

FULL REVIEWS

Deirdre Towers, former curator, Dance on Camera Festival co-produced by The Film Society of Lincoln Center and Dance Films Assn.

Wayne Wallace, jazz trombonist, composer, educator, 3 times Grammy nominee

Dr. Umi Vaughan, Asst. Pro. Africana Studies, Univ. of CA., Monterey Bay

--Review of *Rough Cut* (see below)--

EMRO (Educational Media Reviews On-line) – review by Brad Eden, Ass. Univ. Lib. for Tech. Services & Scholarly Communication, Univ. of CA., Santa Barbara

Deirdre Towers review:

Palomino Productions [sic: *A Zest for Life*, produced by Palomino Productions] offers a valuable introduction to Afro-Peruvian Dance & Music, as led by the charming percussionist/dancer/folklore scholar Lalo Izquierdo. In the middle of this hour long documentary suitable for elementary school showings is a gem that would fascinate world music aficionados of all ages - a cajon solo played by Izquierdo in which he offers a soundbite of the typical rhythms heard in Peru, Brazil, US, Colombia, Cuba, Colombia (reminiscent of Savion Glover's brilliant tour through tap styles in the Broadway hit "Bring out Da' Noise, Bring in Da' Funk"). Izquierdo, who can't stop smiling, has been dancing since he was a kid. His shoulder shimmies, hip sways, zapateo, and crisp yet mellow playing of the cajon is so compelling you just might jump up and join in.

Wayne Wallace review:

"*A Zest for Life*" is a vivid demonstration of the threads that show Afro Peruvian music and culture to be one of the most exciting and dynamic genres in modern music today.

Dr. Umi Vaughan review:

A Zest for Life: Afro-Peruvian Rhythms, a Source of Latin Jazz by Eve A. Ma explores Africa's influence on music and dance in Peru through exciting, multi-dimensional performances by the group De Rompe y Raja, led by master percussionist and folklorist Lalo Izquierdo. The group features three male and four female dancers and an eight-piece band with percussion, strings, and vocals. Scholar Eve A. Ma provides

explanatory interludes before most of the performances. In fascinating interviews Izquierdo explains the bases as well as fascinating nuances of black culture in Peru.

The documentary is constructed simply and elegantly, with sections dedicated to several distinct African-influenced music/dance traditions. We learn about a whole range of styles; some like *festejo* with overwhelmingly clear African roots and others like *marinera* that are more subtly African. Ma's short sections provide great context for the dynamic dance, music, and theater of De Rompe y Raja.

A Zest for Life highlights connections between Afro Peru and the wider African Diaspora. It notes that Afro-Peruvian styles like Torito Pinto, which satirizes the Spanish colonial masters, exemplify the social commentary and struggle found in black U.S. American spirituals and Cuban rumba, to name just two examples. As a bonus on the DVD, Lalo Izquierdo gives a great demonstration on the Afro-Peruvian box drum called *cajon*. He underscores diaspora connections by performing not only Afro-Peruvian rhythms, but also merengue, samba, salsa, and even hip hop funk with his Peruvian drum. *A Zest for Life* is informative and entertaining for anyone interested in Latin American and/or African Diaspora music, dance, history, and culture.

EMRO-Brad Eden review (rough cut):

Recommended

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This DVD is a presentation of Afro-Peruvian music and dance. Filmed in California, the performers include native Peruvians and African-Americans. The featured dancer is Lalo Izquierdo from Peru, with guitarist Vladimir Vukanovich and singer Jorge Luis Jasso. The performing group "de Rompe y Raja" is featured as well. Historical background information, interviews, photographs, performance, and a host's narrative are included. It is a little-known cultural performance art that has not had a widespread audience to this point, and this DVD is meant to provide more information and public exposure to this exciting and varied tradition. Of interest to classes related to ethnicity, cultural diversity, immigration, and dance.