

Cuerpo y cultura. Las músicas "mulatas" y la subversión del baile.

Body and culture. "Mulatto" music and the Subversion of Dance



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Publisher: [Iberoamericana Editorial Vervuert](#) [2]

Year of Publication: 2009

Pages: 394

ISBN: 9788484894216

Genre: Social Science and religion

AUTUMN

2009

Season: AUTUMN 2009

"Dance, drink and gamble" was the motto used by some governors of colonial Spain to placate their Caribbean subordinates' desires for freedom and independence. Of course, this was a strategy that only worked to an extent; many of the slave revolts from the colonial period began, precisely, during dancing celebrations. "Canto y baile," song and dance – two eternally connected art forms that seem to simultaneously lie in contradiction: Senseless amusement or a celebration of freedom? Alienating pastime or a ritualistic expression of collective memory? Like music, the language expressed through dance is universal. In every society studied by historians and anthropologists, there has been documentation of some form of dance. Experts turn to the historical roots of this universal practice to explain how the idea of 'dance' is perceived and carried out across a diversity of geographic locations and ages. The mélange of universalism and historical singularity not only provides 'dance' with the capacity to foster dialogue, but also opens a wide range of subversive possibilities in a world of continuous growth and globalization.

Quintero asserts the role of dance in cultivating the social identity of the Caribbean nations. He analyzes Afro-american musicality while presenting a social history of "mulatto" harmony and dance, beginning with the first contradanzas and habaneras of the 19th century up until the turn of the 21st century and the advent of the reggaetón. The author gives a panoramic depiction that fits in the general context of Latin America: envisioning the origins of baile en pareja (dancing in pairs), the harmony of vocal improvisation, and the soneo and struggle for the supremacy of the salsa in the midst of its globalization as an Afro-latino cultural "product" as it arose from Caribbean emigrants residing in the United States.

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