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THE DENVER POST

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In a state...

10.1999

Saturday, July 10, 1999

THE DENVER POST

Flamenco Latino accents ensemble

By Glenn Giffin
Denver Post Dance Critic

BOULDER — In financial circles there is a reassertion of influence from Spain laughingly called the "reconquista." Perhaps the shoe is on the other foot in the matter of Flamenco Latino, the opening show of the Colorado Dance Festival. This group of five dancers and five musicians has outflanked the traditional flamenco form in a fusion view that incorporates rhythms and music influenced by Brazil, Cuba, Mexico — even, as the program notes have it, a "Middle Eastern" turn with "passages from Egyptian and Greek music."

Eclecticism, in short, is part of the outlook of Flamenco Latino, as the ensemble performed Friday night in the Boulder Theatre. There will be another performance tonight.

Flamenco puro could be seen in the traditional Sevillanas, one of the set form of flamenco, engagingly set for all five dancers and done with castanets. The idea of flamenco dance fusion is hardly new — Rene Heredia in Denver

has his own version — but carried to the extent that Flamenco Latino does it, well, purists will engage in their usual tut-tuttery while experimenters will applaud.

There are some drawbacks: Having so large an instrumental group, which includes two percussionists, means the flamenco form is less improvised and more choreographed. There is little room for spontaneity. Furthermore, the heavy emphasis on the percussive element tends to make the dancing forced. And flamenco traditionally includes the voice as part of the accompaniment, which proved inter-

mittent Friday.

Having said that, there were some splendid moments nonetheless. "Caballeros que Bomba Traigo Yo" introduce a splendid Puerto Rican element to the evening. "Se Fue Llorando," a merengue, traces its origin to the Dominican Republic.

The members of Flamenco Latino are less emphasized than the ensemble. The ensemble and its directors, Aurora Reyes and Basilio Georges, have embarked into uncharted territory with all the dangers — and rewards — that implies.

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