

NEH Application Cover Sheet (DR-272617)

Fellowships Open Book Program

PROJECT DIRECTOR

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Field of expertise: Interdisciplinary Studies, General

INSTITUTION

Duke University Press
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APPLICATION INFORMATION

Title: *Open Access Edition of Listening for Africa: Freedom, Modernity, and the Logic of Black Music's African Origins.*

Grant period: From 2015-08-01 to 2017-08-01

Project field(s): Music History and Criticism; African History

Description of project: In *Listening for Africa* David F. Garcia explores how a diverse group of musicians, dancers, academics, and activists engaged with the idea of black music and dance's African origins between the 1930s and 1950s. Garcia examines the work of figures ranging from Melville J. Herskovits, Katherine Dunham, and Asadata Dafora to Duke Ellington, Dámaso Pérez Prado, and others who believed that linking black music and dance with Africa and nature would help realize modernity's promises of freedom in the face of fascism and racism in Europe and the Americas, colonialism in Africa, and the nuclear threat at the start of the Cold War. In analyzing their work, Garcia traces how such attempts to link black music and dance to Africa unintentionally reinforced the binary relationships between the West and Africa, white and black, the modern and the primitive, science and magic, and rural and urban.

BUDGET

Outright Request	5,500.00	Cost Sharing	0.00
Matching Request	0.00	Total Budget	5,500.00
Total NEH	5,500.00		

GRANT ADMINISTRATOR

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Black dance music from the 1930s through the 1950s encompassed a complex arena of activity in which musicians, dancers, academics, activists, and others addressed modernity's promises of freedom in the face of racism, sexism, colonialism, and an uncertain future. Based on extensive archival research on some of this history's key figures—Melville J. Herskovits, Katherine Dunham, Richard Waterman, Zoila Gálvez, Fernando Ortiz, Harold Courlander, Modupe Paris, Chano Pozo, Asadata Dafora, Duke Ellington, Harry Smith, and Dámaso Pérez Prado—this book analyzes what their activities tell us about discrimination, colonialism, and the threat of nuclear annihilation in the period bridging the 1920s and 1960s. In their own unique ways they believed that engaging in music and dance could turn around the scourge of racist ideologies in Europe and the Americas, bring about decolonization in Africa, and inspire the rediscovery of humanity's redeeming qualities. But to analyze, listen to, embody, and observe the sounds and movements of black music and dance and their African origins hinged on the very logic that underpinned modernity's determinations of the un-raced, heteronormative, productive body, and scientific truth in the first place. The book shows that fleeting moments of freedom from temporal and spatial practices distancing the modern from the primitive, the city from the bush, the scientist from the artist, and the raced from the un-raced did materialize in their activities. It was the threat of losing one's subjective anchoring in modernity's sanctioned and contingent identity formations, however, that accounted for the profundity in historicizing one's way in modernity.

[size of initial print run?]

The primary audience of the book is scholars and students in the fields of African diaspora studies, cultural studies, dance studies, ethnomusicology, musicology, and sound studies.

The book was awarded the Bruno Nettl Prize for Outstanding Publication in the History of Ethnomusicology by the Society for Ethnomusicology in 2018. It also received an honorable mention for the Alan P. Merriam Prize for Outstanding Book in Ethnomusicology by the Society for Ethnomusicology in 2018; and a commendation by the British Forum for Ethnomusicology in 2018. The following academic journals have published reviews of the book: Sarah Bishop in *Popular Music*, 38/2 (May 2019); Joel Dinnerstein in *African American Review* 51/4 (2018); Steven Feld in *Journal of Anthropological Research*, 74/3 (September 2018); K.W. Mukuna in *CHOICE: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*, 56/1 (September 2018); Ryan T. Skinner in *American Anthropologist* 120/2 (June 2018); CJ Rensburg in *Journal of the Musical Arts in Africa* 15/1-2 (2018); and Anonymous in *The Journal of Pan African Studies* (Online), 10/9 (October 2017).

[sales profits?]

The intended audience for the open-access edition will be academic and non-academic readers.

[distribution channels?]