
Book Review

Kate Van Winkle Keller, *Dance and its Music in America*, Pendragon Press, Hillsdale, New York. 2007. ISBN 978-157647-127-2. 697 pp., illustrated, from £53.58 (paperback).

This is an excellent and invaluable source for dance historians, reconstructors of historic dances and any reader interested in social and theatrical dance and music in America between 1528–1789. It begins with an excellent bibliography of primary sources of visual and dancing instruction manuals utilized in the author's research for this book and provides a wonderful resource for the reader's own personal research. A phenomenal introductory chapter provides an exploration of how this book integrates American history from Columbus's 1492 discovery of North America, the Spanish, French, English and Dutch explorations and how each of the new arrivals encountered the Native American people and their ceremonies of music and dance. This introductory chapter focuses on Native American dances, Black dances, European dances, French dances and Dances as Social mediation in the American colonies. The introductory chapter also includes a brief discussion of forms of European dance, such as lines, circles, processions, and figure dances as well as emphasizing the dominant forms of the French minuet, English Country dances, Cotillions, Hornpipes, Jigs, Reels, and High dances such as specific Baroque dances recorded in Feuillet notation.

The rest of the narration in the book is organized first by geographical region and then by state, and presented chronologically in the order of discovery and settlement. Once introduced to a geographical region, the local history of each state up to 1789 is discussed in terms of its dance and music "relevant to its roots". Most of the book covers: The Spanish Exploration and settlements in Florida, New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, California; The French Exploration and Settlement in Mississippi, Michigan, Illinois, Missouri, Indiana, Ohio, Tennessee, Kentucky, Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi; The English plantation colonies of South Carolina, with excellent insight into Henry Holt, Early Ballets and Panto-

mimes, Dance Education in South Carolina, and Theatrical Dance in 1760s–1770s. Especially significant is the section on dancing during the American Revolutionary War and the British Occupation 1780–1782. Although all of the information is important in the chapter on English Plantation Colonies, the author tries to cover too many subtopics that are loosely connected in one chapter. The chapter on Tobacco colonies of Virgin and Maryland is more focused, discussing the functions and forms of a great variety of theatrical and social dances as well as men and women identified in advertisements as dancers and musicians which provides primary sources for the reader. The author also provides this kind of resource material throughout the book which is most valuable to future researchers.

The chapter on dance in New England covers a huge amount of information with innumerable subjects all of which are most informative even if it provides an encyclopedic format. Especially exciting are the highlights of Ordination balls for Congregationalist ministers, tavern ballrooms, dancing at colleges and literature that treats dance as a metaphor for the Revolutionary War and Post Revolutionary War and dance as a political metaphor.

The concluding chapters of dance in the Middle Atlantic colonies of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware includes dance in theatres, assemblies, balls, the first Inaugural ball, dance books sold in New York City, Black dances, dances of the Shakers and dancing in the American Army as well as a chapter on John Durang. This book concludes with 25 pages of outstanding and invaluable bibliography of primary and secondary sources.

One of the most beautiful features and strengths of this most important book is the innumerable and relevant illustrations of dancers, and invaluable dance and music notations.

Chrystelle Bond