

**PROCEEDINGS SOCIETY OF
DANCE HISTORY SCHOLARS**

Twentieth Annual Conference
Barnard College
New York City, New York
19 - 22 June 1997

Proceedings

Society of Dance History Scholars

Reflecting our Past;

Reflecting on our Future

Twentieth Annual Conference

Barnard College
New York City, New York
19 - 22 June 1997

This collection of papers has been compiled from camera-ready copies provided by individual authors who wished to contribute 'their papers as a record of the 1997 Society of Dance History Scholars conference. In order to achieve a volume speedily available to the group, no editing, a time consuming process, has been done.

University of California, Riverside
1997
Published by Society of Dance History Scholars

CONFERENCE PAPERS

Twentieth Annual Conference
19 - 22 June, 1997

Barnard College
New York City, New York

Linda J. Tomko, Compiler

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Burt, Ramsay. <i>Laban in Yorkshire: Illlerrgaling the Grand Narratives of Dance Scholarship</i>	1
2.	Lester, Garry. <i>Margaret Barr: Epic Individual and Fringe Dweller</i>	9
3.	Sparti, Barbara. <i>What Can Pictures Tell Us (And Not Tell Us) About Dance? Reading Italian Renaissance Dance Jconography</i>	21
4.	Heffner, Michelle. <i>Blood Wedding: Tradition and Innovation in Contemporary Flamenco</i>	23
5.	Smigel, Libby. <i>Masquerading Intenlions: The Bal Masque in Victorian Perception and Practice</i>	29
6.	Cook, Susan C. <i>Tango Lizards and Girlish Men: Pe,jorming Masculinity on the Social Dance Floor</i>	41
7.	Daye, Anne. <i>The Sun-King Eclips'd</i>	57
8.	Willis, Juliette. <i>Dancing Cultural Identity: Grottesque Bodies at London's Bartholomew Fair</i>	69
9.	Gonzalez, Anita. <i>Re-Configuring Af'ican Slave Dancing in Mexico: Popular Imaginations of Jarocho</i>	77
10.	Vaccaro, Kim Chandler. <i>The Contribution of Jazz Dance to a New Conception of the Social Dancing Body as Perceived by Mura Dehn</i>	85

11.	Colonna, Deda Cristina. <i>Comparative Study of the Different Versions of the Passacaille of Armide</i>	93
12.	Whitley-Bauguess, Paige. <i>Same Music-Different Dance: Analysis and Comparison of Dances by Louis Pécour and Anthony L'Abbé Choreographed to the Same Music and Phrasing as a Reconstruction Tool</i>	103
13.	Veroli, Patrizia. <i>Walter Toscanini's Vision of Dance</i>	107
14.	Perces, Marjorie B. and Ana Marie Forsythe. <i>Lester Horton</i>	119
15.	<i>Cynthia Jean Cohen Bull Roundtable</i> Susan Leigh Foster, Mark Franko, Randy Martin, Ninotchka Bennahum, Jennifer Fisher, June Vail.....	121
16.	Arkin, Lisa C. <i>The Mazurka and the Krakovia: Two Polish National Dances in Michel St. Léon's Dance Notebooks, 1829 - 1830</i>	129
17.	Hammond, Sandra Noll. <i>Windows into Romantic Ballet: Content and Structure of Four Early Nineteenth-Century Pas de Deux</i>	137
18.	Earnhart, Brady. <i>Giselle's Onstage Audience</i>	145
19.	Poesio, Giannandrea. <i>Galop, Gender and Politics in the Italian Ballo Grande</i>	151
20.	Jeschke, Claudia. <i>Marianne Vogelsang: Ausdruckstanz Choreographer in the German Democratic Republic</i>	157
21.	Mozingo, Karen A. <i>Fractured Images: Montage and Gender in Pina Bausch's Tanztheater</i>	165
22.	Schroedter, Stephanie. <i>Demonstration of a Database Concerning Dance Literature From the Late 17th to the Early 19th Century Held at the Derra De Moroda Dance Archives, Salzburg/Austria</i>	173
23.	Cain, Elizabeth A. <i>Electronic Access to Dance Resources: The "Il Papa" Manuscript</i>	181
24.	Nichols, Madeleine M. <i>Art and Artifact: The Digital Option, A Case Study of the "Il Papa" Manuscript</i>	187

25.	Soares, Janet Mansfield. <i>Barnard's 1932 and 1933 Dance Symposiums: Bringing Dance to the University</i>	191
26.	McGinnis, Katherine Tucker. <i>At Home in the "Casa del Trombone": A Social-Historical View of Sixteenth-Century Milanese Dancing Masters*</i>	203
27.	Dahms, Sibylle. <i>New Light on 18th-Century Social Dance in Germany</i>	217
28.	Pierce, Ken. <i>Dance Vocabulary in the Early 18th Century As Seen Through Feuillet's Step Tables</i>	227
29.	Woods, Karen, Nena Couch, and Ligia Pinherio. <i>The Rape of the Lock, A Ballet in 18th-Century Style</i>	237
30.	Stratyner, Barbara. <i>Wallflower at a Cotillion</i>	245
31.	Siegel, Marcia B. and Beth Lessard. <i>Olympian Romance</i>	255
32.	Kane, Angela. <i>Parallel Narratives: The Private and Public Domains of Paul Taylor's Dances</i>	263
33.	Erdman, Joan L. <i>Cross-Cultural Discourses: Writing of Uday Shankar</i>	269
34.	Vaze, Bageshree. <i>When North Meets South: The Use of Hindustani Music in the Context of Bharatha Natyam Dance</i>	277
35.	Danitz, Marilyn. <i>Hadassah's Use of Traditional Movement Gesture Exemplified by "Shuvi Nafshi"</i>	285
36.	Sutton, Julia. <i>Cadential Formulae in Music and Dance in 16th-Century Italy</i>	299
37.	Pharo, Carol. <i>Musical Form and Dance Form: The Role of Cadential Formulae in Early 18th-Century Choreographies</i>	305
38.	Turocy, Catherine. <i>Reflections on Gilbert Austin's Chironomia and Dance Conventions of the Eighteenth Century</i>	311
39.	Program.....	323

RE-CONFIGURING AFRICAN SLAVE DANCING IN MEXICO: POPULAR IMAGINATIONS OF JAROCHO

Anita Gonzalez

Within Veracruz society the image of the jarocho predominates, appearing in many of the cultural productions of the eastern coast of Mexico. Jarocho dancing was once a scandalous form associated, during the colonial period, with African and Native American slaves. It has evolved into an artistic expression promoted by official tourist brochures. The image of the jarocho, one of the most popular icons of Veracruz state, is examined in this paper from three different perspectives: as an historical performance form in transformation, as a defining motif for community displays of ethnicity, and as a professional dance genre performed by state-supported companies.

Wherever African people resided within Mexico, celebratory events evoking animal imagery, utilizing expressive character stances, and featuring masked dancers appeared. Images and references to Blacks--old man figures, soldiers, and sailors--are common in folklore of regions as diverse as Papantla, Guerrero, Michoacan, and of course, Veracruz. Although for centuries Blacks residing in Mexico integrated themselves into larger political struggles without emphasizing their racial origins; expressive culture (or dance) provided an opportunity for African communities to publicly display "blackness" in covertly political ways. Jarocho dancing, particularly during the colonial period, was one way of performing African cultural consciousness.

When performed spontaneously in a competitive environment, jarocho is initiated by a dancer, usually male, who challenges a woman by creating heel beats on a raised *tarima* or wooden platform. He gazes at the woman, who mounts the *tarima* and begins her own stomping rhythmic pattern to accompany his. They circle one another like a hen and a rooster, turning their heads to look over and around their (own) shoulders. The dance is a sexual play of head, torso, and facial gestures, coupled, of course, with the continuing rhythmic interplay of the stamping foot rhythms. In the coastal towns of Alvarado and Tlacotalpan, the jarocho is performed with a bent-body posture typical of African diasporic dances throughout the Americas. Unlike *zapateados* of other regions, the jarocho *zapateado* is polyrhythmic and incorporates syncopated improvisations rooted in Spanish and African practices.

Musicians, always male, play *jarana* (a type of guitar), *pandero* (tambourine), and *arpa* (harp) to accompany the dance. The *pandero* is played with the hands along the edges so that the principal sound emitted by the instrument is the chatter of the cymbals. Every so often, the player augments the rhythm with a hand slap. Other musicians play a mobile harp resembling the one used in symphonic orchestras, but supported by a single peg. The *jarana* and *arpa* carry the melody, which drives the music and the dancing, while the rhythmic heel beats of the dancers, resonating through the hollow chamber underneath the platform, punctuate the strummed melodies of the songs.

Jarocho descends from musical tradition called *son*, first officially mentioned in 1766 "when inquisition authorities condemned a *son* called *chuchumbé*, associated with a boat load of predominantly 'negro' and 'mulatto' seaman from the coast of Cuba, on immoral and anticlerical grounds"¹. Jarocho lyrics, generally allude to sexual acts, and Spanish officials found the open sensuality of the verses scandalous. For example, the roofer character who is the protagonist of the *son* "María Chuchena," sees a woman named María bathing in a river and asks her to throw herself in the water and "look at the prow of my boat"².

In an 1844 document, José María Esteva, a creole chronicler, characterizes jarocho men as belonging to a "raza" that is different from the general republic. Jarocho performers live at the margins of Mexican society. He claims:

The true jarocho are not inclined to work in the country: the occupation of a farmer is arduous and monotonous for a burning and lazy soul, a quarrelsome spirit and a friend of glory; because of this, the true jarocho prefers to dedicate himself to herding, slaughtering cattle, or horsebreaking.³

Esteva portrays jarocho dancers, primarily people of African and Indian descent, as lazy and untamed. He uses the word jarocho like a derisive label meant to set off or "other" the mixed-race workers. His writings indicate that jarocho, now applied primarily to performance forms, once alluded to a social caste.

Even though jarocho song and dance is closely associated with African performance, negative depictions of African people emerge within the tradition. The *son* "Los Negritos"⁴ states:

La mañana de San Juan que hace el agua gorgoritas cuando se van a bailar. Salen los cinco negritos y Jesús y María que me espanta como hacen los negros pa'trabajá comiendo tortillas con carne asá. Ja ja ja ja ja ja ja ja.

[The morning of Saint John's day, when the water bubbles, when they go to dance. The five Blacks come out and Jesus and Mary how it frightens me how the Blacks work eating tortillas with fried meat. Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha].⁵

The song depicts black men as fearsome creatures. Not only are they "othered," but they are also laughingly ridiculed. Their meal etiquette, eating tortillas with fried meat, challenges norms of social behavior and offends the unnamed viewer. The song draws from the African experience and, at the same time, portrays darker-skinned people as alien.

Jarocho women however, were historically portrayed in positive ways that complemented gendered notions of appropriate female behavior. Daniel Sheehy, again quoting Esteva, writes:

The jarochoita is normally gracious, kind with strangers, and tender and condescending in the extreme with her husband. Industrious and laborious, she spends most of the day in house chores, forming a singular contrast with individuals of her class of the other sex, who are generally lazy and apathetic.⁶

The jarocho woman, unlike the aggressive male, is envisioned as refined and genteel. Reasons for this differing construction of the "mulatto" or "pardo" female may go back to slave society relationships.

Twice as many African men as women were brought into "New Spain," so that men outnumbered women by two to one. African women quickly intermarried with indigenous people or were raped by their slave masters. As they became assimilated into mestizo society, and bleached of their African somatic features, the distinctions between women of African descent and other *mestiza* women was less obvious. Eventually ex-slave women, some of whom married Creoles and Spaniards, were viewed by the general society in the same light as white women.

Although jarocho music and dancing historically acknowledges African connections, the art form is now considered to be a homogeneous, tradition representative of Veracruz. Master narratives of *mestizaje*, promoted after the Mexican Revolution re-imagined Mexican ethnicity as a fusion of indigenous and Spanish ancestry in an attempt to impose a false unity on a politically and socially divided country. Blacks, who participated in the revolutionary labor and agrarian reform movements by and fighting side-by-side with other members of the peasant underclass, were later assimilated into the mixed-race society.

Richard Jackson, in his book, The Black Image in Latin American Literature, uses the phrase "ethnic lynching" to describe the forced assimilation of blacks with whites and Indians and writes: "whites try to get rid of blacks in the United States through extermination (and birth control) and in Latin America through racial amalgamation or linchamiento étnico (ethnic lynching).⁷ While Jackson perhaps overstates the case, the reality of Mexican racial politics means that Afro-Mexicans continue to identify themselves by privileging Spanish/Indian mixtures over other racial associations.

After the Revolution, the cultural contributions of blacks were minimized and Black African dance, like the dances of other ethnic groups, became assimilated into a national conception of mixed-race heritage that subsumed difference. Jarocho as a performance form however, retains many of the africanisms that first distinguished it as a subcultural dance style. Furthermore, the idea--the image--of the jarocho continually reconfigures itself within the popular imagination so that jarocho dancing, whether in a community context or in front of paying audiences, affirms Veracruzian connection to historical memories of Veracruz.

Community connections through jarocho were evident in a festival that I attended in 1995, the Cruces de Mayo event which takes place in the coastal town of Alvarado one month prior to the Thursday of Corpus Christi. Alvarado is one of two towns (the other is Tlacotalpan), that have historically competed for recognition as the "authentic" home of jarocho. The rival fishing villages sit together on the Papaloapan river, only twenty minutes drive away from one another. When Tlacotalpan people wear white jarocho dresses Alvadoreños wear blue. Alvarado residents accuse Tlacotalpan residents of having nasty public manners while Tlacotalpan residents accuse Alvarado residents of having foul mouths. Although they have historically challenged one another as the repository of jarocho folkloric heritage, both have valid claims to the tradition. The Fiesta de los Cruces is one of Alvarado's premiere occasions for showing off its jarocho culture.⁸

During the celebration, representatives from each of the Alvarado neighborhoods collaborate to construct an altar of crosses that is displayed first in their own neighborhood, and

later, in the central plaza of the town. These installations are called "Las Cruces" because articles are placed within a central cupola so that the entire installation resembles the shape of a cross. The community altars feature paper flowers, antique furniture, family heirlooms in gilded boxes, embroidered tablecloths, and statues of Catholic saints. Yet nestled among the items are pictures, many of them yellowed with age, of children and adults dressed in jarocho outfits. Sometimes actual jarocho dresses are on display, marking the family or neighborhood's connection to a long-standing tradition in which the colors of the dresses, the embroidery patterns, and the adornments denote specific jarocho families. Religious artifacts have been replaced (or augmented) with jarocho artifacts so that the ostensibly religious feast actually sanctifies jarocho heritage. The specific and personal images incorporated into the shrines demonstrates the communal use of the Fiesta de los Cruces celebration as a regional marker.

After the public feast, the *arroz a la tumbada*, while townspeople drank *horchata* (rice drink) in the central square and chatted with friends and relatives, many Alvadareños paraded their children, dressed in traditional lace outfits through the streets of the town. Later in the evening, *tarimas* were placed in strategic locations to encourage spontaneous jarocho dance improvisations while roving musicians paraded through the streets to play *sones*. Regional groups, as representatives of official culture, performed staged jarocho choreography on a central proscenium platform. The Alvadareño Fiesta de los Cruces was a celebration of jarocho in all of its variants--as folklore, spectacle, history, and lineage.

After the Mexican Revolution provinces like Veracruz, came to be viewed as seminal sites for cultural activities that validated mixed-race heritage and unified the developing Mexican nation. The neo-romantic search for a "volk" or folk tradition in Mexico--like the development of nationalist ideology in Germany, France and other European nations--called for new imaginations of the Mexican republic. To recoup folk traditions, the government placed teachers and folklore specialists in regional villages and Veracruz, with its multi-racial population and persistent jarocho heritage, was ideally situated as a breeding ground for the invented mythos of the Mexican province.

In effect, the provinces were "inspirational" thematic material for elite urban art. Between 1920 and 1940, Mexico City artists, trained primarily in European art forms, journeyed to the provinces to recoup Totonac, Zapotec and jarocho songs and dances and bring them back to the capital. Provincial artists responded to the demand and created productions that capitalized on folklore as a marketable commodity.

Today in Veracruz, the university continues to foster activities that emphasize regional customs. Fifteen professional performance groups exist under the auspices of the Universidad Veracruzana and over half of these companies are folkloric. One example of the government's ongoing support of folklore is the Ballet Folklórico de la Universidad Veracruzana, a professional dance company run by *maestro* Miguel Velez that has been in existence for forty years and performs regularly in the Teatro del Estado. The company maintains a fully paid corp of 60 dancers as well as musicians, technicians, and an apprentice group. Members rehearse full time and present a repertory of Native American, Veracruzian, Latin American, and Mexican national dance programs. The company differentiates itself from folkloric dance companies like Amalia

Hernandez' Ballet Folklórico de Mexico on the grounds of presumed "authenticity." Dances are assiduously researched and costumes carefully crafted to closely represent regional customs. In actuality the company's work, like all staged folkloric dance work, is a creative re-interpretation of communal dance forms.

Dancer's performing in Ballet Folklórico de la Universidad Veracruzana consider their work representative of the region and an important part of their cultural heritage. In an interview, two of the company dancers, a couple named Elsa and Arturo, clarify what folkloric dancing means to them. Arturo says:

Para nosotros es la manera de cómo estar unidos todo México, ¿no? Como que el folklor en Mexico es un lazo de unión, es un lazo de fraternidad, es algo muy bonito.

[For us, it's a way of being united with all of Mexico. Because folklore is Mexico--a tie uniting us in brotherhood. It's very nice].⁹

His wife Elsa takes the comment a step further:

Yo lo vería como una necesidad también. Pienso que en nuestro tiempo, a nosotros nos tocó vivir en este tiempo, si a mi me hubiera tocado vivir el tiempo de mis abuelitos, mis bisabuelitos, votaparabuelitos, yo hubiera pertenecido a un grupo de danzantes o alguna fiesta que tuviera en particular en nuestro pueblo, pero como no viví en ese tiempo la alternativa que tenemos es hacer la danza folklórica.

[I see it as a necessity too. Because I think that in our time, the time in which we live--If I had been born during the time of my grandparents, my great-grandparents, my great-great-grandparents I would have belonged to a group of dancers or some festival that was particular to my town--but because I don't live in those times, the alternative that we have is to do folkloric dancing].¹⁰

To some extent, the dancer's responses are a reiteration of government ideology--they believe that dancing unifies the people of Mexico but, the ideology is reworked by the performers to meet their personal identity needs. For Elsa, dancing connects her to a multi-generational practice that locates her within the contemporary community and through dance she is able to "live" her ancestors, and allow them to influence her present-day life. When asked if folkloric dancing is particular to a certain historical period. Elsa responds:

Siempre ha sido así México, desde toda la vida desde nuestros antepasados, desde, para todos son los rituales las danzas, pues yo diría un poco, una frase así media "cursi" que es un pueblo que baila Mexico. Es un pueblo que baila. Mexico es un pueblo que baila. Mexico es danza, Mexico es danza y folklor principalmente.

[It's always been like that in Mexico. From the time of our ancestors, all of our dance rituals. I'm going to tell you a little common phrase, a saying, that the people dance Mexico. Mexico is a people/town that dances. Mexico is dance and folklore, primarily].¹¹

Even though the Mexican government promotes folkloric dancing to instill cultural awareness, Elsa responds is on a personal level. She dances because "her people" have always done so. Like African Americans who, during the post 1960's era of Black consciousness celebrated

their roots by creating African dance companies, Elsa uses dance to "find her roots" in Mexico. She may not be aware of the political implications of emphasizing dance as a heritage tradition and de-emphasizing the cosmopolitan aspects of Mexican life. She simply accepts dancing as Mexico's cultural legacy. Company director Velez puts this sense of "roots" expressed through folkloric dance more succinctly when he states:

Lo más importante en los pueblos para que puedan crecer, para que se puedan cultivar, es que conozca su raíz, que conozca su origen, que se sientan orgullosos de hablar un idioma, un Azteca, etc. , de tener fiestas muy propias en su región. Pienso que es importante el mantener vigentes las tradiciones de este país.

[The most important thing for the people to grow, for them to be nourished, is for them to know their origins. They should be proud to speak their languages (Aztec, etc.) and have festivals typical of their region. . . I think that its important to keep the country's traditions alive].¹²

Roots--the sense of connectedness to a historical past--is one reason why people in general, and Jalapeños in particular, participate in folkloric dancing. Performing folklore can also be seen as a political strategy of negating the contemporary norm of proscenium dance. While performed representations of folkloric heritage sometimes support nationalist agendas, they are also important cohesive mechanisms for personal explorations of self-hood. This function of performance is like the "transformation of being" described by Richard Schechner in Between Theater and Anthropology. "The dancer is 'not himself' and yet 'not not himself,'" ¹³ the dancer is using the performance as a vehicle for spiritual/psychological connection with an ancestral past. Or, as Jack Kugelmass states in his article "The Rites of the Tribe:" "performance itself is meaningful and in part because the rites do attempt to shape and systematize otherwise abstract and diffuse cultural orientations."¹⁴ Perhaps in the fragmented transcultural gloabl society, the need for modernist expression of folkloric rootedness is even greater.

Jarocho, as described in this paper is a fluid art form that can surface as an Afro-Mexican expressive dance, a spontaneous community festival, a government-sponsored spectacle, or a memory that links individuals to an ancestral past. Because folk traditions are improvised, mutable, and dynamic, individual participants transform jarocho song and dance into an expressive slate for (re)writing personal myths and (re)iterating community memories.

copyright 1997, Anita Gonzalez

Notes

¹ Daniel Edward Sheehy, "The Son Jarocho: The History, Style, and Repertory of a Changing Mexican Musical Tradition," U of California at Los Angeles, 1979, 17.

² Sheehy, 355.

³ Sheehy, 57.

⁴ As with most jarochos, there are several versions of the song. Sheehy presents only one example of Los Negritos text.

⁵ Sheehy, 13.

⁶ Sheehy, 57.

⁷ Richard Jackson, The Black Image in Latin American Literature (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press), 2.

⁸ Information about Tlacotalpan and Alvarado folkloric competition was gleaned from conversations with residents of each of the towns. A novel, Un son que canta en el río by Roberto Blanco details the friendly animosity of the two towns. The Tlacotalpan festival, which rivals the Fiesta de Los Cruces is the Fiesta de la Candelaria celebrated in the beginning of February.

⁹ Elsa Malpica Muñoz and Arturo García Solís, personal interview, 5 June 1995.

¹⁰ Malpica Muñoz and García Solís interview.

¹¹ Malpica Muñoz and García Solís interview.

¹² Miguel Velez, personal interview, 6 June 1995.

¹³ Richard Schechner, Between Theater and Anthropology (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), 4.

¹⁴ Jack Kugelmas, "The Rites of the Tribe: American Jewish Tourism in Poland," Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture, eds Ivan Karp, Christine Kreamer, and Steven Lavine, (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press), 415.