

inspired Jewish choreographers' festival pageants in Mandate Palestine in the 1920s and 1930s (27–29, 39), because so many Jewish choreographers were influenced by German body culture, I desired a more critical engagement with the implications of understanding this corporeality, especially because Eshel discusses the Holocaust and the turning-inward of Jewish dance in Mandate Palestine during World War II (36–45). Another conversation that deserves more space is about Palestinian and non-Jewish Arab dancers (324–332). The majority of the Arab dancers Eshel discusses are based in Israel, not the West Bank or Gaza; readers would benefit from contextualization of the social conditions for Christian and Muslim Arab choreographers who are citizens of Israel. Lastly, Eshel effectively addresses queer presences in Israeli dance from the 1990s to the present. Her study would be well-served by a companion conversation about queerness, however closeted, among the dance figures she discusses in the early and mid-twentieth century.

*Dance Spreads Its Wings* significantly documents established and emerging histories of Israeli concert dance from a local perspective. Its compendium focus expands the scope of established narratives available in English and brings lesser-known dancers into the discourse. The book provides important reference material for students and researchers seeking to understand the scope of Israeli concert dance history and scholarship. Within field-level approaches to localize dance studies, having Eshel's work translated into English importantly enables conversations about Israeli concert dance in both local and global contexts.

Hannah Kosstrin  
The Ohio State University

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## DANCING WITH THE REVOLUTION: POWER, POLITICS, AND PRIVILEGE IN CUBA

By Elizabeth B. Schwall. 2021. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 320pp., 21 halftones. \$34.95 paper. ISBN: 978-1-4696-6297-8. \$95.00 hardcover. ISBN: 978-1-4696-6296-1. \$27.99 e-book. ISBN: 978-1-4696-6298-5.  
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In 1959 following his rise to power Fidel Castro stated, "Here the only thing everyone is going to have to dance with, whether they want to or not, is with the Revolution." Castro was responding to the anti-black reactions of white middle-class Cubans who feared how the desegregation process initiated by the Revolution would upend their intimate social lives. They were especially disquieted by the idea of their unwed daughters sharing a dance floor with black Cuban men, now granted open access to their previously segregated clubs. His statement intended to, on the one hand, assuage those anxieties, and on the other hand, boldly assert the necessity of political unity behind the Revolutionary project across racial lines of difference. Elizabeth B. Schwall chooses this famous quote as the epigraph to her book's introduction, rightfully positioning the resiliency and creativity of Cuban dance makers within this broader historical context of unexpected alliances, spirited vision, and forced compromises. Dance metaphors in Revolutionary political discourse evoke how different stakeholders in Cuban society nimbly navigated the spaces between official government platforms and their own aspirations. With graceful and captivating prose, Schwall brings into sharp relief the way the state mandate to "dance [...] with the revolution" cues us to how race, gender, sexuality, class, and ideology are intimately intertwined and were constantly being negotiated on and off-stage, and under high political stakes.

*Dancing With the Revolution: Power, Politics and Privilege in Cuba* is a groundbreaking history of Cuban concert dance makers' negotiations under different political administrations from 1930 to 1990. Schwall shows how this artistic population developed partnerships with government officials before the 1959 Revolution that laid the groundwork for turning the island into a world-renowned dance center.

She takes up the metaphor of dance partnership to highlight the agency of performers, teachers, choreographers, company directors and students as they creatively improvised and deftly maneuvered in a deeply unequal and rigid public sphere. The kinds of pretensions and tensions entailed in these duets are carefully unpacked along the lines of race, gender, class, and political ideology. As Schwall rigorously chronicles, pairings between dancers and pre- and post- (1959) Revolutionary governments yielded awesome cultural developments, lasting institutions, and audacious social dialogue, as well as pain, struggle, failure, frustration, and disappointment.

The first two chapters focus on the period before the 1959 Cuban Revolution with a spotlight on how ballet rose to prominence and how race and nation were performed through dance from the 1930s to the 1950s. The rest of the book traces continuity and change after 1959. Chapter Three examines the way race and class figured into the institutionalization of dance in the 1960s. Chapter Four analyzes how dance makers negotiated state-sanctioned homophobia and patriarchal gender norms. Chapter Five details how dance was reeled into mass education campaigns in the 1960 and 1970s. Chapter Six maps how dance became a lucrative export as part of Cuba's internationalist politics. Finally, Chapter Seven engages dance experimentations by a "restless" younger generation mirroring the larger reckoning with Revolutionary missteps leading up to the 1990s.

The making of Cuban concert dance, Schwall forcefully argues, is not a simple story of revolutionary triumph. Across the chapters she shows that dancers did not merely follow in step with state dictates but improvised and charted new paths of their own accord. Uncovering the agency of dancers within Cuban political history who, in the words of famed ballerina Alicia Alonso, "proved their worth 'to all the governments,'" is certainly one of the book's primary contributions (9). "Through choreography and advocacy, dance makers reframed the construct [of the "true revolutionary"] to include dancers with diverse desires" (127). To be sure, dance makers were not a monolith. Alonso represents the most privileged subset—privileged socially and in scholarship—of a much broader dancing populous. *Dancing With the Revolution* contextualizes the

exemplary trajectory of Cuban ballet, introduces the reader to understudied figures (like rumba dancer, Julián Valdés, known as Chamba, who coached Alonso), and tells us how and why their movements yielded unequal social effects and recognition.

The research process itself was characteristic of a unique historical moment in US-Cuba relations, under the Obama administration, when there was more diplomatic goodwill that supported cultural and educational exchange. As a result, Schwall took great advantage of unprecedented access to documents that subsequent changes in US foreign policy thwarted or foreclosed. Primary resources were culled from archives in Cuba, the United States, and Puerto Rico. These include previously unanalyzed archives of the Cuban Ministry of Culture as well as the Cuban Heritage collection in Miami, original oral histories of Cuban dance makers in Cuba and abroad, and their personal archives. A dance practitioner herself, her research methodology was enriched by ballet, modern, and folkloric dance lessons imparted by some of the subjects and in the institutions and about which she writes. While she does not discuss how her own embodiment shaped her interpretation of the archives, what comes through on the page is a deep respect for the technical demands of the craft and a nuanced sensitivity around the politics of representation with which the dancers themselves contended.

*Dancing with the Revolution* is innovative on multiple fronts. Firstly, the book brings dance studies to bear on Cuban history, and vice versa. As Schwall rightly states upfront, rather than using history as a backdrop in service of contextualizing dance repertory or form, she demonstrates how dance makers were imbricated in broader social change and institution building (8). Notably, the book's singularity within Cuban Studies is represented by the fact that *Dancing with the Revolution* stands as the first and only monograph dedicated to dance published in the renowned "Envisioning Cuba" series at University of North Carolina Press. For academic fields that can too easily take dancers for granted as two-dimensional cultural symbols—moving bodies that merely represent or resist the political postures of the state—Schwall provides an illuminating vantage of these artists as complex historical actors.

Scholars of Latin American studies and history alike are sure to come to a different understanding of what they think they already know about Cuban (cultural) politics.

Secondly, the book stands out from traditional scholarly treatments of dance focused on a single genre. Schwall's analytical treatment of not one, not two, but all three forms of concert dance (ballet, modern, and folkloric) is ambitious, and comes with unique challenges. Among them, how to avoid the pitfalls of the comparative method that efface the specificity of one genre on its own terms; how to sustain the attention of readers whose primary interests may lay in one genre over another; how to not sacrifice depth of analysis when covering such ample ground? She rises to each challenge masterfully and with care. Indeed, *Dancing with the Revolution* proves that this approach is not only possible but vital. It is precisely the book's breadth that equips the study to uncover unique insights about how ballet, modern, and folkloric dance formed and developed in relation. Other dance scholars have stressed how black working-class aesthetics and forms rose to prominence as part of the Revolution's anti-imperial project (Daniel 1995), while Schwall reveals how, for example, folkloric dancers themselves fared monetarily relative to their professional counterparts in ballet and, to a lesser degree, modern dance companies (80-87). This tri-pronged approach to the study of concert dance allows Schwall to support one of her other main contributions: that even under a revolutionary regime organized around the principals of egalitarianism, and one that valued art as a public good, not all dance forms were treated equal. Moreover, ingrained anti-blackness shored up balletic prominence. Her analysis would be fruitfully read alongside Lester Tomé's (2017) research on Cuban ballet dancers' positioning within the state's political campaigns, and their gendered, raced, and classed implications.

Just as Schwall attends to each dance genre substantively, and with careful balance, she brings the same judiciousness to her intersectional analysis of race, gender, sexuality, class and political ideology. For example, in Chapter Four she details how ballet, modern, and folkloric dance companies were positioned differently in their partnership with a homophobic state. "Juxtaposing the experiences of mostly black folkloric dancers to those of mostly

white ballet dancers reveals that race and class prejudice intersected with discrimination based on sexual orientation as folkloric dancers experienced greater restrictions on their travel than ballet counterparts" (101). While Tomé foregrounds the way Cuban ballet's symbolism married with state agendas, Schwall explores how the ephemerality and ambiguity of dance as a nonverbal form of expression enabled Cuban modern dancers to make bold choreographic statements about race and gender, furthering the very conversations that were censored in public discourse. Schwall's argument that dance was a medium for otherwise barred political expression is nuanced through the virtuosity of this intersectional lens. She distinguishes how race and gender ideologies constricted the range of meanings government officials ascribed to the performance of certain bodies both on and off stage. Any "ambiguity" that the aesthetic form might have afforded had its social limits. In other words, "dance makers suffered a lot but also got away with a lot..." (99). A simple rubric of resistance or allegiance misses the complex reality of the multiple ways that variously raced and gendered subjects commanded the stage by stepping into the representational role of revolutionary excellence allotted to them.

Scholars of African diasporic dance will be intrigued by the second chapter's discussion of the invisibilized role Katherine Dunham played in Cuban modern dance in the 1940s and 50s. "Racialized exclusions and national ideologies erased Dunham, like other African-descended dancers [...], from Cuban dance histories" (55). Indeed, the hegemonic story of how Cuban modern dance came to be is oriented around the trajectory of white Cuban-born protagonists, like Ramiro Guerra, influenced by white (US) American-born protagonists, like Martha Graham. Schwall is able to contextualize the social significance of the professional opportunities that Dunham provided dancers of African descent, like Irma Obermeyer, who were unfulfilled by the limited options available to them in pre-Revolutionary Cuba. Then, in Chapter Three, she tracks the trajectory of these same dancers after 1959, showing their vital role in important innovations in Cuban modern dance. By uncovering these transnational networks forged between women of African descent, Schwall provides an important

black feminist critique and revision of (Latin/US-) American modern dance history.

Forced to contend with precarious institutional support, ever contingent upon competing geo-political interests, innovative cultural/knowledge production in and about Cuba is accompanied by many frustrations and disappointment. In a sense, Schwall's offering exemplifies what artists/scholars on both sides of the Florida Strait continue to struggle for: space to push forward the kinds of conversations across difference that are not openly had in other mediums. At the same time, the struggles with state partnerships chronicled therein might incite more curiosity about dancing communities outside its scope. Particularly, those dance makers whose innovations can be credited to the extent that they have remained circumspect about the state as a reliable partner. General dance studies readers and Latin American dance studies readers, specifically, will certainly gain a deeper appreciation for the art of continuing to dance with state partners as they change over time, and what careful comparisons can glean about the unequal footings within revolution.

Maya J. Berry

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

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### *Dancing on Violent Ground: Utopia as Dispossession in Euro-American Theater Dance*

by Arabella Stanger. 2021. Evanston: Northwestern University Press. 248 pp., 12 b-w images. \$34.95 paper. ISBN 9780810144088 \$99.95 hardcover. ISBN 9780810144095.  
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How have idealistic visions and descriptions of canonical, Euro-American theater dance operated to conceal violence? Merging dance, critical race, critical geography, and Indigenous studies,

Arabella Stanger's *Dancing on Violent Ground: Utopia as Dispossession in Euro-American Theater Dance* powerfully considers this question. The book intervenes in academic and mainstream discourses by delineating how people in power have employed Euro-American theater dance on contested lands to serve and further dominant interests. Stanger demonstrates that utopian understandings of Euro-American theater dance exclude alternative perspectives that challenge these choreographed idealities by revealing "dance as dispossession" (6) and the material consequences that negatively impact human life. By focusing on theater dance performances that occur in Europe and the US, Stanger importantly illustrates how such eclipsing of violence operates in different contexts and beyond national borders. The book makes a much needed and timely intervention at a moment when the enduring injustices of imperialism and colonization—in Europe and the Americas—are acutely apparent, and many institutions and organizations are reckoning with how to ethically continue their work.

Stanger opens the book with an excerpt from Ruth Wilson Gilmore's *Geographies of Racial Capitalism*: "Being a good geographer means going to look and see, and then to challenge oneself in the description of what one has seen" (Gilmore 2020). Building on Gilmore's words, Stanger effectively argues that a comprehensive understanding of canonical, Euro-American dance must account for the historical, political, and material contexts of the places where the dancing occurs. Stanger proposes the framework of "violent ground," which she defines as "the material conditions of struggle, conflict, and domination that make possible the utopianisms of these choreographic cultures but are dissimulated by them" (4). This concept is particularly useful given that dominant structures and discourses, including those pertaining to canonical scholarship and dance on stage, continue to construct Euro-American practices and even enduring colonization, as normative and positive. Descriptors often attached to Euro-American projects that hide this violence include: "benevolent," "democratic," "innocent," "pioneering," and "progressive."

The framework "violent ground" also highlights how land is frequently at the heart of these conflicts, or in the words of esteemed settler