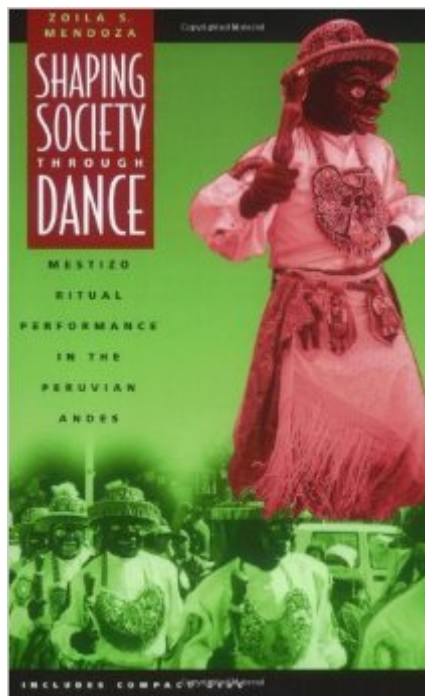


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# Shaping Society Through Dance: Mestizo Ritual Performance In The Peruvian Andes (Chicago Studies In Ethnomusicology)



## Synopsis

During the patron saint fiesta in the Andean town of San Jerónimo, Peru, crowds gather at sunset in the town square, eagerly awaiting the entrance of the colorful dance troupes, or comparsas. With their masks, music, and surprising interpretations of contemporary events, the comparsas of the Cusco region are the focus of this multifaceted work. At the crossroads of folklore and ritual, mass media and local preferences, and regional and national identity, the comparsas "recorded here on VHS, DVD, and compact disc" have become a powerful way for the local people to make sense of their place in Peru and in the world. As Zoila Mendoza shows, they do more than reflect societal changes, they actively transform society. In this fluid world, she argues, racial and ethnic identities are shaped more by notions of what is decent, elegant, and modern rather than by skin color or status. As the different troupes vie for the townspeople's recognition as the most "authentic" group, these notions are challenged and reworked. A fascinating look at a rich tradition, this innovative work is also a compelling example of the critical anthropology of performance.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I bought this book before going to Peru for a visit. I worried it would be a dull academic treatise but instead found it to be profound but fun and lively. The author clearly knows the subject well and transmits her enthusiasm and knowledge. I particularly enjoyed the sections on gender. If you are intrigued by religion in Latin American, or like world music and dance, you'll enjoy this book. The cd is a treat.

I spent much of this summer in the city of Cuzco, Peru, which is the capital of the depart. that is discussed at length. The book can be dense at times, but the rituals discussed are fascinating. I had the privilege to be taught by Zoila's husband during my trip and she would come to class and discuss the dances that we were going to see at the various festivals we visited. Highly recommended.

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