

CULTURAL/LITERARY STUDIES

Making Samba: A New History of Race and Music in Brazil. By Marc Hertzman. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013. Pp. 392. Illustrations. \$94.95 cloth. doi:[10.1017/tam.2016.44](https://doi.org/10.1017/tam.2016.44)

Making Samba offers a substantial, indeed superb, contribution to the already robust literature about the birth of samba in the aftermath of slavery in Brazil and its rise to the status of national rhythm by the early twentieth century. Hertzman brings in a previously unexplored set of sources and stories about musicians, with ample details of their contracts, salary structures, and negotiations; their activism in professional associations; and their manifold encounters with police, the state, and various regulatory bodies as they struggled to define and claim music as intellectual property. In doing so he moves the analysis of samba and its relationship to Brazilian racial politics, and beyond the realm of symbolic ownership or belonging. Instead, Hertzman combines cultural, legal, and economic history to uncover new perspectives on the gritty business of “making samba,” placing Afro-Brazilian musician-entrepreneurs at its center.

Hertzman traces the musical forms that became samba from the period immediately following abolition, when the state subjected popular sectors (from which most Afro-Brazilian musicians hailed) to vagrancy laws, labor regulation, and other racialized forms of social control. He follows the slow and uneven development of a regime of author’s rights in the middle decades of the century in an era of state consolidation, taking us to the resignification of samba as “pure,” noncommercial, and non-conflictual in the turbulent context of Brazil’s military dictatorship. Individual chapters move back and forth within this chronological framework to examine specific people, institutions, and processes. Across these chapters, Hertzman presents and returns to the lives of key Afro-Brazilian figures associated with samba to provide continuity and context.

Readers might come for the music, but they will come away with new insights about racial activism and “racial democracy” in modern Brazil. Among the many lasting injustices of the transatlantic slave trade is the difficulty that people of African descent—long conceived as property—have faced in claiming material and discursive ownership of their bodies and selves, of the fruits of their manual or intellectual labor, and of their individual and group representations. In particular, across the Americas, white(r) elites often treated the cultural and creative work of Afro-descendants as “raw material” for their own creations, minimizing and even ridiculing thinkers, musicians, authors, and artists of African descent as imitative and derivative, or at best, begrudgingly recognizing their efforts as evidence of naïve “natural talent.” By building his story around the practical and philosophical challenges Afro-Brazilian musicians faced as they attempted to claim legal and discursive ownership of their works—their struggles to be recognized and remunerated as authors and respected as legitimate economic and cultural stakeholders in the modern nation—Hertzman puts his finger on one of the central dynamics shaping Afro-Brazilians’ fight for full citizenship in post-abolition Brazil.

Hertzman deftly shows how Afro-Brazilian musicians sought to navigate multiple sets of behavioral expectations that severely limited their fields of action and their chances of full belonging. Musicians had to balance definitions of cultural authenticity that called for “emotional raw black music” against their own desires to be taken seriously as masterful composers and performers and to avoid the caricatured role of the “good Negro”; similarly, anti-vagrancy campaigns targeting supposedly dissolute and improvident former slaves pushed Afro-Brazilian musicians to show themselves as professional and manly, but they had to balance these performances against too much entrepreneurialism (read as greedy and inauthentic) and too much manliness (violent and dangerous).

In almost all cases, earning cultural capital and earning financial capital were mutually exclusive propositions. Hertzman shows us how different musicians charted paths through these treacherous waters, and how their particular compromises shaped their careers. Hertzman highlights agency within constraints without glorifying these musicians as individuals or as a group. Indeed, the book exposes the relentless strains that these battles for dignified self-fashioning placed on individuals, interpersonal relationships, and various attempts at professional and political unity. Afro-Brazilian musicians often reproduced among themselves the hierarchies and exclusions they experienced in relationships with white musicians and elites. More broadly, Hertzman shows how musicians of color adeptly exploited the spaces afforded by Brazil’s ideology of racial inclusion but also, intentionally or not, often reaffirmed its internal hierarchies.

In *Making Samba*, famous Afro-Brazilian musicians become not just entertainers but thinkers and activists—mediators between broader Afro-Brazilian poor, working, and middling communities and mainstream or elite sectors. As a result, the book makes an enormous contribution to an emerging picture of Rio as a place that defies (but also helps rethink) preconceived characterizations of “black activism” based primarily on the cities of Salvador da Bahia and São Paulo. Only some of these musicians, however, spoke openly about their color, race, or African descent. Frequently they intervened in public debates about samba in the less explicitly racial language of “authenticity,” of the “popular,” or of ancestral African roots.

Conceiving of these musicians as racial activists of sorts raises a perpetual question for historians of race and racial politics in Latin America: do we know that they saw themselves as “racialized” subjects, and if so, how? This is a particularly thorny question in Brazil, where a famously complex system of racial identification, celebrations of race mixture, and claims of a proud African-derived culture historically discouraged explicit discussions of race and racial discrimination. Hertzman poses and answers this question through the lens of performance, self-representation, and the politics of culture, and the evidence is compelling. He interprets musicians’ range of self-positionings as crafted responses to the racial and gendered underpinnings of culture and citizenship. These unspoken constraints came to light when musicians crossed tacit boundaries, claimed inappropriate spaces, too zealously pursued elusive rights, and were clearly reminded of

their place. In these transgressions, as much as when they worked to position themselves within ideas of mixture or “authenticity” or when they chose to embrace stereotype, Hertzman demonstrates, these musicians were engaged in meaningful racial and cultural politics that left their mark.

University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan

PAULINA L. ALBERTO

Salsa World: A Global Dance in Local Contexts. By Sydney Hutchinson. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013. Pp. viii, 229. Tables. Figures. Index. \$89.50 hardcover.
doi:[10.1017/tam.2016.45](https://doi.org/10.1017/tam.2016.45)

Over the past decades numerous monographs on Latino and Latin American popular musics such as salsa, merengue, cumbia, conjunto, and banda have analyzed the musics in relation to the cultural contexts within which they have emerged. These studies, however, have generally been attentive to the music *per se* and to the performers, with less attention paid to dancers, whose physical and social experiences can and should be distinguished from their roles as consumers of music. Sydney Hutchinson’s comprehensive anthology on salsa dancing in global and local contexts corrects this imbalance by bringing together essays on salsa dancing and salsa dance scenes throughout the Americas and beyond.

Dancing has aptly been referred to as active listening, although the social significance of dancing goes well beyond the acts of hearing and responding physically to music. Indeed, as one of Hutchinson’s sources (Judith Hamera, 2007) notes, “dance technique [is] an archive that stores information about the past for those who can read its language.” The authors in this thoughtfully compiled anthology are able to read the language of salsa dancing, and to interpret it in lucid, jargon-free prose that renders the meanings of salsa dancing accessible to general audiences, whether a reader’s interests lie primarily in the Americas as a region or in dance as performance, as popular music practice, or as indicator of how social systems are constructed in local and global contexts. Most of the authors hail from the regions they analyze, and are dancers themselves. Hutchinson is to be commended for bringing such diverse voices together, and for translating several of the Spanish language essays into English herself, thereby broadening the range of her work.

The origins and trajectories of salsa music are inevitably part of the discussions, but the authors’ primary focus is on the dance scenes that developed as dancers sought ways to organize themselves around their shared interests. Key essays, including two introductory chapters by Hutchinson, cover salsa dancing in the core locations associated with salsa music: New York, where existing Caribbean rhythms coalesced