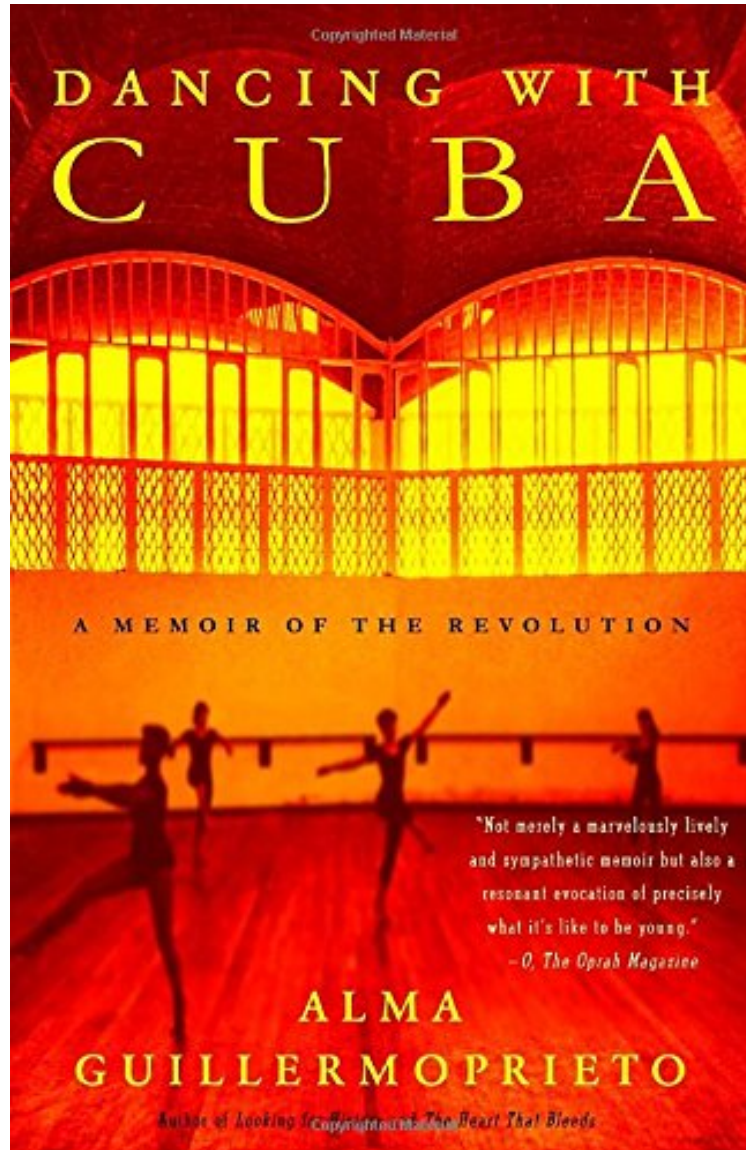


(Download free pdf) Dancing with Cuba: A Memoir of the Revolution

Dancing with Cuba: A Memoir of the Revolution

Alma Guillermoprieto

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Alma Guillermoprieto : Dancing with Cuba: A Memoir of the Revolution before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Dancing with Cuba: A Memoir of the Revolution:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Cuba failing through the lens of a dancerBy Tony SchwalmThis book is a commentary on a failing economic system as seen through the eyes of young woman utterly committed to

ballet. That she has the acumen to look back twenty-five years and make sense of what she felt then and bring it to the page now makes her a wonderful storyteller. Her narrative provides a portal into a world few Americans understood except as a menace, and her change over the course of six months is a captivating tale told well. Read the book as a personal essay, not a commentary on politics, though it is.⁷ of 7 people found the following review helpful. Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dancer By tortuga The person who stressed this is a memoir is on target though I think it is quite well written. As a long time admirer of Guillermoprieto's journalism I found this a fascinating and unfaiingly honest account of her life as a dance teacher in Cuba before she became a writer. IT IS a memoir and the self pity of her young self is conveyed with a brutal honesty--it is the middle-aged writer descibing where she once was and her perspective is a perfect balance of scorn and affection for who she was. If you are looking for a wide ranging view of the revolution, this is not the book you want to read, though you will get a very interesting perspective on life in Cuba in the early 1970s. If you have not read anything by her before, read *The Heart That Bleeds* and *Looking for History* (as well as Mark Danner's *The Massacre at El Mozote*, a story she was responsible, with Ray Bonner at the Times, for breaking in 1982. She is a remarkable writer and this memoir was one of my favorite reads of the last several years.⁰ of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By heidi rotterdam Great book! Especially for those who plan a trip to Cuba.

In 1970 a young dancer named Alma Guillermoprieto left New York to take a job teaching at Cubas National School of Dance. For six months, she worked in mirrorless studios (it was considered more revolutionary); her poorly trained but ardent students worked without them but dreamt of greatness. Yet in the midst of chronic shortages and revolutionary upheaval, Guillermoprieto found in Cuba a people whose sense of purpose touched her forever. In this electrifying memoir, Guillermoprietonow an award-winning journalist and arguably one of our finest writers on Latin America resurrects a time when dancers and revolutionaries seemed to occupy the same historical stage and even a floor exercise could be a profoundly political act. Exuberant and elegiac, tender and unsparing, *Dancing with Cuba* is a triumph of memory and feeling.

From Publishers Weekly Journalist Guillermoprieto (*Looking for History*; *The Heart That Bleeds*; etc.) revisits the six months in 1970 she spent teaching modern dance in Cuba. At the state-supported school where she finds neither mirrors nor music, but dedicated yet ill-trained students, Guillermoprieto realizes she's embarked on a journey that would "thoroughly unravel my life." Her intense commitment to art may seem a contrast to the revolution and its aftermath, yet it provides a jumping-off point for her book about dance, which is really about Cuba and a political coming-of-age. As the then 20-year-old former student of Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham makes the "inimitable elastic flow" of dance visible, she discusses her political education through composite characters, invented dialogue and reconstructed letters. The detail can be daunting, pedestrian even, but the experience is always lifelike. Guillermoprieto captures the complexity of a revolution that scared and bewildered but attracted her. The racism, homophobia and police activities stir "the insidious counterrevolutionary" within, but do not still the discovery that she "belonged to a wider community than that of my friends and fellow dancers." In Nicaragua several years later, Guillermoprieto finds her second calling - journalism - yet she doesn't leave dance behind. It informs her political analysis as she looks back to the failure of the Ten Million Ton Harvest: "any dancer could have told Fidel that the movements of the dance of [harvesting sugarcane]... can't be learned in a single day..." Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Award-winning Mexican-born journalist Guillermoprieto has made Latin America her beat for the past 25 years, writing perceptive and unflinching reports for the *New Yorker* and several books, including *Looking for History* (2000). She now tells the involving and visceral story of her political awakening, disclosing the fact that this renowned writer of conscience initially wanted to be a dancer and studied with the best: Martha Graham, Twyla Tharp, and Merce Cunningham. Eventually recognizing that she isn't destined for stardom, Guillermoprieto accepts an invitation to teach dance in Havana. Abysmally ignorant about Cuba and therefore utterly unprepared for the harsh realities and painful paradoxes that await, she arrives on May 1, 1970, and is soon struggling to stay sane at a state-run dance boarding school with inadequate food, no mirrors, no music, and students who have never seen modern dance before. Guillermoprieto vividly and purposefully recounts her acute discomfort with the strained and ludicrous rhetoric of the revolution, her sorrow over Castro's catastrophic failures, her astonishment at the great valor of Cuba's people, and her gradual recognition of her true calling as a journalist. Guillermoprieto's riveting portrait of herself as a young artist is an excellent corollary to Gioconda Belli's *Country under My Skin* (2002). Donna Seaman Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved Not merely a marvelously lively and sympathetic memoir but also a resonant evocation of precisely what its like to be young. --O, The Oprah Magazine There is no clear course to the past but only a kind of dead reckoning. It is such reckoning that gives authenticity to Ms. Guillermoprietos uneasy and fascinating account, and more than 30 years after the events, a pulsing sense of discovery. --The New York Times One of the most astute and eloquent chroniclers of contemporary Latin America. . . . Guillermoprietos description of everyday life under the revolution is intimate and poignant, and also tough-minded and shrewd. --San Francisco Chronicle *Dancing with Cuba* is about falling in love

with this mythic place or, more precisely, trying to. . . . A sympathetic yet ultimately unsparing account of a personal odyssey that ends not triumphantly but nonetheless extraordinarily. --The Nation "A pleasure to read, full of humanity, sly humor, curiosity and knowledge." Katha Pollitt, The New York Times Book "Written with the deftness that has made Guillermoprieto's dispatches in The New Yorker some of the best writing on Latin America, Dancing with Cuba makes a significant contribution to the in-depth understanding of contemporary Cuba." -The Miami Herald Few dancers write memoirs, and so the world of dance remains an elegant mystery to many of us This is a tale, then, of artists and poets, dancers and architects bewildered, always in conflict, trying to keep alive standards which they knew were essential, but which were also suspect, not to say dangerous. Doris Lessing, The New York Observer "An honest memoir filled with the struggles most young people wrestle with: love, identity and idealism." -USA Today "The memoir's greatest strength is its ability to infect the reader with the feverish, hopeful and heartbreaking sense of the early days of the revolution." Elle "As much a pleasure as an astonishment." - Harper's "Written with dignity and without rhetoric or undue emotion: when this author flays her feelings, it's because she is utterly alive with protest." - Kirkus sGuillermoprieto is one of the most perceptive commentators on Latin America, a writer whose political analysis is sensitive to culture and history and punctuated by telling details that illuminate larger dilemmas. This bittersweet remembrance of youthful hopes and disillusionment, of the contrast between the idealism of revolutionary aspirations and the clay feet of day-to-day revolutionaries, is set against the story of six months she spent in Cuba as a dance teacher in 1970this marvelous book is almost impossible to put down. Foreign Affairs "Gracefully told...splendidly rendered into English by Esther Allen." - Los Angeles Times Book A vivid chronicle. The Boston GlobeIn exploring her own evolving relationship to art and politics[Guillermoprieto] proposes a genuinely original take on history. To the traditional discussion of events and ideologies she adds psychology, rhetorical analysis, and, most provocatively, ideas about how ones physical body participates in the experience of cultural identity. Sarah Kerr, The New York of Books [A] beautifully written novelistic memoir. San Antonio Express-NewsA compelling look back from the safe wisdom of middle age at the role a revolution played in transforming this young dancer into a journalist. Sacramento News An insightful account of a time when the revolution was past its dawn but had not yet descended into cynical political bankruptcyalso a powerful memoir of a sometimes painful journey that thoroughly unraveled its authors life, turning a nave young artist into a confusedly politicized adult. The EconomistExcellentGuillermoprieto writes so well. NewsdayGuillermoprieto brings out the flavor of the timeinsightful. Street Weekly (Miami) [Dancing with Cuba] is a loose mix of half-memories, reporting and musings on the place and meaning of artThe mix works for some of the same reasons Guillermoprieto had such difficulty in Cuba the sophisticated, intelligent singularity of her voice, her insistence on recognizing lifes grays and her sly wit. Associated PressA bittersweet page-turner. Dance Teacher[Dancing with Cuba] is elegantly written and captures both the spirit and rhythms of Cuba during a period of dramatic change and political upheaval. Tucson Citizen (Tucson, AZ)A vivid memoir. The Wall Street Journal In recalling and reconstructing those days, [Guillermoprieto] has given us a convincing portrait of a young woman torn between her sympathy for those in need and her desire to do nothing except her art, between her conviction that the Castroites were trying to do good and her revulsion at their rhetoric, their methods and their very selves. The Washington Post Book World