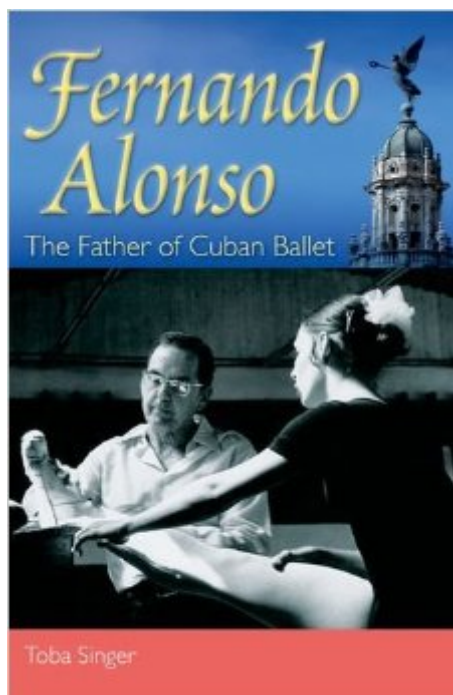


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Fernando Alonso: The Father Of Cuban Ballet



Synopsis

A riveting look into the life and times of a great dance artist. From a small island shrouded in mystery, Fernando Alonso changed the face of ballet for the world. Bravo! A standing ovation for a great read about a fantastic life.

—Ben Vereen, Tony Award winner
One of the most fascinating books I have ever read. Cuba is a mystery to so many of us, and this book gives an insight into the making of a great ballet style and company. A must-read for dancers, students, and balletomanes.

—David Howard, Broadway Dance Center
A long-overdue book about one of the most influential figures in the making of the Cuban ballet miracle.

—Lynn Garafola, author of *Legacies of Twentieth-Century Dance*
A greatly informative and unusually structured account of one of ballet's most influential and impressive teachers from the past hundred years. The English-speaking dance world has lost track of him owing to two cold wars—that between the United States and Cuba and that between Alonso and his former wife and inspiration, Alicia. The interviews Singer conducts here unflinchingly take stock of both.

—Mindy Aloff, author of *Dance Anecdotes*
An illuminating biography of one of the most important pedagogues in twentieth-century ballet. Fernando Alonso not only codified the formidable Cuban ballet technique, but he trained many of the extraordinary Cuban dancers who grace the international stage today.

—Suki John, Texas Christian University
Alonso's philosophies are gems for ballet dancers.

—Miko Fogarty, Gold Medalist, World Ballet Competition, and star of the award-winning film, *First Position: The Cuban National Ballet*, complete with its own training school and indigenous twist, was built in large part by Fernando Alonso, a remarkable man who danced on Broadway, studied with the greatest figures of the Golden Era of Ballet, and helped win the support of the post-1959 revolutionary government for the advancement of ballet.

Written records of Alonso's work are scarce, yet Toba Singer's quest to spotlight his seminal role in the development of the modern ballet canon yields key material: pre-blockade tapes from Lincoln Center, Spanish-language sources from the Museum of Dance in Havana, and interviews with the ballet master himself alongside a broad range of friends, relatives, and collaborators from throughout his long career, including his ex-wife, Alicia, a famous ballerina in her own right.

Under Alonso's loving guidance, Cuban ballet has become the most revered art form in the country and a powerful presence in the international dance arena.

Book Information

Hardcover: 240 pages

Publisher: University Press of Florida (March 5, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0813044022

ISBN-13: 978-0813044026

Product Dimensions: 6.2 x 1.1 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (8 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #848,355 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #141 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Arts & Literature > Dancers](#) #232 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Performing Arts > Dance > Classical](#) #291 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Biographies > Classical](#)

Customer Reviews

Full Disclosure: (1) I've known Toba Singer, although not that well, for around 40 years. I knew her as a political activist, and hadn't even known that she danced (or had long forgotten it). (2) Toba got in touch with me for advice on the index, and I volunteered to prepare it. (3) I knew a lot about Cuba and almost nothing about ballet when I agreed to do this, but learned quite a bit about ballet in the process of indexing the book. This book is about many things: It's about three remarkable people; Fernando Alonso, his former wife, the ballerina assoluta Alicia Alonso, much better known than he is, and about Fernando's brother, Alberto Alonso. The three of them laid the basis for serious ballet in Cuba, but before the revolution, the funds were lacking to create ballet schools to train dancers (what Fernando Alonso is best at), and all the other things necessary to have professional ballet. But then it's also about Laura Alonso, the daughter of Fernando and Alicia, who now heads a ballet company in Cuba. And about many of the other students of Fernando Alonso, who play important roles as dancers in Cuba and in other countries. The book is to a great extent based on interviews with Fernando Alonso, his daughter, and with a number of his students, as well as a letter by Alicia Alonso. Fernando Alonso is a remarkable man; his interest in science is as important to Cuban ballet as his interest in art. In fact, there's very little that he's not interested in and knowledgeable about. The small island of Cuba was always a "world power" in terms of music and dance (see

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