

A SURVEY OF THE COMMUNITY • 2026

Flamenco on Vancouver Island

Community Report



Flamenco guitarists and palmeras at Victoria Flamenco Music Intensive, The Mint, Victoria, BC, June 2025.

Principal Investigator Dr. Emily Christina Murphy

Faculty of Creative & Critical Studies, UBC Okanagan

In partnership with the Flamenco de la Isla Society



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
Okanagan Campus



About the Survey

Flamenco on Vancouver Island captures the perspectives, practices, and aspirations of the flamenco community on Vancouver Island. Phase 1 — the online survey, administered by UBC Okanagan via Qualtrics — invited members of the community to share how they participate in flamenco today, how they wish to participate in the future, and what resources and supports they need.

The survey ran from November 3, 2025, to January 16, 2026. We received ninety-one total responses, and fifty-seven responses are represented here. We cleaned the data to remove duplicates and responses with no completed answers.



WHY THIS STUDY

1

To listen first. Capture how the community participates today — across performance, teaching, and social practice.

2

To document a distinctive heritage. Build a record of the styles, lineages, and gathering places that make flamenco on the Island unique.

3

To inform what comes next. This report is intended as a starting point for community reflection and discussion. Findings will be shared with the community first, while formal recommendations for the Flamenco de la Isla Society (FDLI) will be developed separately.

HOW WE RAN IT | METHODS

- Survey designed in consultation with the Flamenco de la Isla Society.
- Data anonymized before analysis — and kept anonymous in perpetuity. The Community Partner takes part in analysis but never accesses unanonymized data.
- Open-ended responses were aggregated to surface dominant vocabulary and coded into themes to capture community priorities.



STUDY TEAM

Emily Christina Murphy

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR · UBCO

Emily is a researcher at UBC Okanagan and a flamenco practitioner — one of the few researchers in Canada studying flamenco communities. With personal roots in Victoria, she sees this research as a chance to capture what is unique about flamenco on Vancouver Island. She served on the Flamenco de la Isla Society Board from 2021–2025 and remains engaged with the flamenco community. She directs the ReMedia Infrastructure for Research and Creation at UBC Okanagan.

Upma Rai

COMMUNITY PARTNER

Upma has practiced flamenco since 2011, studying baile, palmas, and cante with Veronica Maguire, Amity Skala, Denise Yeo, Lia Crowe, and Gareth Owen. With a background in languages and faculty experience at Camosun College's Massage Therapy department, she brings a curiosity about how flamenco moves across lands and makes its home in different places. She served as FDLI Co-Chair (2024–2025) and is currently a Member at Large.

Kailee Fawcett

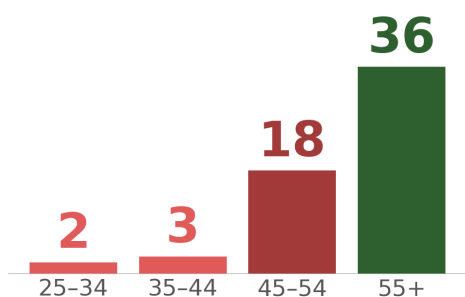
DESIGN AND PRODUCTION

Kailee Fawcett is a multidisciplinary artist whose work explores immersive media, animation, projection, graphic design, and performance. With a background in dance and theatre, she often combines interactive storytelling with live experience design, including a theatrical immersive wine tasting experience. She is a graduate of UBC Okanagan's Bachelor of Media Studies program and currently works with Dr. Murphy's ReMedia Infrastructure as the CFI Technical Manager.

02 / THE PEOPLE

The Community Respondents

We asked questions about participants' professions, age, and heritage to get a sense of who participates in flamenco on Vancouver Island. As all questions are optional, not everybody chose to respond, but a few clear trends emerge. The community consists of older adults from a range of professional and cultural backgrounds. There is a wealth of professional skill and experience in this community, and participants feel that it is highly inclusive in relation to age.



Age

The community skews older: 55+ is the largest group by a wide margin, with 45–54 next. Younger cohorts are thinly represented.

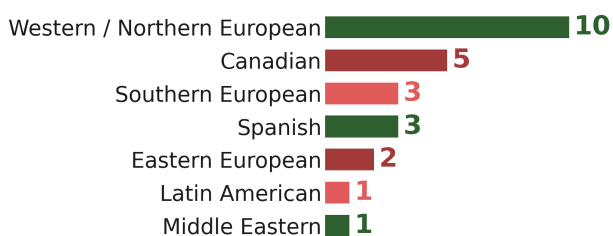
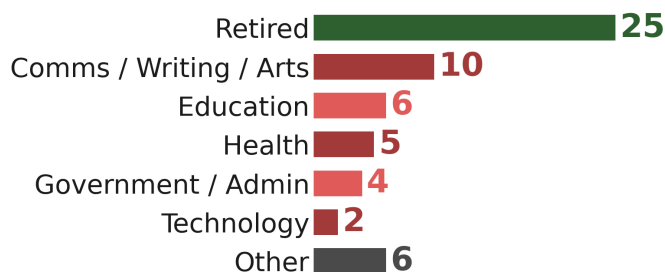
This is both a strength and an opportunity. Long-tenured members carry deep knowledge and reaching younger participants will matter for the art form's longevity and succession. Are younger people facing barriers of time, cost, or capacity that the community could help address?

“Aging is not a deterrent to becoming a better dancer. I feel like I have a longer shelf life! There is no end to the learning.” — SURVEY RESPONDENT (SHARED WITH PERMISSION)

Profession

Respondents come from across working life. Retired members are the largest group, followed by people in communications, writing, and the arts, with education, health, government, and technology also represented.

This range of professions demonstrates the rich skillset that individuals bring to the community.



Heritage

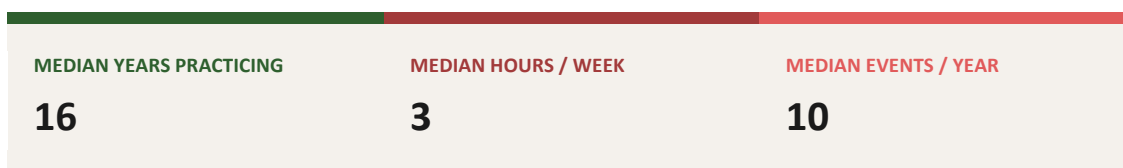
Heritage was an optional, free-text question; 25 of 57 respondents disclosed. We grouped self-identified heritage into geographical groups and reserved the response "Canadian" in its own category.

Most respondents identified Western or Northern European heritage, with smaller numbers across Southern and Eastern European, Spanish, Latin American, and Middle Eastern backgrounds. Responses did not include African, South Asian, East Asian, or First Nations heritages.



HOW MUCH PEOPLE TAKE PART

How deeply do members take part? Respondents are a remarkably engaged group, bringing years of practice to the art form, taking part most weeks of the year, and turning out for a steady stream of classes, juergas, and shows.

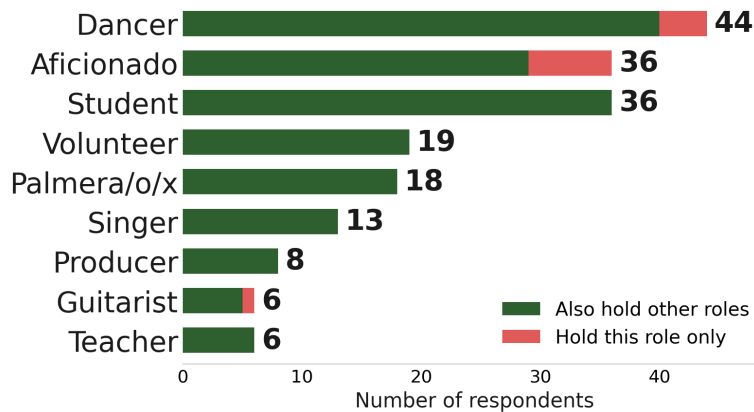




CREATIVE PARTICIPATION

Members of the flamenco community on Vancouver Island rarely practice only one art form. Of the 45 respondents to these questions, 79% participate in two or more of the flamenco arts. People who identify themselves as a Singer, Palmero/a/x, Producer, Student, Volunteer, or Teacher always participate in more than one art form. These responses suggest that participating in multiple flamenco art forms happens at all levels of expertise, from student to professional, and that the people who support the community with organizational work are also artists.

Participation Across Art Forms



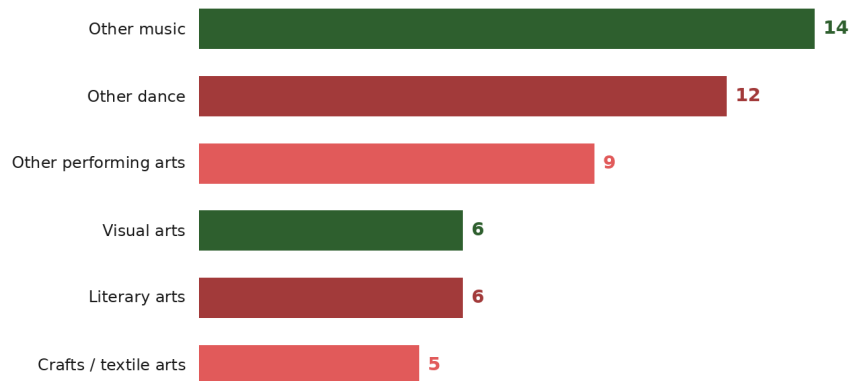
The matrix below maps the overlap between art forms. Read each row as: “if someone participates in the art form listed in the row, how often do they also participate in the art forms listed in the columns?” Producers, for instance, almost always also play palmas, while dancers are the most likely to specialize. Producers average 4.2 roles each versus 1.2 for everyone else.

Overlap Between Art Forms

	Dancer	Singer	Guitarist	Palmera	Producer	Teacher
Dancer	100%	23%	5%	34%	16%	11%
Singer	77%	100%	23%	77%	31%	23%
Guitarist	33%	50%	100%	67%	33%	33%
Palmera	83%	56%	22%	100%	44%	28%
Producer	88%	50%	25%	100%	100%	62%
Teacher	83%	50%	33%	83%	83%	100%

Participants in the flamenco community are also multidisciplinary far beyond flamenco. Respondents are active in other music, other dance, performing arts, visual arts, literary arts, and crafts — and several asked for more variety and collaboration across art forms. There is great potential here to use participants' multidisciplinary to grow the flamenco community.

Art forms beyond flamenco



03 / PERCEPTIONS

Community Reflection

This is the community as its own members describe it. The word cloud below draws on every open-ended answer in the survey — the larger the word, the more often it appeared. Community, dance, performance, and music rise to the top. The next most common words were classes, opportunities, festival, time, and support.





HOW THE COMMUNITY DESCRIBES ITSELF

When asked, *“From your perspective, what is specific or unique about flamenco on Vancouver Island?”* respondents returned three clear themes — in order of how often they appeared:

1

An inclusive community. The most common theme by far — friendly, welcoming of newcomers, open to all ages and body types, and less territorial than other Canadian flamenco scenes.

2

A highly knowledgeable community. Respondents point to a high level of skill and discernment among teachers, students, and aficionados alike.

3

Investment in generational knowledge. The Vancouver Island flamenco community has an almost 50-year lineage — the kind of intergenerational knowledge you usually only find in Spain or New Mexico.



INCLUSIVITY & ACCESSIBILITY

Asked to rate the community on a 1–10 scale, members place inclusivity highest. Accessibility and diversity sit lower — a counterpoint that points to room to grow.

In qualitative answers for this section, many respondents expressed a desire for greater aesthetic variety in performances and performance opportunity. These responses suggest that the aesthetic variety of flamenco art forms may themselves be a path to greater inclusion and diversity in the community, including through collaboration with other art forms.



“Despite being on AN ISLAND in North America, we have a vibrant, welcoming flamenco community here. We have professional, knowledgeable teachers and some incredible musicians.”

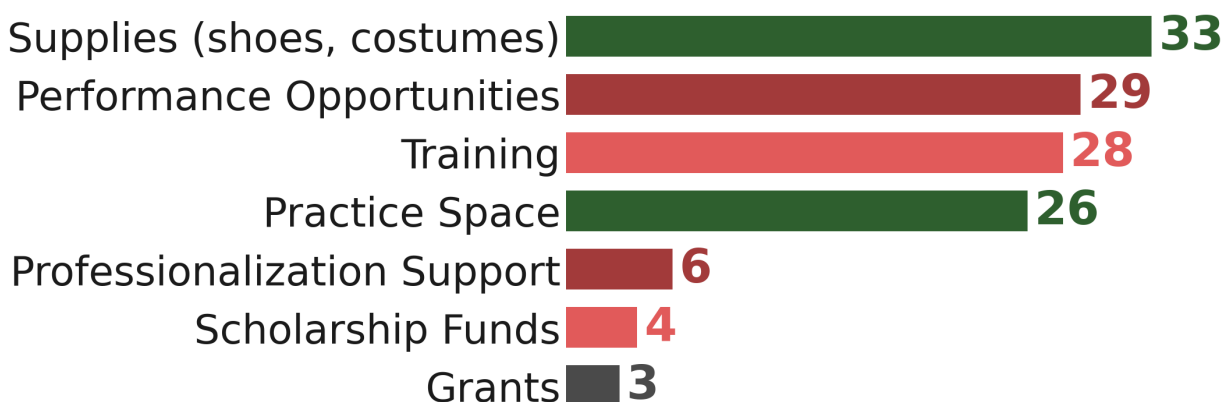
— SURVEY RESPONDENT (SHARED WITH PERMISSION)

What We Need

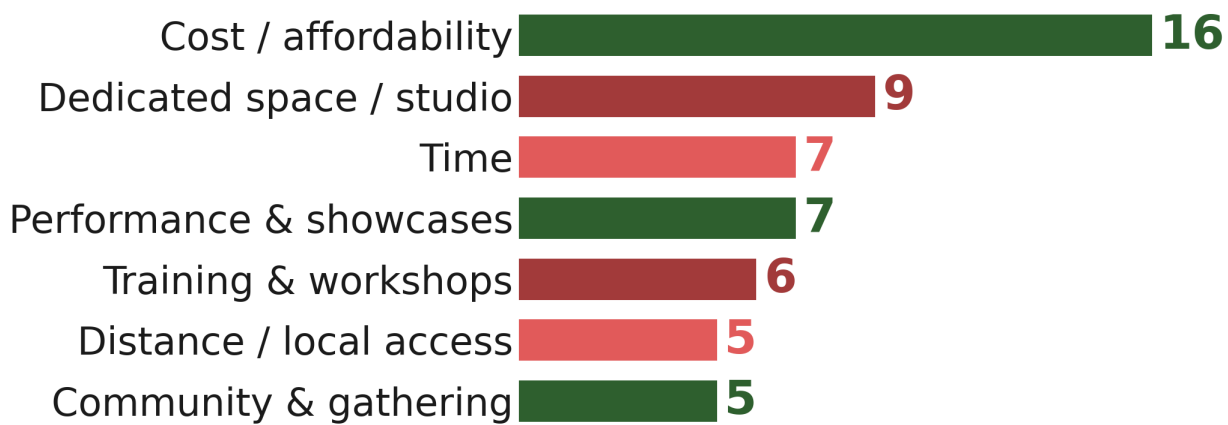
Respondents identified the resources they currently use, the barriers they face, and the supports they wish were more available. Cost emerged as the most-cited barrier by a significant margin, followed by dedicated space, time, more performance opportunities, and training.

Community members wish for resources that aren't represented in the data for usage or barriers cost and affordability leads the wish list, followed by dedicated space or studio, more performance and showcase opportunities, training, and low-stakes meet-ups.

Resources people use



Needs and Barriers



Key Findings

01

The biggest resource gaps are cost and dedicated space.

When members describe what they need and what holds them back, affordability comes up most often, closely followed by access to dedicated studio and performance space.

02

The festival is missed.

The loss of the Victoria Flamenco Festival surfaces repeatedly along with the intensive, showcases, and shared gathering moments it created for performers and audiences alike.

03

People want to perform — at every level.

From low-stakes juergas to showcases, and across flamenco and other art forms, members want more chances to take part at every level of expertise.

“Communities need education, creation support for locals, and influence from non-locals, it doesn't necessarily need to all be done by one not-for-profit because if the focus is solely on one role the community doesn't grow as much.”

— SURVEY RESPONDENT (SHARED WITH PERMISSION)

Recommendations to the Community

- 1 Expand access to space through partnership.** Expand partnerships with other art forms and identify public resources and civic programs that can support shared, affordable access to space.
- 2 Scope the return of the festival.** The festival is missed. Scope the feasibility of revamping it — including initiatives like the music intensive and performance opportunities for all levels — and map the financial and human resources a sustainable return would require.
- 3 Create opportunities at every level.** Build low-stakes and showcase opportunities side by side, so participants at every level of expertise have a place to perform, practice, and grow within the art form.
- 4 Identify key supports to offset the cost of participation.** Consider approaches that ease the financial burden of participation and support broader access.

Acknowledgements



TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Flamenco on Vancouver Island is practiced and shared on the unceded traditional territories of the Ləkʷəŋən-speaking peoples — the Songhees and Xʷsepsəm Nations — and the W̱SÁNEĆ Nations, who have stewarded these lands and waters since time immemorial. We are grateful to these Nations for their ongoing care of place, and we recognize that the artistic communities reflected in this report are guests held within their relationships, laws, and stewardship.

The flamenco arts emerge from long histories of Indigeneity and migration, and we recognize that the artistic communities reflected in this report are guests within and stewards of these histories.

This research is supported through UBC Okanagan, located on the unceded traditional territory of the syilx Okanagan Nation, to whom we likewise extend our respect and gratitude.



THANKS

Thank you to every respondent who shared their time and reflections; to the University of British Columbia Okanagan for supporting this research; and to the Flamenco de la Isla Society for its partnership in shaping this work.



SPONSOR + EQUIPMENT

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PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS



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