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Influences Of Spanish And/Or African Dance On Five Character Dances Of North, Central, And South America

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INFLUENCES OF SPANISH
AND / OR AFRICAN DANCE
ON FIVE CHARACTER DANCES
OF NORTH, CENTRAL,
AND SOUTH AMERICA

CECILIA VELASCO SERRA

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INFLUENCES OF SPANISH AND/OR AFRICAN DANCE ON FIVE
CHARACTER DANCES OF NORTH, CENTRAL, AND SOUTH AMERICA
(TITLE)

BY

CECILIA VELASCO SERRA

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1974

YEAR

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The writer wishes to express her sincere appreciation to Dr. Harriet Yingling, Advisor, Dr. Dorothy Hart, and Ms. Alice Stoughton who served as members of the writer's committee.

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312642

To Alice

PREFACE

It was apparent to the writer that the cultures of Spain and Africa had great influence on the general cultures of the Americas, but initially it was not known how much both cultures had influenced the dance of the Latin American countries.

As a native of Bolivia, the writer was exposed to many folk, ethnic, and ballroom dances from Latin American countries. It was not until actual research was done, however, that the history and mythology of the dances, which were an accepted part of life, became apparent. It was at that time that the writer developed the desire to share this cultural knowledge by choreographing character dances which showed the the influences, relationships, and symbolism of these Latin American dances.

The content of this study is divided into five chapters. Chapter I deals with the statement of the problem, limitations and terminology. Chapter II deals with the significant characteristics of Spanish and African dance. The purpose of this chapter is to bring out the important points which played a crucial role in the development of dance in the Americas. Chapter III deals with particular dances found in five countries - Cuba, Colombia, Bolivia, Argentina, and United States. These five countries were chosen because the writer was exposed to the basic steps and rhythms of dances peculiar to each country. In Chapter IV, the methodology of the study and of the performance is explained. It also contains a section of pictures from the concert, which enables the reader to see some of the costuming and choreography. Chapter V

gives a brief summary, conclusions, and recommendations based upon the research.

The writer's deepest desire is that this will help other interested researchers, dancers, and readers gain a better knowledge and understanding of the dance in North, Central, and South America.

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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It has been frequently mentioned in Biblical and historical passages that human emotions were expressed through forms of dance. These forms of dance expressed emotions such as joy, grief, and freedom, and commemorated important moments such as birth, marriage, death, etc.

On no occasion in the life of primitive peoples could the dance be dispensed with. Birth, circumcision, and the consecration of maidens, marriage and death, planting and harvest, the celebrations of chieftains, hunting, war and feasts, the changes of the moon, and sickness--for all of these the dance is needed.¹

The symbolism and mythology of the dance in many cases has been lost with the passage of time. For this reason, the researcher felt a need to re-emphasize the historical and cultural meaning originally attached to some of the folk dances of the Americas.

This study traces and demonstrates both the Spanish and African influence on the dance of the Americas. It deals with two types of Spanish dance (Flamenco and Jota), and with significant characteristics of African dance, in order to ascertain the historical and cultural aspects of each particular type. Through the actual choreography, staging, and performance of character dances, the three styles of dance were related to dances of Cuba, Colombia, Bolivia, Argentina,

¹Curt Sachs, World History of the Dance (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1937), pp. 4-5.

and United States. Relationships between the dances, their mythology, and their history were demonstrated.

LIMITATIONS

Much general research has been done on the Spanish and African cultures; however, since this study was involved with dance, the sources of information were somewhat limited, because dance in these areas has often been overlooked by dance researchers.

Lack of literature regarding Latin American folk dance limited this particular phase of research even further. Agnes De Mille states that "dancing has a history as old as the race of man, but most ancient dancing has been lost because there was no way of recording movement."²

This study was also limited by the background of the people from Eastern Illinois University Modern Dance Club who participated in the performance portion of the study, and by the length of time allotted for the training of the performers.

TERMINOLOGY

The frequent use of foreign words and terminology made it necessary for a glossary of words to be included in this study for the benefit of the reader. (See p. 44)

²Agnes De Mille, The Book of the Dance (New York: Golden Press, 1963), p. 32.

CHAPTER II

SIGNIFICANT CHARACTERISTICS OF SPANISH AND AFRICAN DANCE

Spain and Africa have a vast diversity of dances depending upon the region, the environment, the individual's social position, and the occasion.

Because all types of dances could not be included, this chapter deals only with two types of Spanish dance - Jota and Flamenco - and with significant characteristics of African dance which were thought to have had some influence on the dance of the Americas.

HISTORY OF THE FLAMENCO DANCE

Contrary to a widespread belief, the Spanish gypsies were not the creators of the mysterious art called flamenco. Flamenco is a music that has spread to southern Spain from many sources. It has been traced, through numerous theories and much stimulated guesswork, to such diffuse countries as Morocco, Egypt, India, Pakistan, Israel, and to the East and Far West in general Regardless of its origin, however, credit has to be given to the gypsies, flamenco's main perpetuators and interpreters, and the Andaluces (Andalucians) of southern Spain, for the development of flamenco to the position it holds today as one of the world's most intricate and moving arts.³

During the reign of the Moors, various sacred dances were performed as a form of entertainment for the royalty. During that time many changes in these dances occurred, such as allowing more movement of the arms and torso. After the Moors were forced out of Spain, all

³Donn E. Pohren, The Art of Flamenco (Spain: Editorial Jerez Industrial, 1962), p. 39.

religious connotations in the dance were lost. The dances were not only banned from the church because of their increasing sensuality and "sinful movement", but at one time persecutions were carried out against interpreters of certain dances regardless of where they were danced. It was then that the dance went underground, becoming an art of the "lawless elements" of society.

Great numbers of gypsies were driven out of the main cities of Spain and became outlawed people as a result of the persecutions.

The main form of flamenco, the cante jondo, expressed the suffering of these outlawed people, who through the years were condemned to serve in the galleys, in chain gangs, and in the Spanish army in America, were prohibited to talk their own language, and how, during one prolonged period, suffered the death penalty, often by torture, for just belonging to a wandering or outlawed band. Somehow their spirit remained unbroken and their mode of expression - their flamenco - developed to magnificent heights through the centuries.⁴

Symbolism

The techniques and movements of the Flamenco are not symbolic in themselves, and in a solo dance no actual story is being told. The dancer utilizes the techniques and movements of his dance to help him express his inner self at the time he is dancing. (Picture 5, p. 27)

Although there is no real symbolic meaning in the dance, one crucial aspect must be present:

The true flamenco artist may, or may not, have an outstanding technique, but it is imperative that he possess the abilities of identifying himself with the duende (soul) that he is unfolding, and, of equal importance, of being able to transmit this emotion, or series of emotions, to his audience.⁵

⁴Ibid., p. 41.

⁵Ibid., p. 44.

The Art of Flamenco

It has not always been understood, that the Andalucians have created an art in the very execution of the folk dance. As La Meri states:

They dance for their partners, but perform art designs for the audience that are without equal in the world; they dance for their partners, but captivate their audience completely; they dance for sheer enthusiasm, yet execute a choreographic design that puts to shame many professional choreographers; they dance for sheer enthusiasm, yet achieve a rhythmic counterpoint that challenges the best musicians; they have created a dance in the village square in alpargatas (peasant sandals), and themselves refined it to a theater art in their own patios!⁶

The Flamenco Dance Today

It was not until the formation of the large theatrical companies in the late 1920's and 1930's that the Flamenco dance began to expand radically in scope. By the 1950's however, the dance had vastly expanded its repertoire in a variety of ways.

Some of the crucial elements found in the Flamenco dance today are: the guitar which plays a very important role since it is the most motivating factor for the dancer; and the jaleo, or clapping, which serves as a motivating factor to the dancer and as an accompaniment to the guitar. (Picture 6, p. 27)

As the dance changed and progressed some other elements were added, among which was the increasing use of the castanets (picture 7, 8, p. 28). This instrument, formerly not used, seriously hindered the proper movement of the arms and hands. (Purists consider that those who use castanets do so to cover up mediocre arms and hands). This

⁶La Meri, Spanish Dancing (New York: A. S. Barnes & Company, 1948), p. 61.

new element, however, added new scope to the dance.

Another element that brought change was the tendency of the bailaoras (female Flamenco dancers) to go beyond their more conservative, feminine footwork, at the expense of the upper torso, arms and hand. This brought them into direct competition with the men, and turned much of the Flamenco dance into a non-esthetic race towards high-speed, intricate, overly-extended footwork. The above modification and a confusion of the sexes in dances has gone hand-in-hand.

Today many female dancers dress in male clothing and emphasize almost nothing but footwork and brusqueness in their dance. And conversely; many male dancers look everything but masculine when dancing. The condition that men be men and women, women, or at least appear to be is an absolute necessity in the baile flamenco, if it is to be effective.⁷

JOTA ARAGONEZA

The Jota Aragoneza is a very well-known dance in the northern part of Spain. A very lively dance, it is performed by both young and old, men and women. Unlike the Flamenco, the Jota does not require the dancer to have the ability to identify with the "duende". This dance has no pretension to grace; instead, it is hardy, athletic and humorous. The accompanying lyrics also have this hardy and humorous quality.⁸

The Origin of the Dance

Like the Flamenco, the origin of the Jota has been attributed to various sources. Some writers claim that it is of Basque origin

⁷Donn E. Pohren, Lives and Legends of Flamenco: A Bibliographical History (Spain: Society of Spanish Studies, 1964), p. 179.

⁸La Meri, Spanish Dancing (New York: A. S. Barnes & Company, 1948), p. 43.

taking the name from an instrument called "jotu". Other believe that it came from the Canary Islands; while other claim that the name comes from the word "sotar" (to jump). While dancing the Jota:

The men carry their arms squared off with the elbows as high as the shoulders. The women generally carry their a little lower. Performed on village squares or threshing floor, the music is played almost incessantly and the dancers spring up to dance as long as their energy permits, ceasing only when another livelier couple or soloist begins. It is said that the Jota, 'the fastest dance in the world', is less a dance than an endurance contest.⁹ (Pictures 1,2, p. 25)

The Jota as an Art Form

The Jota is one of the folk dances that is found in almost every Spanish repertoire. Because of its pleasant and delightful arm, torso, and leg carriage, many artists have interpreted this vigorous folk dance; they have preserved the basic quality and character of the steps, while often making them more clearly enunciated and exaggerated. (Pictures 3,4, p. 26)

AFRICAN DANCE

Dance is the loyal companion of the African native from cradle to grave. It embraces the fundamental actions, problems, and sentiments of life. It tells a story of anxiety and hopes, dreams and crude reality. And it tells it eloquently, spontaneously; and beautifully.¹⁰

Africa is one of the few places where primitive dance is still found, and such dance probably has not varied greatly from that performed for thousands of years. Each African culture has its own characteristic style and formation. Accompaniment and participation in the dance

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Dominique Darbois, African Dance (Artia Prague, Printed in Czechoslovakia, 1962), p. 7.

may vary. However, according to Dolores Kirton Cayou, there are some main characteristics that can describe traditional African dance:

1) the use of bent knees, with the body close to the earth excluding those times, of course, when the dancer is jumping; 2) the tendency to use the foot as a whole in that the weight is shifted immediately from one foot to the other; 3) the isolation of body parts in movement, such as the head, shoulders, hips, rib cage, etc., 4) the use of rhythmically complex and syncopated movement; 5) carrying as many as two or three rhythms in the body at once - polyrhythm; 6) combining music and dance as a single expression, one feeding the other; 7) individualism of style within a group style, and 8) functionalism - becoming what you dance - the art of real life.¹¹

The use of the mask and face painting is also another characteristic which played a very important role. (Picture 17, p. 33) Ruby Gleaves Bateman states that among all peoples and nations, at some time during their development, the use of the mask has been an outstanding feature of their dancing. Primitive people dance in a mask for the common purpose of dispelling demons, or mourning their dead, or praying, and of dramatizing their religious teachings. Although the designs and materials varied according to the race and climate, these elements expressed the peoples' methods of war and hunting, and their ideas of social life.¹²

Dance and religion go hand-in-hand in many of these primitive cultures. Wincie Ann Carruth found that:

in all the stages of the development of religion, the dance has been used to express the religious feelings of the people. It has offered to religion a medium through which to express this feeling. Religion on the other hand, has influenced the form of the dance used in the worship of

¹¹ Dolores Kirton Cayou, Modern Jazz Dance (California: National Press Books, 1971), p. 4.

¹² Ruby Cleaves Bateman, "The Mask and Its Significance in the Dance", Unpublished Master's Thesis (Louisiana: George Peabody College for Teachers, 1936), Abstract.

spirits, many gods, anthropomorphic gods, and a Supreme Being, offering them opportunity of expressing feelings through rhythmic movements.¹³

African Dance Today

Today, we find professional African Dance Companies whose desire is to re-create and preserve the ritual and festive dances. Their aim is to share with the world traditional dances and those cultural aspects which many people have never seen or heard.

Usually these dances are kept as pure as possible, preserving the traditional meaning, costuming, and execution of steps. However, in order to be shown on stage, much African dance has to be stylized and choreographed according to the space and props available, and the number of dancers, and musicians.

¹³Wincie Ann Carruth, "The Significance of Religion in the Dance", Unpublished Master's Thesis (Louisiana: George Peabody College, 1937), p. 1.

CHAPTER III

DANCE IN THE AMERICAS

Certain parts of the Americas have been influenced more by the Spanish or Africans than other parts of the hemisphere. As an example, the Caribbean Islands were the key ports for the sale and importation of slaves to the southern parts of the United States such as New Orleans and Virginia, and the northern parts of South America such as Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, and the British Guineas. Thus, African influence was strong. The southern part of South America, however, has been influenced more by the Spanish through the conquistadores (conquistadors) who came to the new world for the purpose of finding wealth, new land, and spices.

The dance in the Americas is, then, a reflection of the diffusion of peoples, and through their dance they are able to preserve some of the distinct characteristics of African or Spanish cultures, or a blend of both.

DANCE IN THE CARIBBEAN ISLANDS

Dance is religion and religion is dance to the people of the Caribbean Islands who express hope and fears, joys or sorrows through this single medium. Although the unifying racial element of Caribbean dance is African, the customs and mythologies of forgotten Indian tribes and the dancing habits of nearly every European nation have contributed their separate parts of the evolution of dance forms that today are called 'Latin American'.¹⁴

¹⁴Lisa Lekis, Dancing Gods (New York: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1960), p. 11.

Spanish Colonization

During the colonization of the New World, the Spaniards brought not only their sabers and guns, but also their guitars. Music and dance were parts of the memories of the homeland, and from the first were important elements in the new life.¹⁵

As time went on, music and dance experienced changes. The urge toward expression of tradition through music and dance remained strong, but many of the people had no means of acquiring traditional music or instruments. As a result, new instruments were invented or adapted from Indian or African instruments, and dances were also modified.¹⁶

African Influence

When African slaves were brought into the New World, many beliefs and customs were found to be similar to those of the Indian slaves. Both had an old tradition of dance as an essential activity of life; for both it was a religion. Many of the concepts of life and especially of the significance of death, including the relationship of the dead with the living, were strikingly similar.¹⁷

Until the time of emancipation, dance, with the legends and traditions, unified an enslaved people as nothing else did. The planters came to realize that the dreaded Negro revolts were always preceded by 'wild screeching and hysterical and savage dancing', and frantic efforts were made to eliminate African drums and African dances. But, despite legislative ban, destruction of the drums and floggings the dances and the drums continued.¹⁸

¹⁵Ibid., p. 31.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 32.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 26.

¹⁸Ibid.

CUBA

The arrival of African slaves did not mean the immediate integration of the two dance forms, African and Spanish. On the contrary, it took more than two hundred years for these two cultures to mix artistically , the Negroes imitated Spanish forms and incorporated them into their rhythms and step patterns.¹⁹

Cuban Conga

In Cuba, one finds music and dance, some of which is a hybrid of African and Spanish descent, such as Danzones, Sones, Boleros, Congas, Rumbas, and Mambos.

The Conga is an internationally known Cuban dance which was a product of urbanization and sophistication.

Congas are demonstrated by the conjuntos or cumparza bands who roam the streets during Carnival season, especially in the Oriente of Cuba. Here the conga was born and developed, the bands using percussion instruments only, any melodic strain being carried by voice. Conga drums, claves, maracas with the addition of the iron triangles and perhaps the jawbone of an ass beat out the regular, heavily accented beats. Followed by a motley crowd, the colorful cumparza bands, dressed in their elaborate Carnival costumes, parade the streets pounding out their traditional one-two-three kick beat which has been a part of Carnival for generations.²⁰ (Pictures 25,26,27,28,29, p.40)

The island of Cuba is a storehouse of rhythm and melody, featuring both Afro and Hispanic traditions, as well as many songs and dances which are mixtures of both.

DANCE IN SOUTH AMERICA

"The dance of Latin America, like its people, is not a pure but a hybrid form containing a few scattered examples of pure

¹⁹Ibid., p. 32.

²⁰Ibid., p. 78.

African, European or Indian dance and music."²¹

During the Spanish colonization, a new ingredient, carried in the bodies and minds of African slaves, was added to the music and dance of Latin America. The degree of African influence on music and dance depended upon the strength or dilution of the mixture. African dance and music were by no means immediately accepted. Until the turn of the twentieth century, African groups drummed and danced for religion and for recreation.²²

Also during the Spanish colonization period, Christianity played an important role in the lives of the native Indians:

Although at first certain zealous priests tried to stamp out the indigenous dance as an example of heathen worship, others realized the value of absorbing Indian ceremony rather than obliterating it. And so, Indian dance remained, renamed for the feast days of the Church Rather than forbid the use of dance in religion, the priests introduced the Spanish guitar and Spanish folk dances, and, because the Church sponsored music, music became an essential part of the colonial culture of Spanish America.²³

COLOMBIA

The population of Colombia is made up of three races and a mixture of all three. In the Atlantic coastal area, the inhabitants of large Negro settlements have retained many Afro customs, with ceremonies containing vestiges of African religion expressed in dance.

The Indians of Colombia have been pushed back into the highland regions. The few writing about Colombia Indians remark upon

²¹Lisa Lekis, Folk Dances of Latin America (New York: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1958), p. 17.

²²Ibid., pp. 20-21.

²³Ibid., p. 19.

the sad, melancholy, and nostalgic quality of both dance and music.

The mestizo, or person of mixed blood, is the dominant element of the rural community, and his adaptations and recognizable Spanish music and dance as interpreted by a mixed race have produced most of the regional folk dance of Colombia.

Cumbia

The most popular dances of the Negro, the Cumbia and the Porro, are variations of African dances found in all countries where slaves lived and are analogous to the Cuban rumba and conga. Confined for many years to the coastal area, the rhythms of the Cumbia and the Porro are exerting increasing influence upon the regional dances of the interior previously free from Negro characteristics.²⁴

During the colonization, the Spaniards tried to ban African dance and music. Slaves were prohibited from performing any ritual dances, and even from playing their instruments. However, this did not stop the Negro slaves from finding a means to practice their customs and religious rites. The Cumbia was one of the dances which evolved from the prohibition of other African dances. Negro slaves would gather at nights and with candles or torches in their hands, would dance to express their inner feelings. (Pictures 21,22,23,24, pp. 36-37)

BOLIVIA

Dance in Bolivia in form and tradition corresponds very closely to the dances of Peru. The Inca Empire covered vast territories of Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. As a result, the Indian populations in all three countries have many factors in common.

²⁴Ibid., p. 108.

Dances in Bolivia can be divided into three categories as stated by Lisa Lekis: 1) dances with roots in the pre-colonial period, 2) dances invented after the arrival of the Spaniards, and 3) mestizo dances.²⁵

Cueca: A Mestizo Dance

The Cueca is an example of a mestizo dance which is a blend of both Indian and Spanish influence. Most authorities accept the theory that the Cueca originated in Peru and from there travelled to neighboring countries. Today, the Cueca is found in Chile, Argentina, Peru, and Bolivia in many variations and is known by other names.

The Marinera (one of these variations) is a courtship dance, happy and festive, with humorous, bawdy lyrics containing many double meanings. At the cry 'Primera' couples begin to circle in a show paseo (promenade), handkerchief in hand. As the tempo increases, spectators ring the floor clapping and calling out 'ahora' (now), 'Que Bueno' (how nice), or other complimentary (and some not so flattering) remarks. Dancers strut and stamp. Behavior may range from decorous elegance to outright ribaldry, but usually, the man triumphs and leads his coquettish partner demurely from the floor to wait for the next Marinera.²⁶

The Bolivian Cueca is very similar to the Peruvian Marinera. In an interview with Mr. and Mrs. Alfredo Velasco, a Bolivian couple, the symbolism of the dance was discussed. This dance is a characterization of the "courtship dance" of a rooster and a hen. The pattern of movements has been modified and styled as a flirtation dance. The lyrics are very sentimental, which adds a nice atmosphere to the dance.

Many of the steps, as well as the style of dance, reflect those found in Spanish dancing. The use of a handkerchief is one example; it

²⁵Ibid., p. 144.

²⁶Ibid., p. 134.

takes the place of the castanets. The shawl is another element found both in the Cueca and the Flamenco (pictures 9,10, p. 29). The continuous use of triplets, little jumps, and hops are characteristics found in the Jota. In one section in the dance, stamping of the feet is used, which shows the influence of the Spanish zapateos (footwork) of the Flamenco.²⁷ (Pictures 11,12, p. 30)

ARGENTINA

Dance in Argentina is recreational or social rather than ritual and ceremonial. No African religious cults exist nor were elaborate Indian ceremonies absorbed into the liturgy of the Catholic Church.²⁸

Using the musical heritage of Spain as a base, and the guitar as the instrument of interpretation, Argentine music and dance has gained recognition for its style, mood, and expression.

The Tango Era

There is great controversy concerning the origin of the Tango. Curt Sachs²⁹ states that the Tango is not a pure Negro dance, and it owes its best qualities to the talents of the Spaniards. Carol Lee Symonds³⁰ believes that the name is an imitation of the two sounds of a hand-tapped drum tan-go. And Lisa Lekis³¹ believes the most probable

²⁷Statement by Mr. and Mrs. Alfredo Velasco, personal interview, November 23, 1973.

²⁸Lekis, op. cit., p. 168.

²⁹Curt Sachs, World History of the Dance (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1937), p. 446.

³⁰Carol Lee Symonds, Statement obtained from a record cover called Tango!, Werner Muller Orchestra, London Records, Inc.

³¹Lekis, op. cit., pp. 173-174.

theory to be that the Tango is a hybrid form made up of parts of the Andalucian Tango, the Cuban Habanera, and the Argentine Milonga.

During the last two decades of the 19th century, slum dwellers in Buenos Aires were dancing the Milonga, a dance never permitted in respectable gatherings. Although condemned for its sensuality and crudeness, the quick, sharp tempo of the Milonga was one of the sources of the Tango, a dance that at first suffered from the bad reputation of its predecessor. Although the Tango, the best known and most popular of Argentine dances, was closely related to the Milonga and popular among the same class of people, many musical and dance elements were mixed in its final composition The Tango was the first Latin American dance to achieve international fame despite protests from church groups, respectable society and violent newspaper attacks that insisted the Tango to be destroying the morals of the generation.³² (Pictures 18, 19,20, pp. 34-35)

NEGRO DANCE IN THE UNITED STATES

The Negro dance made a vital contribution to the American theatre. However, it was not until the beginning of the present century that its theatrical potential was noticed, and it only began to assert itself as a mature art form at mid-century. Its historic roots can be traced back to the first shipment of slaves to America. They brought with them their rich heritage, their rituals, their religious dances, and their ancestral memory of free-flowing movements and steps.³³

As was true in the Caribbean Islands, slave laws were passed to prohibit African dance and music. However, this did not stop the African slaves, who always found a means to practice the rites which had always been part of them. Although the drum playing was also pro-

³²Ibid.

³³Walter Sorell, The Dance Through the Ages (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1967), p. 275.

hibited, they danced to hand-clapping, to the sound of their own steps, and to the beat of the banjo.³⁴

Because of their environment and of American influence, the African slaves began to adapt to the American society. Similarly, they adapted and interpreted many of the American dances such as the square dance, and songs such as cowboy tunes.

And when the Negroes began to compose by mixing their native African with acquired American musical styles, the blues song, lamenting the oppression under which they lived, came into being. Syncopation, the spirit of jazz, is basically African. But Jazz itself, hardly more than fifty years old, has been in the making for over two hundred years.³⁵

BLACK DANCE TODAY

According to Marshall and Jean Stearns, six characteristics of African dance can be identified as a part of the African influence in the United States. First, because it is danced on the naked earth with bare feet, African dance tends to modify or eliminate such European styles as the Jig and the Clog in which the sound of shoes on wooden floor is of primary importance; the African style is often flat-footed and favors gliding, dragging, or shuffling steps. Second, African dance is frequently performed from a crouch, knees flexed and body bent at the waist. The custom of holding the body stiffly erect seems to be principally European. (The Flamenco style, it has been suggested, goes back to an imitation of a man on horseback; African dancing, to a hunter crouched for the kill.) Third, African dance generally imitates animals in realistic detail. Fourth, African dance also places great importance upon improvisation, satirical and other-

³⁴Ibid., p. 275.

³⁵Ibid., p. 277.

wise, allowing freedom for individual expression. This characteristic makes for flexibility and aids the evolution and diffusion of other African characteristics. Fifth, African dance is centrifugal, exploding outward from the hips. This point is crucial. "The leg moves from the hip instead of from the knee, the arm from the shoulder", writes musicologist Rose Brandel, who adds that the motions of the shoulders and head "often appear as the end result of a motion beginning at the hips." Sixth and most significantly, African dance is performed to a propulsive rhythm, which gives it a swinging quality³⁶ (Pictures 13,14,15,16,17, pp. 31-33)

A study done by Cecilia Roberta Brown was based upon the hypothesis that in the fields of ethnic, jazz, modern and tap dance, the Afro-American has contributed original dance forms and styles indigenous to the United States. Brown concluded that during the 1900's, the Negro musical began to be accepted, and it was at this time that the Black performer began to be recognized and accepted as an entertainer. The Afro-American also developed social and ballroom dancing as a recreational activity, and he created styles and forms basic to many of the social dances today. The Afro-Americans danced to express themselves; their expression was seen through modern, ethnic, and jazz dance as performed on stage.³⁷

"Modern dance was the key to understanding and communication among the races because it spoke for the Afro-American and expressed

³⁶ Marshall and Jean Stearns, Jazz Dance The Story of American Vernacular Dance (New York: The Mac Millan Company, 1968), pp. 14-15.

³⁷ Cecilia Roberta Brown, "The Afro-American Contribution to Dance in the United States, 1865-1965", Unpublished Master's Thesis (Normal: Illinois State Normal University, 1970), p. 125.

what he could not say as effectively in words."³⁸

Katherine Dunham and Pearl Primus played an important role in the development of the Negro dance as an art form. It is not surprising, then, to find today many Negro dancers and artists in Modern Dance, such as Donald Mc Kayle, Carmen de Lavallade, Tally Beatty, and Alvin Ailey, who through Modern Dance are able to express their feelings and improvisational talent. (Pictures 13,15 p. 31)

³⁸Ibid., p. 130.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

AND PERFORMANCE

Five dances influenced by Spanish and/or African dance were selected for this study. The history, elements of the dance, type of people participating, costumes, symbolism, and mythology were studied for each style of dance.

History books, dance books, periodicals, personal interviews, and related literature from previously completed theses were the sources of information.

Forty members of the Modern Dance Club at Eastern Illinois University and guest dancers volunteered to participate in the performance. The participants observed some of the basic movements and steps in four group numbers (Conga, Cumbia, Jota, and Modern Jazz Dance). They were asked to choose a specific dance in the light of their own dance background, taste, and ability to perform the number. Some participants were asked to switch from one group to another for various technical reasons, and the number of people in each dance was then assigned.

Rehearsals were set up so that the members of each group would meet at the same time for an hour each week (later twice a week and more) before the actual concert. Individual rehearsals were also scheduled for special and additional instruction.

Seven dances were actually performed and a description of how

the dances were selected and performed follows:

Flamenco - Due to the difficulty of instruction and lack of time, the dance was performed as a solo. Usually, the dance is done by various female and male dancers as a group, duet, or solo. However, a solo performance is usually more effective, due to the intricate footwork and general body movements.

Jota - This particular folk dance is vigorous and lively. The footwork is not as intricate and difficult as the Flamenco; however, the rhythm and tempo were difficult for the dancers to learn at first. Most of the seven dancers chosen to participate in this number had some ballet background. The dance consisted of triplets, little jumps, delicate arm movements, and constant vigorous patterns.

Cueca - The Flamenco and Jota have influenced the Cueca, which is a couple dance. The couple who performed the Cueca were native Bolivians who were familiar with this dance, and had learned not only the dance but its meaning as well.

Tango - This dance was greatly influenced by the Milonga, a dance common among the lower classes in Argentina, and by Spanish dance. Before achieving the great popularity which the Tango now possesses, it was severely condemned and downgraded by the Catholic Church and the Argentine upper class.

Because of the difficulty of the Tango for beginners, a couple with previous experience in the basic movements of this dance performed it.

Cumbia - The Cumbia is a dance native to Colombia. It was first

danced by Negro slaves and later picked up by the Indian and Spanish population.

With candles in their hands, Negro slaves would perform this dance during the night. It was the only form of entertainment in which they could forget the rigorous activity which they had gone through and which still awaited them.

Since this dance is usually performed in groups, six dancers were selected. There were no specific qualifications, due to the simplicity of the dance.

Modern Jazz Dance - The United States is credited with the development of Jazz, but this dance, closely related to southern United States, has been mainly influenced by African dance and Black culture.

Ten members of the Modern Dance Club participated in this piece. These ten members had previous training in the technique used in Modern Jazz.

Authentic folk recordings were obtained for each dance. After studying the music, movements and patterns were choreographed with the intention of communicating the symbolism behind each dance. The dances were video taped and studied; then, necessary revisions were made.

Various sources were used in studying the traditional costumes. The dancers made their own costumes after they were given specific instructions.

A selected number of pictures were chosen from the pictures taken throughout the dance concert and placed in the study. This was done to enable the reader to see the choreography, staging, and colorful costumes.

Folk dances are dances performed by common people. The patterns are usually simple and repetitious. For the purpose of this study, each dance was choreographed as a character dance. Using the basic folk steps, variations and stylization were added for a more effective result on stage.

The actual performance took place in conjunction with the Annual Dance Concert which was held on March 28, 29, and 30, 1974 at McAfee Gymnasium on the Campus of Eastern Illinois University. This particular group of dances was performed as Part III of the concert, since it seemed desirable to keep all the dances together in order to illustrate the choreography, staging and performance done by the researcher and dancers.



EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Spring Dance Concert

March 28, 29, 30, 1974

Jazzing Around

ISOSTACY

Choreography: Tami Geltmaker
Music: Focus

Nancy Choban, Angela Early,
Tami Geltmaker, Melissa
Krakowiak, Lola Lichter,
Pam Mabbitt, Karen Woods

...AND IT DAWNED UPON THEM
THAT THEY WERE CAUGHT UP IN
EACH OTHER'S DREAMS...

Choreography & Tape Collage:
W. Doris Brown

Barbara Alexander, Doris
Brown, Leslie Donaldson,
Paula Hearn, Debbie King,
Susan Polodna, Jane
Stallard, Shirley Warren

THE WICKED

Choreography: Tina Guritz
and Debbie Schultz
Music: Dawson, Ross, Osborn

Nancy Bays, Tina Guritz,
Debbie Schultz, Karen Woods

UNTITLED

Choreography: Rosie Myers
Music: Capaldi, Winwood

Leslie Donaldson, Tina
Guritz, Lola Lichter,
Melissa Krakowiak, Rosie
Myers

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY MASSACRE

Choreography: Pam Mabbitt
Music: Alice Cooper

Nancy Choban, Tami
Geltmaker, Gail Lewis
Carol Leon, Pam Mabbitt,
Kristi Jo Olive, Debbie
Schultz

Short Intermission

Contemporary Comments

"ITCH OR IT'S A MUTHA"

Choreography & Tape Collage:
Marcia L. Sanders

Joe Allison, Beth Cox,
Angela Early, Debbie King,
Marcia Sanders

Satire on the frustration in life in trying to be other than what we are; desiring to be something else or somewhere else on the conscious level of self-awareness.

IT DOESN'T MATTER

Choreography: Linda Keefe
Music: Mason Williams
Pianist: Doug Updike

Linda Keefe

EMPATHY

Choreography: Beth Cox
Music: Milton Babbitt

Barbara Alexander, Diane
Avalos, Beth Cox, Rosemary
David, Paula Hearn, Debbie
King, Rosie Myers, Susan
Polodna, Dan Slack, Karen
Woods

The Intellectual identification with or vicarious experiencing of the feelings, thoughts or attitudes of another person.

MODERNE

Choreography: Gail Lewis
Music: Quin Adamson

Nancy Choban, Tami
Geltmaker, Tina Guritz
Judy Jansen, Melissa
Krakowiak, Gail Lewis,
Debbie Schultz

...reflections of the early Modern Dance era....

Short Intermission

Folk-Ethnic-Roots

This section of the program was researched, choreographed, costumed, and directed by Cecilia Velasco Serra. It depicts the Spanish and/or African influence on various dances of North, Central, and South America.

SPANISH JOTA

Music: Breton

This lively folk dance is very well known in the Northern part of Spain. Its purpose is recreational rather than religious. The challenge is for dancers to dance as long as energy permits, ceasing only when a livelier couple or soloist performs.

Bonnie Blanck, Doris Brown, Priscilla Fong, Debbie Houser, Gail Lewis, Erica Matzka, Alice Stoughton

FLAMENCO

Music: Robert Barford

There is no symbolism involved in this dance, which is predominant in Southern Spain. It is imperative, however, that the dancer possess the ability to identify with the "duende" (soul) that is being unfolded, and that this be transmitted emotionally to the audience.

Cecilia Serra, accompanied by Robert Barford

BOLIVIAN CUECA

Music: Las Imillas

This dance is a characterization of the courtship of a rooster and hen, which was interpreted by the Bolivian Indians. Some of the Spanish influences are: the shawl; the use of handkerchiefs (instead of castanets); the basic steps; the zapateo (heel footwork).

Alfredo and Clara Velasco

MODIFIED JAZZ

Music: Ginkinto & Santana

Jazz dance, modern or otherwise, is related to the total expression of a group of people and to their experience. "Pure" jazz dance is primarily an Afro-American expression. Some of

the characteristics of African dance that are depicted in this piece are: use of syncopated movements; isolation of body parts in movement; use of face painting.

Nancy Bays, Sandra Beccue, Leslie Donaldson, Julie Cartwright, Linda Keefe, Rosie Myers, Kristi Jo Olive, Arlene Samaras, Jane Stallard, Debbie Schultz

ARGENTINE TANGO

Music: La Cumparsita

There is a great controversy about the origin of the tango, which now holds international acclaim. It is believed to have originated in Argentina, to have been influenced by African dance, but to owe its best qualities to the talents of the Spaniards.

Cecilia and Jose Serra

COLOMBIAN CUMBIA

Music: Gamez

The cumbia originated in the Atlantic coastal region of Colombia and was influenced by the African slave population. The slaves would perform this dance during the night, with candles in their hands. It was the only form of entertainment through which they could forget the tedious work to which they were subjected by day.

Rebecca Blair, Judy Bowldy, Angela Early, Nick Estiverne, Marcia Sanders, Paula Thurman, Karen Woods

CUBAN CONGA

Music: Ortiz

The conga originated in Oriente, the eastern most province of Cuba. It was first performed by African slaves and later influenced the Spanish populations in Cuba and other Caribbean Islands. It has become internationally well known. Its "one-two-three-kick" rhythm and movement has been a part of the Carnivals for generations.

Joe Allison, Julie Cartwright, Beth Cox, Nicolas Estiverne, Tami Geltmaker, Tina Guritz, Melissa Krakowiak, Linda Keefe, Carol Leon, Pam Mabbitt, Earl Pledger, Cecilia Serra, Jose Serra, Rick Simon, Dan Slack

JOTA ARAGONEZA



Picture 1. The arms are squared off with the elbows as high as the shoulder and little lower.



Picture 2. Costumes are very folkish in nature and not as elaborate as the Flamenco dress.



Picture 3. Most of the basic steps have been preserved.
One of these is illustrated by the dancer above.



Picture 4. Flexed feet is one of the main characteristics of this dance.

Picture 5. The guitar and fiddle are special accompaniment of the Flaminio dance.



Picture 5. Expression of inner feelings while dancing.



Picture 6. The guitar and jaleo are crucial elements of the Flamenco dance.



Picture 7. Another element of the dance is the use of the castanets.



Picture 8. Castanets and the colorful costume adds a new scope to the dance.

BOLIVIAN CUECA



Picture 9. Use of handkerchief instead of castanets.



Picture 10. The shawl is very similar to the shawl used in Spanish dancing.



Picture 11. Use of heel work is another characteristic of Spanish dance.



Picture 12. The flirtation dance is very colorful in nature and very happy.

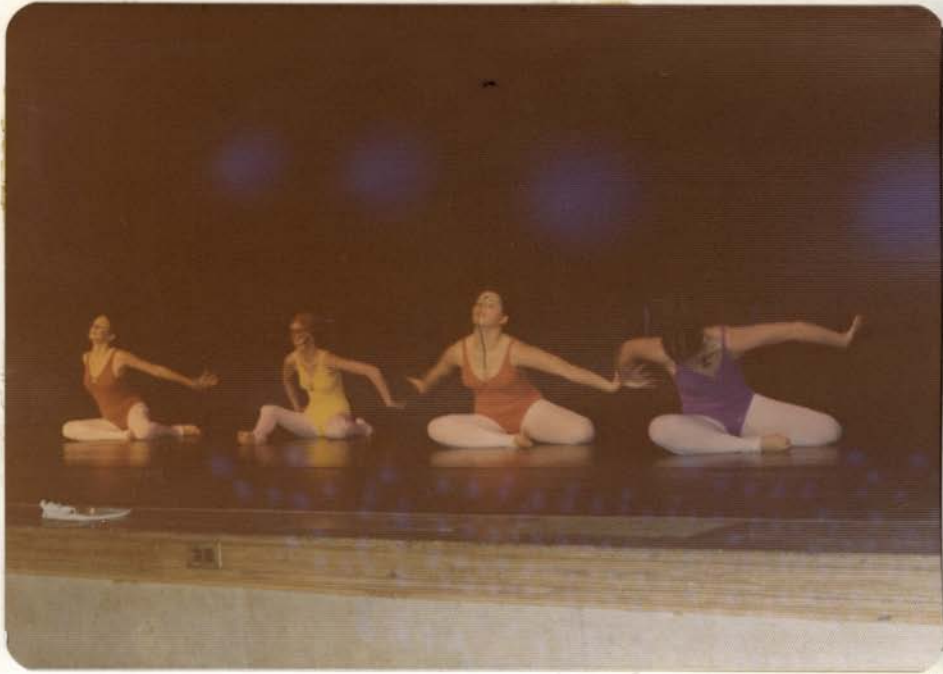
MODERN JAZZ DANCE



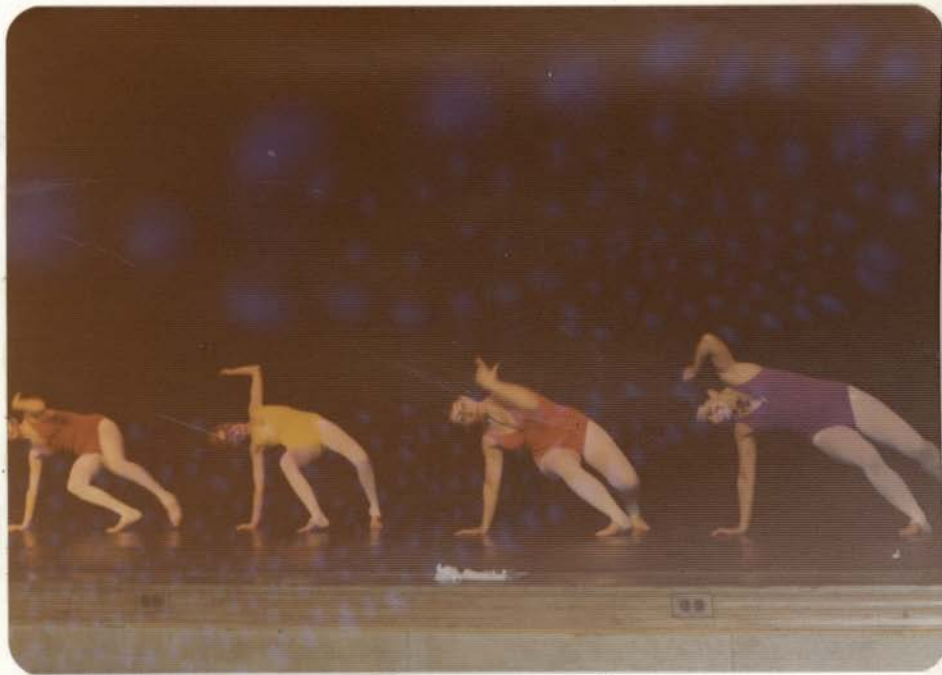
Picture 13. Modern dance has been a means of expressing African heritage.



Picture 14. Design is an element of modern dance.



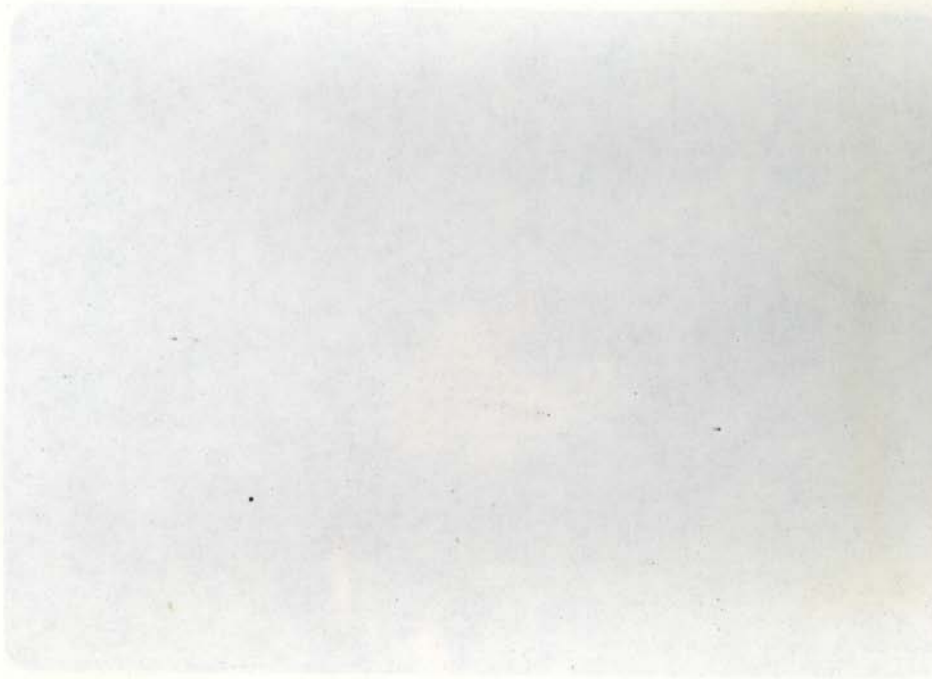
Picture 15. Sharp, quick movements are very effective on stage.



Picture 16. Bare feet, contractions, bent knees, and syncopated rhythm show African influence.



Picture 17. Face painting - a crucial characteristic of African dance.



Picture 18. The dance was performed for the sensuality and openness.

ARGENTINE TANGO



Picture 18. The colorful costuming adds scope to the nature of the dance.



Picture 19. The dance was condemned for its sensuality and crudeness.



Picture 20. The quick, sharp tempo and movements came from the Milonga.

Picture 21. The dress is very simple and has a peasant flavor.

COLOMBIAN CUMBIA



Picture 21. Dancers with candles in their hands.



Picture 22. The dress is very simple and has a peasant flavor.



Picture 23. Voodoo, still practiced in many primitive countries, is shown by the dancer.



Picture 24. The use of fire and the state of trance is found in African cultures.

CUBAN CONGA



Picture 25. The farolas are poles used by witch doctors to motivate the dances.



Picture 26. Colorful cumparza band.



Picture 27. Bent knees, bare feet, and colorful costumes are some of the African influences.



Picture 28. One-two-three-kick is the beat and step of the Conga.



Picture 29. The very popular Conga line.

Based upon the information presented in this study, the following conclusions appear to be justified:

The dances studied have shown evidence of Spanish and/or African influence. More specifically, the Bolivian Ceceo and Argentine Tango were greatly influenced by Spanish dances. The Cuban Conga, the Cuban Conga, and Modern Jazz however, were largely influenced by African dance.

Although it was found that Spanish and African influences were the primary influences, none of the dances studied is of pure African or Spanish nature; instead, all these dances are basically hybrid. Very early in man's history, there were original dance forms. Due to the spread of people throughout the Americas and changed conditions,

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

In general, the cultures of Africa and Spain have had a great influence on the New World. Their culture, language, religion, customs, and dance all have contributed to our western civilization. Today, in the twentieth century, many of these elements are less apparent because of modernization and technological progress; however, if one studies these countries, it will be apparent that some of their native or primitive population still preserve some of the cultural aspects established centuries ago.

CONCLUSIONS

Based upon the information presented in this study, the following conclusions appear to be justified:

The dances studied have shown extensive Spanish and/or African influence. More specifically, the Bolivian Cueca and Argentine Tango were greatly influenced by Spanish dance. The Colombian Cumbia, the Cuban Conga, and Modern Jazz however, were mainly influenced by African dance.

Although it was found that Spanish and African dance were the prime influences, none of the dances studied is of pure African or Spanish nature; instead, all these dances are basically hybrid forms. Very early in man's history, there were original dance forms. However, due to the spread of people throughout the Americas and changing cultures,

most dances are now influenced by many other dance forms, social classes, and music.

The mythology of dance has been lost or altered in many cases because much of the mythology was passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth instead of written records. Materials passed down by word of mouth have a tendency to be changed or reinterpreted.

Dance was a way of life in many primitive cultures. For every occasion there was a dance, whether it be birth, death, harvest, or war. Today, we find that in many cases dances have become of a social, ballroom, and recreational nature.

Through dance, people found a means of expressing themselves and their emotions. In this study, it was noted that all the dances researched originated among the middle and lower classes. For example, the Flamenco became a way of expressing the suffering of the outlawed gypsies who did not have a country of their own. The Cumbia, the Conga, and Jazz evolved from the African slaves who were trying to practice and preserve their heritage and culture; although they were prohibited from practicing their rites, their mode of expressing themselves through dance remained. The Tango, Jota, and Cueca were also danced among the middle and lower classes; however, the purpose was recreational and social rather than expressive of deep feelings of suffering and/or loss of a country.

Many of the basic steps found in Spanish and African dance can be detected in the dances studied. However, each country has contributed greatly by adding its own musical flavor, interpretation of the dance, and style of dance.

The participants in the concert have gained greater knowledge

about the dances performed. This knowledge not only included the performing of the dance, but it also served to give them some awareness of the culture of the people who initiated these dances.

The audience also benefited from the opportunity of observing dances they knew little or nothing about. They also had a chance to learn something about the culture of Latin American people and some of the historical values of Jazz.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The writer makes the following recommendations:

More research is needed about folk dance in the Latin American countries. These countries have a vast repertoire of dance forms - ethnic, folk, religious, social and recreational - and such forms could greatly enrich our language of dance.

Latin American folk dances should be included in folk and square dance courses. European folk dances seem to be very popular among these classes but few Latin American folk dances are taught.

Students should be encouraged to research and choreograph dances or types of dances in which they may be interested.

GLOSSARY

ahora - now.

alpargatas - peasant sandals.

Andaluces - Andalucians

bailaora - female Flamenco dancer.

Bolero - social ballroom dance.

cante jondo - the purest form of Flamenco.

character dance - modification of an original folk dance, which is taught and performed by trained dancers.

claves - clavichord.

conjunto - see cumparza.

conquistadores - Spanish conquistadors

cumparza - numerous, band, masquerade in Carnival.

Danzon - Cuban slow dance and its tune.

duende - soul, ghost.

jaleo - clapping

jotu - Basque musical instrument.

Mambo - Latin American social ballroom dance.

maracas - Guarami musical instrument consisting of a dry gourd in which some pebbles are placed.

Marinera - Peruvian Cueca.

mestizo - mixture of Indian and Spanish blood. This social class is predominantly found in the Andes.

Milonga - Argentine popular dance.

que bueno - how nice.

Rumba - Cuban social ballroom dance.

Son - Cuban social ballroom dance.

sotar - to jump.

triplet - a group of three notes performed in the time of two of the same value.

zapateo - Spanish tap dance, keeping time by beating the foot.

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APPENDIX

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Dance Club of Eastern Illinois University is presenting a concert program of student choreographed works on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, March 28, 29, and 30, 1974.

The Concert will be held in McAfee Gymnasium at 8:00 p.m. There is no admission charge.

A section of this year's concert will consist of character dances portraying Spanish and African influence on the dance styles of North, Central, and South America. This section of the program was researched, costumed, and choreographed by Cecilia Velasco Serra, a graduate student in Physical Education. Other styles of dance to be included in the concert are jazz, contemporary satire, and modern.

The Dance Club functions under the auspices of the Department of Physical Education for Women and the Women's Recreation Association.

GREENUP PRESS

THURSDAY, MARCH 28th, 1974

To Present Concert

The Dance Club of Eastern Illinois University is presenting a concert program of student choreographed works on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, March 28, 29, and 30, 1974.

The Concert will be held in McAfee Gymnasium at 8:00 p.m. There is no admission charge.

A section of this year's concert will consist of character dances portraying Spanish and African influence on the dance styles of South, Central, and North America. This section of the program was researched, costumed, and choreographed by Cecilia Velasco Serra, a graduate student in Physical Education. Other styles of dance to be included in the concert are jazz, contemporary satire, and modern.

The Dance Club functions under the auspices of the Dept. of Physical Education for Women and the Women's Recreation Association.

TIMES-COURIER, Charleston, Illinois,
Wednesday, March 27, 1974, page 7

EIU Dance Club Will Present Student Works

CHARLESTON—The Dance Club at Eastern Illinois University will present a concert program of student choreographed works Thursday.

The concert will be held in McAfee Gymnasium at 8 p.m. There is no admission charge.

A section of this year's concert will consist of character dances portraying Spanish and African influence on the dance styles of South, Central, and North America. This section of the program was researched, costumed, and choreographed by Cecilia Velasco Serra, a graduate student in Physical Education.

Other styles of dance to be included in the concert are jazz, contemporary satire, and modern.

eastern news

Thursday, Friday, Saturday

Dance club holds spring concert

Eastern's Modern Dance Club will hold its Spring Dance Concert at 8 p.m. Thursday, Friday and Saturday in McAfee Gym. Admission to the concert is free.

Alice Stoughton, faculty sponsor of the group, said Tuesday that the concert, open to the public, will feature 48

dancers in the student-choreographed production.

Both male and female students plus Alfredo and Clara Valesco will perform in the three sections of the concert.

The sections are: "Jazzing Around," "Contemporary Comments" and "Folk and Ethnic Character Dances," she

said.

The character dance section will portray Spanish and African influence on American dance, Stoughton said, with all of the research done by student Cecilia Valesco Cerra.

The Modern Dance Club is under the Women's Physical Education Department and the Women's Recreation Assn.

Panther Postscripts



A Newsletter published by the School of
Health, Physical Education, and Recreation,
Eastern Illinois University,
Charleston, Illinois
61920

VOLUME X

MARCH 1974

NUMBER II

SCHOOL OF HPER

DANCE CLUB

The Dance Club, under the direction of Mrs. Alice Stoughton, Mrs. Bonnie Blanck, and Mrs. Cecilia Serra, is presenting a program of student choreographed works on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, March 28, 29, 30. The Concert will be held in McAfee Gymnasium at 8:00 p.m.

A section of this year's Concert will show Spanish and African influences on the dance style of South, Central, and North America. This is partial fulfillment of Mrs. Serra's Master's thesis. Other styles represented are jazz, modern satire, and lyrical.

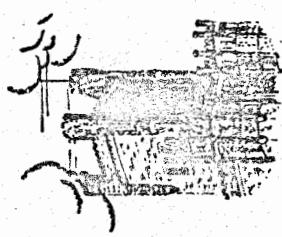
The Dance Club functions under the auspices of the Department of Physical Education for Women and the Women's Recreation Association.

Mary Atchison

Faculty Campus Newsletter

Eastern Illinois University

CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS



Office of Information and Publications

Number 26

March 20, 1974

Modern Dance Concert. The Modern Dance Club will present the annual dance concert on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, March 28, 29 and 30 at 8:00 p.m. in McAfee Gym. A section of the concert will be made up of character dances choreographed by Cecilia Serra as partial fulfillment of her master's thesis. The purpose of this section of the dance concert is to show the Spanish and African influence on the dance of North, Central, and South America. The concert is open to the public. High school dance teachers are encouraged to bring their students.

VITA

I, Cecilia Velasco Serra, was born in Cochabamba, Boliva.
In 1963, when I was 12, my entire family moved to Chicago, Illinois.
In 1969, I graduated from Roger C. Sullivan High School in Chicago.
In 1973, I received my Bachelor in Science Degree in Business Education,
with a Spanish minor at Eastern Illinois University. On June 9, 1973,
I became the wife of Jose E. Serra.

While at Eastern, I was a member of the tennis team and of
Phi Omega Phi - Honorary Business Fraternity; Secretary of the Association
of International Students; member and student director of the Dolphinas
Synchronized Swimming Club; and member, choreographer, student director,
and assistant director of the Modern Dance Club.

At the end of the summer semester session of 1974, I will be
receiving the Degree of Master of Science in Physical Education from
Eastern Illinois University.