



The Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre and Performance

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Publisher: Oxford University Press

Print ISBN-13: 9780198601746

Current Online Version: 2005

Print Publication Date: 2003

Published online: 2005

eISBN: 9780191727818

quadrille

Dance of French origin, also called *haute-taille*, introduced to the Caribbean in the mid-seventeenth century. Accompanied by an orchestra, a *komandè* sets the pace and signals the start of the various figures to the four pairs of dancers. The instruments are a diatonic accordion or a violin, guitar, and varied Caribbean percussion, including *tanboudibas* (oak drum of Basque origin), *siyak* (bamboo scraper), *malakach* (rattles made of calabash), steel triangle, and *tibwa* (two wooden sticks knocked together). The dancers perform four figures—*pantalon*, *lété*, *lapoul*, *pastourèl*—each with different sub-figures. At the end of the twentieth century there was a renaissance of quadrille balls. They are most popular in the countryside in Guadeloupe and usually take place on Saturdays and Sundays, except during Lent. In Martinique the quadrille is introduced by a waltz, mazurka, or the local *biguine*.

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Subscriber: Swarthmore College; date: 19 July 2019