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## Best dance of 2011

### Flamenco, ballet still make the strongest showing.

By Jasmina Wellinghoff, For the Express-News

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Cloud Gate Dance Theatre will perform 'Water Stains on the Wall.' Courtesy of Cloud Gate Dance Theatre/ SA


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Ballet and flamenco continue to be the dominant dance genres in San Antonio, though visiting productions of contemporary dance and a few Latin-flavored shows based on popular dances also have contributed to the increasingly exciting local dance scene.

On the ballet front, the best news comes from Ballet San Antonio. Growing more confident and ambitious, the company has expanded its programming from two to four productions this season and ventured into producing a brand-new story ballet, "Dracula," which premiered in October.

Given the city's Spanish roots, San Antonio should be a natural center for flamenco in the U.S., and it is finally making strides in that direction with

more and more artists and companies calling the Alamo City home. This past year, there were flamenco performances virtually every month, with EntreFlamenco establishing a monthly performance schedule since May.

Below are some notable events of 2011 in chronological order.

**Complexions Contemporary Ballet**, presented by the Carver Community Cultural Center: The intensity and athleticism displayed by the dancers of this New York-based company were not only breathtaking but truly gravity defying.

**Parts of “Dance Kaleidoscope,”** San Antonio Metropolitan Ballet: Guest artists Jacob Bush and Rachel Van Buskirk performed “Me in Your Fall,” capturing the uneven arc of contemporary relationships in rough and edgy movements with shades of hip-hop; another guest duo, Aaron Smyth and Alys Shee, created an oasis of romance and magic in “Ballo Per Sei,” a gorgeous duet that retained the elegance of classical ballet while looking fresh and new. The young SA Met dancers scored, too, in Nikki Sell's “Crash.”

**Parts of “Off Center,”** Ballet San Antonio: Francisco Armstrong's “Requiem for a Dream” was one of the highlights. Danced by Saki Yabumoto and Husan Hopuy, the choreography made insightful use of partnering in both the physical and emotional sense. Resident choreographer Gabriel Zertuche also deserves mention for his “Sahara,” which seamlessly combined ballet with undulating Near Eastern moves.

**“Flamenco del Sur,”** EntreFlamenco Dance Company: To inaugurate its new performance venue on Bandera Road, the company presented this great showcase for solo virtuosity. The show also brought to town four outstanding musical artists: guitarists Ricardo Anglada and Luisma Ramos, and singers Roberto Lorente and Felix de Lola.

**Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble**, presented by the Carver Community Cultural Center: Rooted in African-American traditions, the excellent modern dance company from Denver performed several works, but the centerpiece was the educational and narrative “Divinities,” which introduced audiences to the deities and stories of the Candomblé religion practiced in areas of Brazil. It was a visual feast that was both strange and familiar.

**Antonio Arrebola and Francisco “Yiyi” Orozco in “Arte y Pasion,”** produced by Tamara Saj: Arrebola simply blew us away with

his stage presence and forceful performance. And Orozco has become a force on the local scene as singer, cajon player and musical director. San Antonio is lucky to have him.

**“Pasos y Pasiones,”** a centerpiece show of [Flamenco Fest](#), a collaboration of the [Cameo Theater](#) with the [Parks and Recreation Department's Dance Program](#): Yes, flamenco again! The municipal program's teacher and director of the Fandango youth group, [Sonya Jimenez](#), was mostly responsible for the artistic content of the show, and she did a great job with both young dancers and their adults counterparts. Her own solo was one of the most sincere, heartfelt flamenco performances in recent memory.

**“Dracula,”** Ballet San Antonio: A meticulously staged, beautifully danced new story ballet choreographed by Zertuche to the strongly descriptive score by English composer [Philip Feeney](#) was a big undertaking and a big accomplishment for Ballet San Antonio.

**“Water Stains on the Wall,”** Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan, presented by the city's [Office of Cultural Affairs](#): Inspired by Chinese calligraphy, “Water Stains” unrolled as a series of live image-meditations that, like water stains on the wall, can be read in so many ways.

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