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**TEXAS FLAMENCO ENSEMBLE PUTS THE SPOTLIGHT ON IMMIGRATION
IN THEIR NEWEST WORK, *DESPLAZADOS***

AUSTIN — 40 million people living in the U.S. today were not born here. While many read political conflict into that statistic, Olivia Chacón sees artistic potential. Chacón is Director of A'lante Flamenco, an Austin-based flamenco music and dance troupe that is presenting a new work focused on immigration.

Almost half of her 11-member company consists of immigrants to the U.S. The rest are part of another statistic: the 40,000 new arrivals that move to Austin every year.

“Our ensemble is made up of Cuban refugees, Mexican and Spanish immigrants, and people from all over Texas and California who ended up in Austin for any number of different reasons,” says Chacón. “Our new work is called *Desplazados*, which is Spanish for 'displaced.' The music and choreography are informed by the experiences of our own artists: struggles with bureaucracy, the breakup of families, rising housing costs, feelings of alienation in a new culture.”

“In many ways, flamenco's history mirrors America's own love/hate relationship with immigration. The art form was created by migrating populations—Muslim, Jewish, Gypsy and Spanish--bringing their own cultural identities and conflicts to the mix. Today flamenco is appreciated globally, but it used to be the expression of the marginalized underclass,” says Chacón.

Despite their disparate origins, A'lante's 6 musicians and 5 dancers are drawn together by their love of the flamenco. The traditional structures of the guitar, song, and dance provide a framework on which the performers elaborate and draw inspiration, while striving to communicate their own experience of displacement. In *Desplazados*, audiences will hear them tell their stories in their own words, as well as through their art.

A'lante Flamenco presents *Desplazados* April 17-26 at the Off Center Theater in Austin, Texas.

A'lante Flamenco is a young company, formed in Austin in 2011. They have impressed audiences and critics alike with their imaginative “flamenco theater” productions, including their adaptation of *The Red Shoes* in 2012 and 2014's *Prophecies*, based on the writings of Khalil Gibran. For more information on the company, see www.alanteflamenco.com.