

## From Rigaudon to Reggaeton:

### The Perception and Reception of European Dance Cultures in the Caribbean

*Bill Tuck*

The *contradanza* as a musical form and as a dance occupied a very significant place in Cuban society from at least the late 18<sup>th</sup> century onward -- the earliest *contradanza* to be published in Cuba, *San Pascual Bailon*, dates from 1803.<sup>1</sup> It was not, of course, the only dance form even at that early date, but it did serve as a basis for many of the later developments, from *danzon* to *rhumba*, that have emerged in Cuba, a country peculiarly rich in varieties of dance. It is not with these later developments that I am concerned, however, but with the deceptively simple question: how might the *contradanza* have arrived in Cuba?

Cuba at this time was still a Spanish colony. It had been ruled and dominated by Spain from soon after their arrival in 1492 until their defeat in the Spanish-American War of 1898, with a brief occupation by the British in 1762-3 (after which it was returned to Spain in exchange for Florida).

The typical instrumentation that provided the accompaniment for the *contradanza* (and its later derivatives, the *danza* and the *danzon*) was the *orquesta typica*, itself derived from the military bands of the period. An example is illustrated here (Figure 1) albeit from a much later period.



Fig. 1. Orquesta Enrique Peña, with Peña seated left

As to the origins of the *contradanza*, it may as well be said at the outset that the answers suggested here are inconclusive: we may never know precisely how it arrived in Cuba, but in the course of the investigation much can be learned about the ways in which European dance forms were perceived and received as they moved from one country to another, and how they were adapted then adopted by the receiving host. As with many travels, the journey may prove more interesting than the arrival.

We begin this exploration with a short passage from one of the most important novels written about life in early 19<sup>th</sup> century Cuba -- Cirilo Villaverde's *Cecilia Valdez*. The book is set in the Havana of the 1820s or 30s (Havana was at that time the largest city in the Americas -- bigger even than New York) and the scene described is of a ball:

“The bald man led Mercedes by the hand and stood stock still with her, facing the orchestra which he imperiously ordered to play a court minuet. This grave and elaborately formal dance had fallen into disuse in the era of which we are speaking, but because it was the custom in respectable or elite circles, people of colour in Cuba always reserved it for opening their fiestas.

That old-fashioned dance was executed fairly gracefully by the woman, and grotesquely by the man; the former was greeted by the spectators with thunderous applause, and then, without further ado, the real dancing began, that is to say what is known as Cuban dance, a modification of Spanish dance so special and so unusual that its origin is scarcely discernible.

It must have been ten at night and the ball was at its height. People were dancing in a frenzy. Above the sound of the orchestra with its deafening kettledrums there could be heard, in perfect time to the music, the monotonous and continuous shuffling of feet; a requisite without which people of colour do not believe that it is possible to keep perfect time to the music when dancing Creole-style

In the era of which we are speaking the latest vogue was for country dances with set figures, some of which were so difficult and complicated that it was necessary to learn them first before daring to perform them in public, since anyone who made a misstep laid himself open to ridicule, such a mistake was known as getting lost. The man who placed himself at the head of the dancers set the figure and the other couples had to follow it or leave the rows of dancers. At every ball there was usually an expert dancer or maestro to whom the other dancers yielded or granted the right to ‘set the figure’, which on taking the lead again, he changed at will. The one who set the most unusual and complicated figures enhanced his reputation as an excellent dancer and the women regarded it as an honour to be his companion or partner.”<sup>2</sup>

Thus, we are dealing with what is clearly recognisable as a Playford-style dance of the ‘longways for as many as will’ type, but with the extra competitive element in that the man of the top couple sets the figure and may try to devise it so that others may struggle to follow. The top couple work their way down the set, with others joining in as they reach them. When the top couple get to the bottom of the set they work their way up again. On reaching the top once more they may change the figure.

The first observation is that the way the dance evolves provides a very convenient mechanism for dance creation without the need for a ‘caller’ or for any written record of figures to be pre-learned. In the case described above, the dance is not named, nor is the music. Of course, the best such creations may later be remembered and written down, creating a repertoire of dances which can be pre-learned or ‘called’, thus allowing all in the set to join in at once.

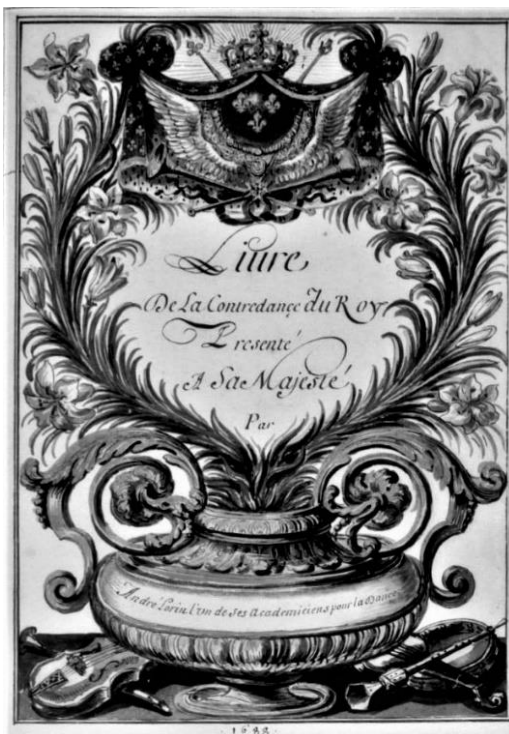
Is this, in fact, the way that ‘longways progressive dances’ originated back in their presumed country of origin, England? Do we have something here that even predates the 1651 Playford collection that is now so familiar to us? No longer is there any need to speculate on how the dances originated -- choreographed then taught by a ‘dancing master’ – they just arise as improvised forms and the best survive. No creator, just evolution and survival of the fittest in the best Darwinian manner!<sup>3</sup> (This will not, of course, serve as an explanation for the origin of the many ‘round’ dances that appear in Playford, or those for just two, three or four couples.)

The *contradanza*, on the other hand, does not arrive in Spain until the early 18<sup>th</sup> century and the establishment of the Bourbon monarchy from France. At this point tastes change towards French style dancing and in particular the French *contredanse* and its later derivatives: cotillion, quadrille, etc. By mid-century the musical form of the *contradanza* is well-established in Madrid and appears in the dancing manuals. Cuba at this time was, of course, still a Spanish colony. While it is possible that the route by which Villaverde's *contradanza* gets to Havana in the early 1800s is simply its direct transfer from Spain, this is not the most interesting of several plausible suggestions. Supporting evidence would need to show that the form described in his novel bears a strong resemblance to the *contradanza* as practised at that time in Spain.

Another path that has been suggested is the occupation by Britain of Havana during the two-year period 1762-3. Given the predilection for dancing among the English military (as shown, for example, at the Duchess of Richmond's Ball on the eve of the Battle of Waterloo) this may appear possible, although this seems an implausibly short period for a new dance fashion to be implanted. We will return to this later.

The third suggested path, proposed by several authors, including the well-known Cuban novelist and musicologist Alejo Carpentier, is that the *contradanza* arrived from the neighbouring island of Hispaniola at the time of the slave revolt of the 1790s. This broke out in the French colony of Saint Domingue (the western part of the island, now Haiti) and led to widespread massacres which forced all of the white and much of the mixed-race population to flee, many ending up in eastern Cuba.<sup>4</sup>

A fourth possible route is via the armies of Napoleon. These were well-versed in the art of dance and it is known that in Europe they were responsible for the rapid spread of 'quadrille fever' throughout the territories in which they were engaged. Could the same have happened during their misadventures into the Caribbean conflicts around 1800?<sup>5</sup>



### **The investigation**

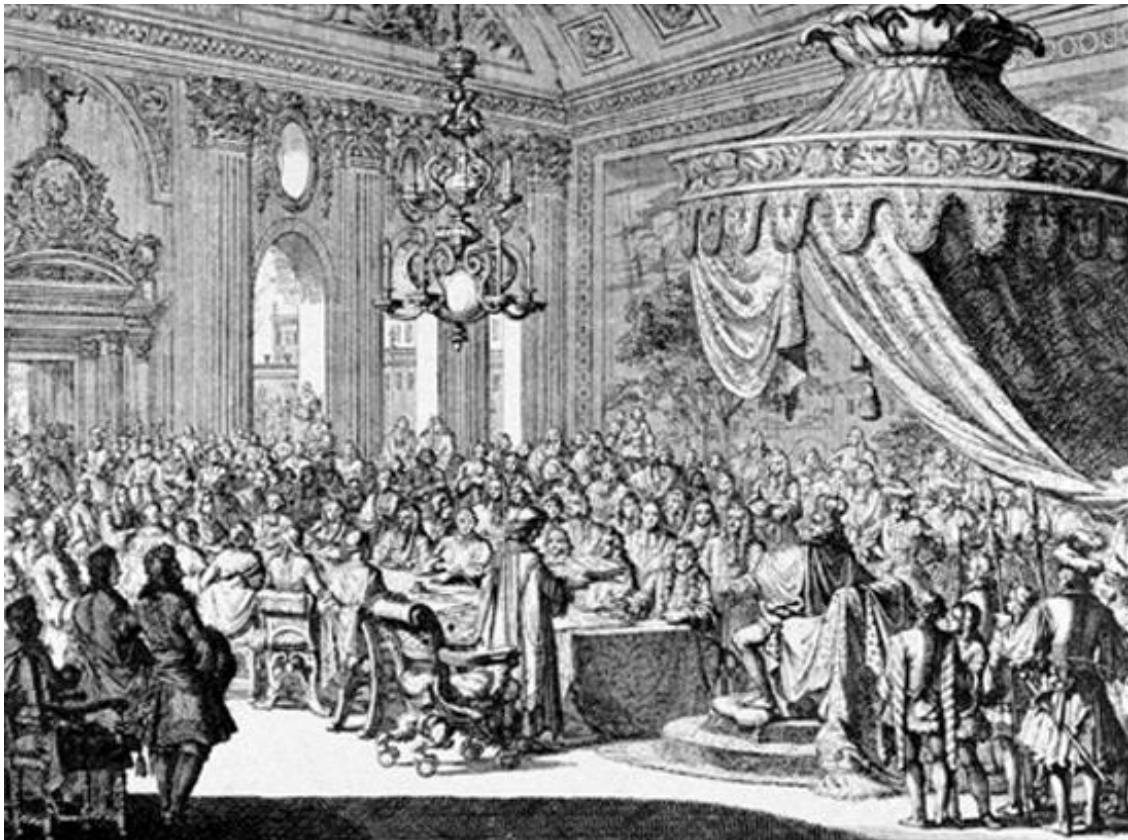
The first exhibit in our quest to solve the mystery of our Cuban dance's origin is the manuscript that André Lorin presented to Louis XIV a year or so after his visit to England in 1685.<sup>6</sup> This clearly describes the mechanism of the 'progressive longways set', with the top couple initiating the dance which then progresses down the set until all have joined in and terminates when the top couple have regained the top of the set. Lorin's visit to England took place in August 1685. He was a member of a diplomatic party sent by Louis to congratulate James II on his victory over the Monmouth rebellion, which had been crushed in July of that year. It is usually assumed that Lorin, as a recognised 'dancing master' had explicit instructions to find out how the English were dancing at this time. His manuscript (in two parts,

**Fig. 2.** Frontispiece of André Lorin's *Livre de la Contredance du Roy* (1688)

the second in 1688<sup>7</sup>) is thus an invaluable guide to current English practices as well as providing a more refined version that he hoped would prove suitable for the taste of the French court.

The year 1685, the time of Lorin's visit to England, was a very interesting year – and not only for dance. In February of that year Charles II had died. Throughout his reign he had been an active (if informal) promoter of dance and other 'social sports', believing that they helped distract the populace from rebellion. His death was followed in April by the coronation of his brother James. Rebellions broke out soon after, the most serious being that led by the Duke of Monmouth (known to have been a fine dancer). This was brutally crushed by the King's army. In a series of trials that came to be known as the Bloody Assizes, the King's judges—most notably, George Jeffreys—condemned Monmouth and 250 of his fellow rebels to be executed, while something like 800 were sentenced to transportation and indentured servitude in the West Indies. Given the well-documented dance interests of their leader, Monmouth, there must have been many among the 800 who could dance a longways set.

In France, in October of that same year, another committed dancer, Louis XIV, revoked the Edict of Nantes (with the Edict of Fontainebleau), which led to the expulsion from France of many thousands of Huguenots unwilling to convert to Catholicism. It might be expected that among them would have been a number of dancing masters. This aspect of the revocation and consequent emigration appears to have been little explored by dance historians, yet it may have been an important factor in the dissemination of European dance forms across a much wider world. Although most of the Huguenots sought sanctuary in England or on the Continent, large numbers also moved to the Caribbean and the Americas.



**Fig. 3.** Signing of the *Edict of Fontainebleau* (revoking the *Edict of Nantes*)

The French *Académie Royale de Danse* was established by Louis XIV in 1661. It was a licencing authority for dance teachers, ensuring standards. It also determined what dances could be taught and formalised exactly how they were to be taught. All dancing masters in the city of Paris were required to register at the *Académie Royale*; after an audition and classes they could be voted a ‘letter of mastery’ or a diploma. Fees were high: 300 pounds sterling apiece for licences to teach. Since there were over 650 dancing masters in Paris at this time, its income was substantial. Not only did the organisation oversee the teaching of dance but also the academicians were expected to vote on the acceptability of any new dances. All choreography, according to the charter, was forbidden to be performed or taught unless it had first been passed by a majority voice vote. The net effect of such a ruling was to enforce orthodoxy in dance. The *Académie* thus functioned as a monopoly to enforce conservative standards in dance.<sup>8</sup>

The Act of Revocation was draconian: members of the Huguenot nobility must either convert, or leave the country within two weeks, forfeiting their possessions. How many dancing masters were members of the *Académie* in 1685 and how many of these were Protestant Huguenots? Or were Protestants, in fact, excluded from membership? These are all interesting questions deserving of further research.<sup>9</sup> It is well-recorded that the Protestant nobility from the time of Henry IV (Henry III of Navarre from 1572 and King of France from 1589-1610) were well acquainted with dance, despite frequent admonishment from their more hard-line co-religionists. And it was Henry – later converted to Catholicism -- that introduced the Edict of Nantes (1598) giving religious freedom to Protestants.<sup>10</sup> There is no reason to believe that the Protestant nobility remained any less enthusiastic about dance over the next century or so.

Why did Louis feel compelled to revoke the Edict that gave protection to Protestant believers? The answer given in the edict itself that “now we are all Catholics, the act is no longer needed” is thoroughly disingenuous. It is more likely that the Monmouth rebellion against Catholic James II was a warning of the still potent power of Protestantism and that the rising economic strength of this group in France may come to threaten his own position if he did not take immediate action. We have already mentioned that the Duke of Monmouth had been, in his youth, an enthusiastic and skilful dancer. Born in 1649, named as James Crofts and the illegitimate son of Charles II, he is recorded as having performed important roles, usually reserved for professional dancers, in the court masques of the Restoration period. His wife, Anne Scott (whose name he took on marriage) also was renowned as skilful in this art, but was unfortunately injured in a fall while performing and never regained her earlier ability, walking with a permanent limp. As a child, Monmouth had been raised in Protestant circles in Belgium and the Netherlands and would almost certainly have been well-acquainted with the Huguenot nobility. What role did dance play in such circles? Unlike many hard-line Puritans, it seems likely that within aristocratic circles at least there was considerable freedom to engage in such activities. If so, what kinds of dancing would they do? By the 1660s they may well have been familiar with the forms described in Playford.

Louis himself was, of course, a serious dancer in his youth. This leads to the intriguing possibility that Louis’ eagerness to get Lorin to find out what the English were up to, dance-wise, was as much to do with his reluctance to ask his Huguenot citizens for information as with his suspicion that he may be missing out on some crucial choreological information. Lorin, in other words, was a spy. Louis’ long term goal was that the accession of Catholic James II

might lead to further gains in re-establishing Catholicism as the uniting religion of Europe – besides, if he were to meet with the English king at some point, then knowing the rituals of dance then current at the English court could provide a diplomatic advantage.

A more obvious motive for Louis' interest in finding out about 'English dancing' is that he saw the potential that dance had to inhibit rebellious behaviour within his subjects. Louis' court at Versailles, it is well known, used compulsory dancing, along with gambling and a formidable dress code to occupy the time and the financial resources of his courtiers, so they would have little of either left over to even consider fomenting rebellions. Could the same approach, he might have wondered, work on the population in general – or at least on the important upper echelons of society?

In England this had been the explicit suggestion of the Duke of Newcastle with his recommendation to Charles II to reinstate the 'old sports'. (The 'Book of Sports', first published with the support of James I in 1617, had been banned by the Puritans and publicly burned in 1643 by act of parliament):



Fig. 4. James Scott, Duke of Monmouth

“Newcastle attaches a great deal of importance to entertainment. He enumerates the amusements proper to royalty; but the most important of all is royal progresses through the countryside, because they foster loyalty among the people. Puritan asceticism and the proscription of jollity had bred rebellion. Let the maypole, the hobby-horse, the morris dance, the bagpipes, cakes and ale, and the festivities appropriate to Christmas, Shrovetide, and other holidays make their reappearance, ‘and all the olde Holedayes, with their Mirth, and rightes sett up agen; Feastinge daylonge will be in Merrye Englande, for Englande Is so plentiful off all provitions, that iff wee doe not eate them theye will Eate Use, so wee feaste in our Defense’.”<sup>11</sup> (in A.S. Turberville, *A History of Welbeck Abbey and Its Owners*, 2 vols., 1938, 1.171-176)

Note the curious phrase ‘If we do not eat them, they will eat us’. William Cavendish the Duke of Newcastle had been tutor to Charles before the Civil War. His advice to restore the various ‘sports and festivities’ – including dancing – that had been prohibited by the Puritans must therefore be taken seriously. The underlying motive however was that by encouraging such wholesome activities any tendency to rebellion would be subverted. In this he was successful: during the 25 years of Charles II’s reign the country was relatively peaceful.

In France, Louis may have been facing a similar problem. The French dances being created by the academicians of the *Académie Royale* since its foundation in 1661 – Beauchamp, Feuillet,

Pécour, and others – were quite difficult to perform and this fact, it may have been feared, would likely cause dissent among the courtiers. At the same time, Louis needed the formality of dance to maintain court protocol. One reason for his interest in the English dances – and why he might have sent Lorin to spy on them – was that he believed they might offer a useful alternative to the too demanding output from the *Académie*, while nevertheless providing for court decorum.

Charles II had been exiled for some time in France during the English Civil War, and later in the Netherlands. The interesting question is whether Charles had contact with members of the Huguenot nobility during this period. This would seem to have been highly likely. One important faction of the court in exile was that led by Prince Rupert, who had commanded the Royalist cavalry during the Civil War. Born in Prague he had been brought up within Protestant circles in The Hague, to escape the Thirty Years War, before moving to England.

Rupert was a younger son of the German prince Frederick V, Elector Palatine and his wife Elizabeth, the eldest daughter of James VI of Scotland and I of England. Thus Rupert was the nephew of King Charles I of England, who made him Duke of Cumberland and Earl of Holderness, and the first cousin of Charles II of England. His sister Electress Sophia was the mother of George I of Great Britain.

“In his journal entry for October 27, 1684 the French courtier Dangeau noted that country dances taught by an Englishman named Isaac had been danced at court for the first time. Although this is the earliest documentation for the introduction of English country dances into French court circles it is certainly possible that English dances might have been performed at the court of Charles II during his years of exile on the continent 1651 – 1660; such dances would therefore have been familiar to at least some French aristocrats.”<sup>12</sup>

Prince Rupert, through his continental Protestant contacts would certainly be familiar with the Huguenot nobility. English Protestant Royalists are therefore one possible path of transmission of ‘country dances’ to France prior to 1685. Furthermore, during the Interregnum, Rupert led a company of privateers in the Caribbean for several years and may well have been in contact with the many Huguenot refugees who had similarly left France due to mounting political oppression (even before the 1685 Act).

### **Impact on Caribbean colonies**

What was happening in the Caribbean at this time? The period from the 1620s up to the 1680s was the great period of exploration and colonisation for both English and French adventurers. Wars and political or religious oppression in Europe had driven many to seek their fortune abroad, particularly to the Caribbean, where Spanish shipping provided a tempting prey. This would have been especially attractive to both French and English Protestants, including aristocratic adventurers such as Prince Rupert. It is at least conceivable that a dance culture based on the English country dance may have penetrated to the Caribbean by this route as early as the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

The place to look would be among the maritime fraternity, most of whom were engaged in one way or another with piracy. The two principal ports that served as refuges and trading posts for

the exchange of stolen merchandise were Port Royale on the island of Jamaica (claimed by the English in 1655) and the Island of Tortuga off the north coast of St Domingue (now Haiti). Tortuga was variously held by the Spanish, the English or the French during this period. Its first French governor was a Huguenot, Jean Le Vasseur, who reigned in autocratic fashion from 1642 until his assassination in 1653. It was in this period that it became renowned (along with its rival, Port Royale in Jamaica) as a haven for pirates.

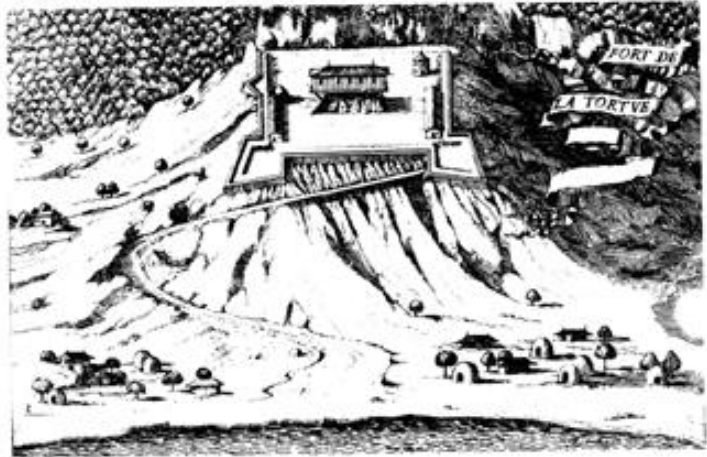


Fig. 5. Fortifications on the Island of Tortuga

Significant wealth accumulated and was spent in these two pirate havens: Port Royale had something like 20 taverns in its heyday, prior to 1692 when it was destroyed by an earthquake. Tortuga was more compact, but catered in a similar fashion and on a similar scale to those wishing to spend their ill-gotten gains. The reminiscences of ex-pirate Alexandre Exquemelin (another Huguenot) give graphic descriptions of the pirate's life, both at sea and ashore, but yield no details of any dancing.<sup>13</sup>

But did these pirates dance? This question, unfortunately, has been left unanswered by the many books that recount in great detail all other aspects of the lives of pirates – often romanticised beyond reasonable belief. Of course, the shortage of women in these pirate havens may have made the conventional couple dance unsuitable. Accounts exist however of close male partnerships, both among sea farers as well as among the buccaneers of the Saint-Domingue mainland. Such partnerships were often formally recognised as a kind of secular 'marriage' and included rights to inherit, among other benefits. It would not be unreasonable, therefore, to assume that a version of the English country dance that was akin to the all-male Morris dance might have emerged in these circumstances. The unanswered question remains: Did pirates dance? And if so, how? By the 1680s, however, piracy was in decline and the inhabitants of Tortuga were forced or encouraged to move to the northern coastal areas of Saint-Domingue and to establish plantations (initially tobacco – later sugar).

### **Saint-Domingue (later Haiti)**

1685 in the tropics was no less interesting than back in Europe. In March of 1685, Louis proclaimed the Code Noir, which paved the way for the industrial scale exploitation of slavery in Saint Domingue which, after years of fighting, was finally ceded by Spain to France in 1697. What followed was the massive import of slaves to fuel the growing sugar industry. Saint-Domingue became known as the "Pearl of the Antilles" – the richest colony in the 18th century French empire. By the 1780s, Saint-Domingue produced about 40 percent of all the sugar and 60 percent of all the coffee consumed in Europe. This single colony, roughly the size of Hawaii or Belgium, produced more sugar and coffee than all of Britain's West Indian colonies



combined. With wealth came the importation of luxury goods and the latest fashions from France – including the latest dances. But by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the standard longways set was well in decline in the home country and been replaced by cotillions and quadrilles. But perhaps it still held sway on the wilder north shores where Huguenot planters had first staked their claim? Our best account of dance in Haiti at this time comes from the work of Moreau de St Méry, but while the dance proclivities of the blacks and mulattos are described in detail, little mention is made of the ‘fashionable’ dances of the white planter elite – and no mention occurs at all of *contredanse* or ‘*contradanza*’.<sup>14</sup>

In the second half of the 1700s, Saint-Domingue accounted for a third of the entire Atlantic slave trade. Between 1764 and 1771, the average importation of slaves to Saint-Domingue varied between 10,000–15,000 per year, by 1786 about 28,000, and, from 1787 onward, the colony received more than 40,000 slaves a year. The slave population, by 1789, totalled 500,000, ruled over by a white population that, by 1789, numbered only 32,000. Not surprisingly, rebellion broke out soon after, partly inspired by the revolution then consuming the French homeland. Massacres followed and the white population fled, along with many of their servants, freed blacks and mulattos. The eastern end of the neighbouring island, Cuba, was the nearest safe haven. Oriente province and the town of Santiago da Cuba rapidly doubled in population following this massive influx of refugees in the years just prior to 1804 (when Haiti gained its independence).

It is supposed by many that it was by this path that the *contradanza* arrived in Cuba and slowly made its way to Havana at the other end of the island (15 days travel away). While this may be a plausible hypothesis, the evidence is still very patchy and the case has certainly not been proven ‘beyond reasonable doubt’. For one thing, the timing seems too late. While the French *contredanse* would have been well-known within the white planter community of Saint-Domingue (possibly along with the *contradanse anglaise*) and is likely to have been transplanted with them to eastern Cuba around 1800, their version – the *contradanza francese* – is not in the English form of ‘longways sets’, but in quadrille formation of four couples.<sup>15</sup>

### The British Occupation of Havana (1762/3)

The occupation by the British of Havana in 1762 was mentioned at the beginning of this paper as a possible source of the *contradanza*. This is generally dismissed on the grounds that the period of occupation – just 11 months (after which Cuba was exchanged for Florida) – is too short for any new dance style to become established. Furthermore, there was at least initially substantial hostility to the occupying regime as indicated by the refusal of the social elite to

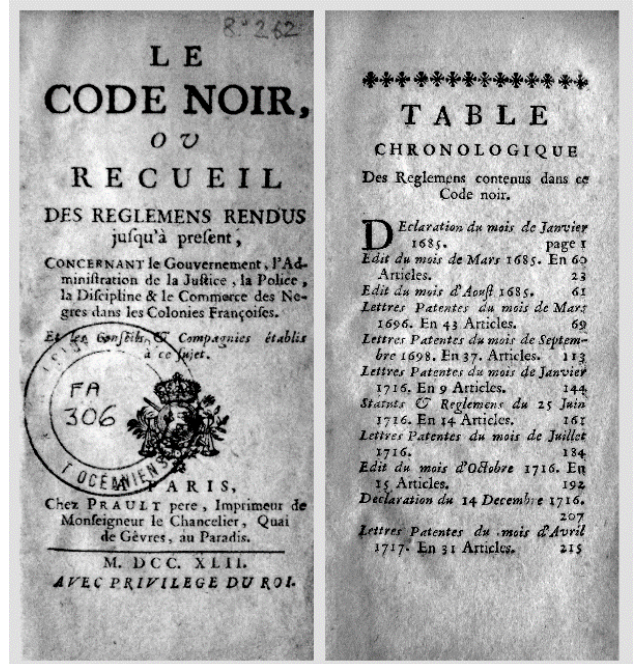


Fig. 6. Title and Contents pages of *Le Code Noire* (1742 edition)

attend an evening ball given by the Earl of Albemarle (George Keppel, commander of the British fleet). At the same time 100 ladies from Havana wrote to the Queen of Spain complaining about the ineptness of the Spanish authorities in losing the Cuban capital to the English.<sup>16</sup>

More recent studies, however, indicate that the impact of the British occupation was very much greater than the short period of 11 months would seem to allow. It had the effect of shattering the severe constraints that Spanish rule had imposed on Cuba, not only in terms of trade, but also of domestic behaviour and even religion (to the extent that the local clergy, principally Bishop Morell, were much concerned by the effect that this Protestant invasion was having on their Catholic flock). Dance was yet another weapon in Albemarle's arsenal:

“Shortly after the capitulation, Albemarle began hosting weekly soirees at his quarters on Thursday nights.... Dancing, which was a central feature of these events, facilitated interaction between British officers and Havana's leading families, particularly their daughters. At first these events were not well attended, but they soon became so, as Albemarle continued to lavish the city's leading residents with courtly pleasantries.”<sup>17</sup>

It is inconceivable that these soirees would not have included the latest versions of the English country dance, printed in England in such profusion throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In order to assess the likelihood of this being a possible source for Cuban *contradanza*, however, it would be important to know to what extent the English country dance differed (if at all) from the Spanish *contradanza* at this time. It would not be unreasonable to assume that the *contradanza* in Spain followed the form of the French *contredanse* (rather than the English ‘long-ways set’). In the second half of the 18th century, Charles Pauli writes that the French, inspired by an ancient branle, designated a cotillon, arranged some *contredanses* in the form of a square known under the name of "*contredanse française* or *cotillon*".<sup>18</sup>

It's worth noting the equivalence of these two terms. In his teaching, Pauli clearly brings to light four characteristic traits which distinguish the *contredanse française* or *cotillon* from the *anglaise* (or English country dance):

- 1) The number of participants is limited to four couples;
- 2) The formation is in a square;
- 3) The alternating between different verses with a repeated chorus;
- 4) The lack of a progression of dancers at the end of these sequences.

Clearly, this description does not match the *contradanza* as described in Villaverde's novel. The latter, on the other hand, is close to the ‘progressive, longways for as many as will’ form of the traditional English country dance, such as that likely to have been performed at Albemarle's soirees.

### **Napoleon's Armies in the Caribbean**

A further possibility is that it was the armies of Napoleon who introduced the *contredanse* to the Caribbean, during their campaign to restore French rule to Saint-Domingue/Haiti in 1801-1805. As with the English armies, the cultivation of dance was an important part of the French military organisation. There is considerable evidence that the rapid spread of the quadrille

throughout Europe was in large part aided by the French armies of Napoleon as they swept through the continent following the French Revolution.<sup>19</sup> Although the *contredanse* may well have been part of the dance repertoire of these groups, their arrival in the Caribbean around 1801 would seem to have been too late to be responsible; the *contredanse* is likely to have been well-established in Saint-Domingue through the expatriate white and creole population well before that date.

## **Conclusions**

This brings us finally back to the title of this paper: from Rigaudon to Reggaeton. Our object in the present exercise is to attempt to view History through the eyes of Dance: Dance is a lens through which we might view major historical events: wars and revolutions, trade and diplomatic relations, and so on. The examples given here – Puritan suppression of ‘sports’, Monmouth’s Rebellion, Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, Le Code Noir, the English Siege of Havana, the French Revolution – all had consequences that impinged in a major way upon the dance cultures of the time, whether at the Court of Versailles, Saint-Domingue colonials, or English villagers. There is much to be learned by approaching history in this way and valuable insights to be found by examining societies through the lens of dance. How societies danced – whether courtiers at Versailles, Haitian refugees, white planters, black slaves or English pirates – is an important key to understanding the way they functioned in the world. Lastly, the Caribbean has seen an extraordinary mix of dance cultures as a result of the numerous streams of different peoples that have at one time or another washed up there: Spanish conquistadores, French Huguenots, English exiles and pirates -- together with vast numbers of African slaves. The outcome from this rich input is equally diverse, as can be seen in the numerous different forms of dance that have emerged in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Figure 5 is just one attempt to trace this rich evolutionary tree, ending with the Reggaeton, but going back much earlier to the minuets, Rigaudons and contradanzas of the long colonial period.

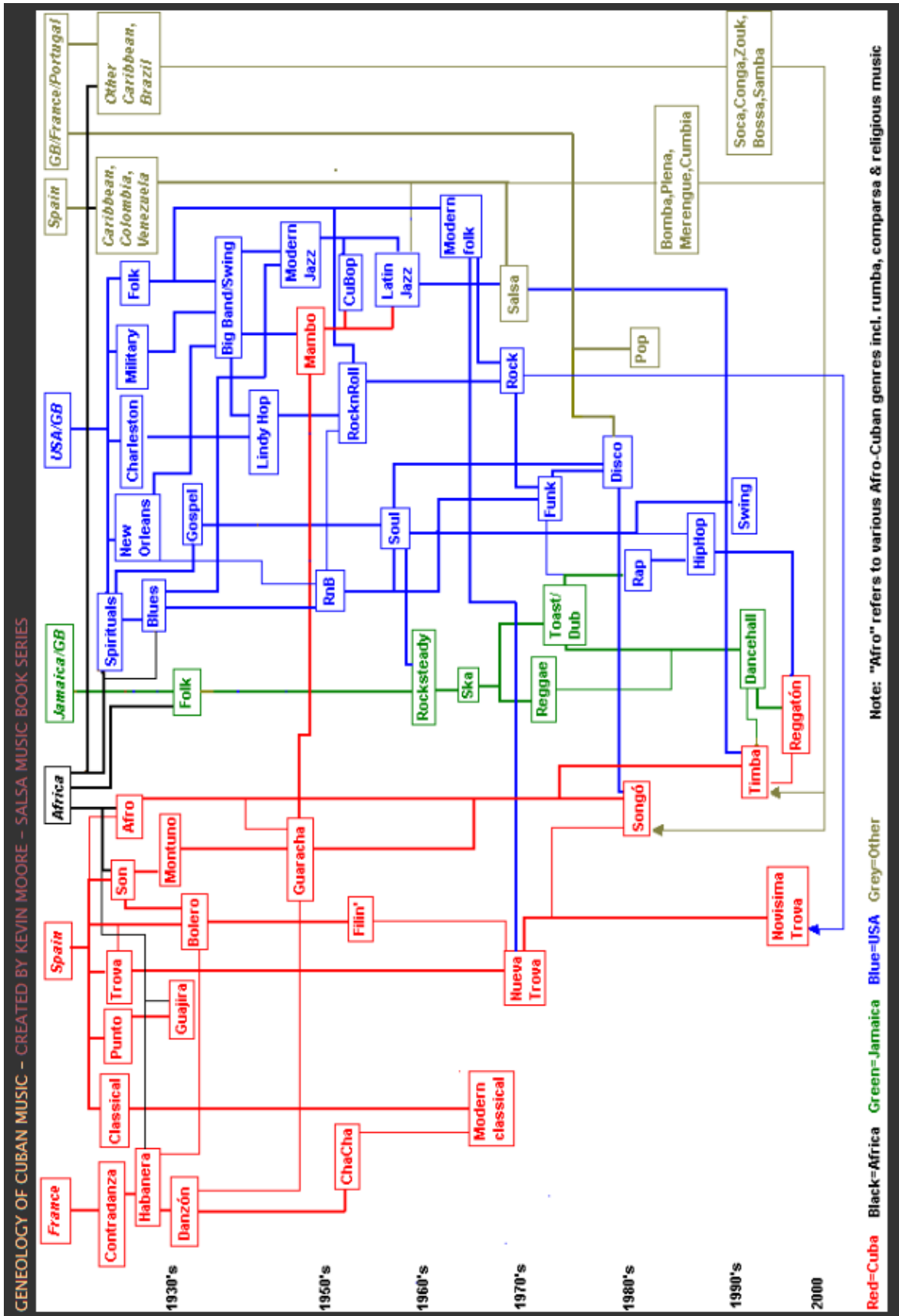


Fig. 5. Evolution of Caribbean dance styles in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (century) – Kevin Moore, *Salsa Music*

## End Notes

---

- <sup>1</sup> Peter Manuel (ed), *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, Philadelphia: Temple U. Press, 2009.
- <sup>2</sup> Cirilo Villaverde, *Cecilia Valdez*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2005, p. 39.
- <sup>3</sup> Many sources refer to this semi-improvised form of country dance, where the top couple choose the form and it is passed on to other couples as it progresses down the set (eg. Wilson, *Analysis of Country Dancing* 1808). In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century it was the top woman who called or 'set' the dance.
- <sup>4</sup> Carpentier, Alejo 2001 [1945], *Music in Cuba*, University of Minnesota Press, 2001. The hypothesis that the source of the *contradanza* was the flood of refugees from Haiti also appears on the liner notes of the CD: *Contradanzas & Danzons* (Rotterdam Conservatoire 2003).
- <sup>5</sup> Cornelis Vanistendael, Napoleon's "Grande Armée": a Driving Force Behind the Dissemination of Dance Repertoires in Continental Europe - 1803 & 1815, *Dance Research*, 36 2018, Issue 1.
- <sup>6</sup> Julia Sutton and Rachell Palnick Tsachor (eds), *Dances for the Sun King: Andre Lorin's "Livre de Contredance"*, Annapolis: Colonial Music Institute 2008.
- <sup>7</sup> Original facsimiles of both parts of Lorin's work are available on the *Gallica* website of the Bibliotheque Nationale Française
- <sup>8</sup> For information on the *Académie Royale de Danse*, see article by Régine Astier in Selma Jeanne Cohen (ed), *International Encyclopedia of Dance*, 1998 vol. 1, pp. 3–5, Oxford University Press.
- <sup>9</sup> It appears that few, if any, of the *Academie* members were Huguenots. Recent research into membership of this organisation has been unable to confirm the presence of any Huguenot members (personal communication from Jennifer Thorp).
- <sup>10</sup> Margaret McGowan, *Dance in the Renaissance: European Fashion, French Obsession*, Yale University Press 2008, p. 172.
- <sup>11</sup> Thomas Slaughter: Ideology and politics on the eve of restoration: Newcastle's advice to Charles II; in A.S. Turberville, *A History of Welbeck Abbey and Its Owners*, 2 vols., 1938, 1 pp. 171-176.
- <sup>12</sup> Julia Sutton, *Dances for the Sun King*, p. 48.
- <sup>13</sup> Alexandre Exquemelin, *History of the Buccaneers of America* (full text available on Project Gutenberg) More recently published as: Esquemeling, Alexander O., *The Buccaneers of America. A true account of the most remarkable assaults committed of late years upon the coasts of West Indies by the Buccaneers of Jamaica and Tortuga*.
- <sup>14</sup> Moreau de St Méry, *Dance* (An article drawn from the work of M Moreau de St Mery entitled *Repertory of Colonial Information* (1796), Dance Horizon Publications 1973
- <sup>15</sup> Giacomo Hebert, *Descrizione delle figure piu in uso della contradanza francese* 1830
- <sup>16</sup> The source for this comment on hostility to English occupation is again Carpentier, op cit. A more nuanced account of the relations between the local Havana elite and the occupying British army is to be found in Schneider, op. cit.

<sup>17</sup> Elena A Schneider, *The Occupation of Havana*, Chapel Hill, 2018, p. 197.

<sup>18</sup> Charles Pauli (1756), *Éléments de la danse*, Leipzig: Imprimerie U.C. Saalbach, p. 68-69. (see also: S Guilcher (1969), *La Contredanse et les renouvellements de la danse française*, p. 79-80).

<sup>19</sup> Cornelis Vanistendael, Napoleon's "Grande Armée": a Driving Force Behind the Dissemination of Dance Repertoires in Continental Europe - 1803 & 1815.