoughts?

Tania

Believe it or not my bigger struggles began when I came to the U.S.A. While I was in Spain there was so much work that I just danced and danced, slept and ate, didn't have much worries, everything just flowed. I wasn't ambitious about money and I made a decent living so I had nothing to complain about. When I came here I realized that there weren't that many companies that were functioning strongly so I decided to do my own thing. Little by little my company grew and my life changed drastically. I learned how to use the computer and had to learn the way you do things here, it didn't help that I hadn't had a formal education. I had to start a whole new way of life. Then I realized I needed to start bringing people from Spain since the pool of artists here was limited. I believe that art needs to move and refresh itself and that was another motivation to bring new artists, not just new but good. It stirs things up. That has been a struggle but one I was happy doing, it was a challenge.

As far as getting comfortable, that never happens. If you're comfortable then you're asleep. One never stops learning, making mistakes, taking

cuadro-style flamenco shows at 7:15 & 8:30  
Featuring: Patricia Velásquez, Benjamin Woods, Carola Zertuche and Roberto Aguilar

+ June 25

The Flamenco Room at the ThirstyBear Two  
cuadro-style flamenco shows at 7:15 & 8:30  
Featuring: Patricia Velásquez, Jorge Liceaga, Virginia Iglesias and Kerensa DeMars

+ June 30

Ben "Benito" Woods: Live Flamenco Dance Show, Show times @ 7:30 & 9:20pm Avance Tapas BAR & Restaurant, San Rafael, Reservations recommened

+ July 15

Cue Productions presents

**Carolina Lugo's**  
**Brisas de España**  
Flamenco Dance Company

Featuring Dancers Carolina Lugo & Carole Arada

Saturday Night  
May 6th  
June 3rd & July 15th  
7:00 PM

For more shows & bookings information visit [www.carolinalugo.com](http://www.carolinalugo.com)

Cue Productions Live  
1835 Colfax Street  
Downtown Concord

call 925-798-1300

Flamenco

Cabaret Nights Featuring  
Carolina Lugo's Brisas de Espana Flamenco Dance Company, 8:00 PM

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Flamenco Nightlife  
The Flamenco Room



Imbue your event with the passionate colors and sepia ambience of Flamenco. Enjoy the Rhapsody of Flamenco's Mysterious Tributaries from its: East Indian, Baroque, Moroccan, Andalusian, Cuban & Jazz Origins. [Link](#)

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Virginia Iglesias  
Flamenco Academy of Dance



Just returned from Spain! All Classes Begin New Session June 5th! All classes include new technique exercises and new choreographies! Classes for beginning through advanced levels. New beginning classes offered on... Mondays, Tuesdays and Saturdays. Year round performance opportunities for level 2 and level 3 performance groups.

new challenges, changing, growing. Believe me I've been trying a long time to get comfortable and I've only gotten less comfortable.

If you question yourself whether you should be a dancer then you probably won't. Most dancers that I know have such a passion for it that they just have to do it no matter what. If you're not born into flamenco you can learn it if you want to make it your life but you're not going to learn by studying once a week. Ask a ballet dancer how much they have to study to do what they do. It is no different; many hours a day. I felt very accepted in Spain as a foreign dancer. I'm sure a lot had to do with speaking perfect Spanish and knowing the culture very well from growing up there. But it also was because I was serious about what I was doing. They will accept you if you are good. It is possible to be accepted there. If you're good at what you do you will find a place. My theory is you need to do what excites you and makes you feel good. Let's face it. Dancing is not an easy career but I wouldn't change it for anything.

Jason

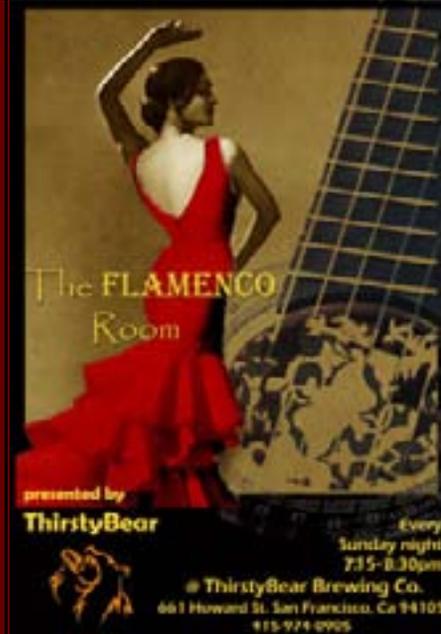
If you find the right space, what do you think you'll do with it? Will it be more of a flamenco center, or more focused on teaching? What do you want to impart to aspiring dancers?

Tania

In order to become a good professional flamenco dancer there is a lot of ground to cover, especially if you want the opportunity to dance in companies. One has to learn a well rounded technique which should include some ballet training (don't need to do points), classical Spanish, a lot of flamenco technique that should include footwork, body and arm movement, turns, palmas. Also eventually one should learn some skills with the "bata de cola" long train dress, fans and mantones (shawls). Too many students want choreography before they're even ready. Choreography in my opinion should only be used as a tool to cover different aspects of Flamenco but should be taught very slowly so one can learn the right way to do it. You can learn a really beautiful choreography but it will mean nothing unless the dancer can execute it correctly. To work in companies you must be very well rounded.

Having a place that can organize all this to give a dancer a full rounded training would be ideal. Sometimes I get students that say "oh I just want to learn the gypsy style". Somehow they think it's easier and actually it's harder for it's very personal. For somebody to dance gypsy style they have to be born into a gypsy family or have been raised with it. They start to learn from when they are in the mother's belly and as soon as they can clap they are learning the rhythms. Then the elders teach them all they know. It's a heritage and a blood line. It's so ingrained that they don't have to think about it. If you're not born into it then you need to learn the basics first. Once you have mastered your body into understanding the rhythms, movements and music then study the Gypsy style if you have the opportunity you must have a good strong foundation before you will be able to capture the essence of a particular style. In Flamenco it's very important that you develop personal style, after you have learned the skill.

To aspiring dancers, dance every day for at least two hours. The more coaching the better because practicing it wrong just makes it worse. Listen to flamenco music, not just the fun popular stuff but traditional flamenco, understanding the singing is very important. Watch videos that do more traditional style performance and analyze. Once in a while try to make a trip to Spain to study there too (it's convenient that you have a good base first). Dedicate your whole life to it and aspire to becoming a great dancer so you can really make a career of it. Oh! And leave the



Check for details and more Nightlife listings: [Link](#)

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SF Flamenco Back Issues  
Ricardo Diaz



Read interviews, essays, artist bios, see concert photos from artists and aficionados like Paco de Lucia, Yaelisa, Farruquito, Juana Amaya, Eva Yerbabuena, La Fibi, Jason McGuire, Ben Woods Flametal, Cihltli Ocampo and Ethan Margolis, Ojos de Brujo, La Tania, Juan del Gastor, Maria Bermudez, El Grillu, Paco Sevilla, Carola Zertuche, La Miri, Jocelyn Ajami and many more. [Link](#)

**Upcoming Performance! Save the date...** Flamenco Academy presents "REFLEJOS", Sunday June 4th! ODC Theater, San Francisco. Featuring "Alma Flamenca".

Link: [www.flamenco-academy.com](http://www.flamenco-academy.com)

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## Flamenco Dance Classes with La Tania



**New !! Summer Schedule 2006  
San Francisco & Berkeley**

**San Francisco Dance Center**  
Fridays June 16 - August 11 (except July 7)  
6:00 - 7:30 PM Beg/Inter Technique/  
Choreography  
7:30 - 9:00 PM Inter/Adv Technique/  
Choreography

**Berkeley**  
Black Repertory Group  
Tuesdays June 13 - August 8 (except July 4)  
6:00 - 7:30 PM Beg/Inter Technique/  
Choreography  
7:30 - 9:00 PM Inter/Adv Technique/  
Choreography  
For more Information and to register  
call (415) 738-0459  
E-mail: [latania@latania.org](mailto:latania@latania.org)  
[www.latania-flamenco.com](http://www.latania-flamenco.com)

inspired gestures/faces until you know what you're doing, the expression comes by itself with time. It's a reflection of pushing the limits once you can feel your body, your gut, the rhythm, the earth beneath your feet, the singing. In order to express emotion through dance you have to be able to control and understand what you're doing to then channel energy.

Sometimes I see dancers putting all the energy into making faces and it should go to the body first then it will surface by itself. Learning Spanish might help also before you want to interpret a Solea or Siguiriyas.

Jason

Do you have plans on bringing other artists over in the future?

Tania

That I don't know, maybe for a special project. Immigration has gotten even more difficult than it was and it's extremely hard to get visas, it's a huge hassle. But I'm here?

Jason

Thanks Tania. We'll all look forward to your upcoming work in September.

+

For more information  
see class listings on this webpage and visit:

**La Tania**  
[www.latania-flamenco.com/](http://www.latania-flamenco.com/)