

A selection of media coverage: Danza Contemporánea de Cuba UK Tour 2017

**REVIEWS**

\*\*\*\* The Observer

\*\*\*\* The Times

\*\*\*\* The Stage

\*\*\*\* The Reviews Hub

\*\*\*\* Chronicle Live

\*\*\*\* East Midlands Theatre

**The Observer \*\*\*\* REVIEW by Luke Jennings**

<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2017/feb/26/danza-contemporanea-de-cuba-review-barbican-review>

“Sensuality, isolation and identity are explored in three works by this stellar Cuban troupe”

“There can be few dance companies in the world as handsome and accomplished as the Danza Contemporánea de Cuba.”

“Most impressive, though, is the dancers’ palpable belief and pride in their project. There’s no hierarchy here; individuals shine, but never at the expense of the whole. All in all, a joyous evening.”

Reader comment below the online review: “I found that these pieces were superb, electric and captivating - and had a very unusually fluidity and welcome sensuality and very observant, comic at times, which seem to have a very uplifting purpose and effect. Contemporary dance sometimes has come over as tortured and angst driven, these pieces are definitely not and surely the way to go!”

**The Times \*\*\*\* REVIEW by Donald Hutera** <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/times2/dance-danza-contemporanea-de-cuba-at-the-royal-concert-hall-nottingham-0zb29htfm>

“Big, edgy and politically charged”

“A display of the discipline, versatility and vivacious energy of two dozen dancers”

This is the third time the long-established, Havana-based Danza Contemporánea de Cuba has visited the UK under the auspices of the Dance Consortium, a group of large-scale theatres interested in importing international dance to this country. The triple bill has been well chosen as a display of the discipline, versatility and vivacious energy of two dozen dancers, the majority of whom are fresh from the company’s own school.

The evening builds nicely, starting with the Colombian-Belgian choreographer Annabelle Lopez Ochoa’s *Reversible*, a somewhat ambiguous group mating ritual, and climaxing with a big, edgy and politically charged panorama of the Cuban people by the company’s house choreographer, George Céspedes. In between comes warm, quirky charm from the British dancemaker Theo Clinkard, whose likeable work allows the dancers to show unexpected sides of their collective personality.

Bold physicality is the strong suit of Ochoa’s dance. Set to an eclectic and often electronic score, it begins with the metaphorical birth of a man and a woman, each lifted up high from the centre of separate clusters of attendants. What ensues is an ever-shifting series of duets and ensemble dances for nine men in grey skirts and eight women in grey trousers. One couple unsuccessfully swap clothing, eventually leading to the female cast members cupping their bared breasts and everyone stripped down to black knickers. Although the gender issues that Ochoa is hinting at are unclear and even stereotypical, there’s no denying the impact of the dancers’ fleet, full-bodied sensuality.

Music is the starting point of Clinkard's deceptively casual *The Listening Room*. Attractively clad in pastel shorts and shirts, each of the 20 dancers is listening to his or her own iPod. The audience, meanwhile, hears Steve Reich's *Variations for vibes, pianos and strings*. The movement might appear playfully scatty and windblown, yet it effectively rides the layered, percolating rhythms of Reich's music.

Céspedes' *Mambo 3XX1* was the highlight of the company's previous UK tours; *Matria Etnocentra* is a striking companion piece. Here dancers in boots, khaki trousers and T-shirts marked back and front by a star (a reference to the Cuban flag) march and undulate through intricately patterned drill formations set to a loud, irresistibly percussive score. They make militarism seem sexy. By the close, Céspedes at least partly liberates this small army from its manoeuvres via duets, trios and quartets that merge acrobatics with Latin social dance. Exciting.

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The Times review and reaction to Danza Cuba opening in the UK was picked up in Cuba...

<http://www.cmhw.cu/cultura/5047-the-times-otorga-cuatro-estrellas-a-danza-contemporanea-de-cuba>

<http://www.radiorebelde.cu/noticia/otorga-the-times-4-estrellas-espectaculo-danza-contemporanea-cuba-20170216/>

<http://prensa-latina.cu/index.php?o=rn&id=64541&SEO=prensa-britanica-elogia-a-danza-contemporanea-de-cuba>

<http://www.cubadebate.cu/noticias/2017/02/16/the-times-otorga-cuatro-estrellas-a-espectaculo-de-danza-contemporanea-de-cuba-en-reino-unido/>

<http://www.juventudrebelde.cu/cultura/2017-02-15/the-times-otorga-cuatro-estrellas-a-danza-contemporanea-de-cuba/>

**The Stage \*\*\*\*\* REVIEW by Anna Winter**

<https://www.thestage.co.uk/reviews/2017/danza-contemporanea-de-cuba-review/>

"Danza Contemporanea de Cuba comprises of performers with stupendous technique."

"This is a stellar company and it's a real privilege to see it perform."

**The Guardian REVIEW by Judith Mackrell** <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2017/feb/24/danza-contemporanea-cuba-review-barbican-london-revolution>

"A seriousness and urgency that signal a very 21st-century call for revolution."

**British Theatre Guide REVIEW by Vera Liber**

<http://www.britishtheatreguide.info/reviews/danza-contempor-barbican-hall-14066>

"They bring youthful punch, warmth and unflagging commitment."

"Knockout performances in three challenging contemporary pieces"

...a **must see**. People in Cardiff, Plymouth, Brighton, Inverness, Edinburgh and Canterbury get booking now.

**Seeing Dance REVIEW by Jessica Wilson**

<http://www.seeingdance.com/danza-cuba-25022017/>

**Nottingham Post REVIEW by Phil Lowe** <http://www.nottinghampost.com/danza-contempor-nea-de-cuba-at-the-royal-concert-hall-in-nottingham-is-exuberant-and-mesmerising/story-30137920-detail/whatson/story.html>

"A red hot 'must have' ticket to get any dance fan in a fevered frenzy."

"The extraordinary Cuban dancers are mesmerising"

**East Midlands Theatre \*\*\*\*\***

<https://eastmidlandstheatre.com/2017/02/15/review-danza-contemporanea-de-cuba-royal-concert->

[hall-nottingham/](#)

"The company of dancers dance with extraordinarily virile sexuality. Their dancing comes across like it is the last time they are going to dance and they really go for it."

**Nottingham Live**

<http://www.nottinghamlive.co.uk/live/review-danza-contemporeanea-de-cuba/>

**Chronicle Live \*\*\*\*\* REVIEW by David Whetstone**

<http://www.chroniclive.co.uk/whats-on/theatre-news/cubas-contemporary-dance-company-whips-12638872> "Marvellous. I could have watched all night. The applause was long, loud and thoroughly merited"

**The Reviews Hub \*\*\*\*\***

<http://www.thereviewshub.com/danza-contemporanea-de-cuba-the-lowry-salford-2/>

"Glorious"

"Don't miss the chance to see a company whose extraordinary work will stay with you for many years to come."

**Manchester Theatre Awards REVIEW by Robert Beale**

<http://www.manchestertheatreawards.com/reviews/1156-danza-contemporanea-di-cuba-the-lowry>

"Exuberant and inspiring."

Reader comment below the online review: "This is a terrific life-affirming show."

**Northumberland Gazette**

<http://www.northumberlandgazette.co.uk/whats-on/theatre-and-comedy/a-contemporary-dance-masterclass-1-8403489>

"Electric, moving and powerful"

"An electrifying, evocative and distinctly unique expression of all that is Cuban"

**Opening Night**

<https://opening-night.org/2017/02/21/danza-contemporanea-de-cuba/>

"Outstanding dancing from bodies moving in totality"