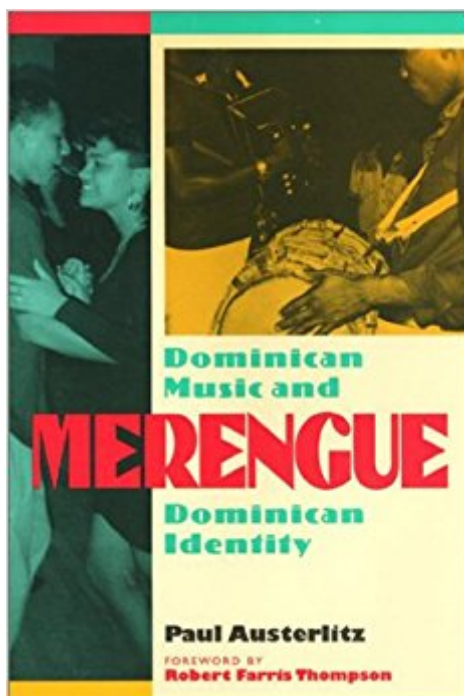


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# Merengue : Dominican Music And Dominican Identity



## Synopsis

Merengue is a quintessential Dominican dance music. This work aims to unravel the African and Iberian roots of merengue. It examines the historical and contemporary contexts in which merengue is performed and danced, its symbolic significance, its social functions, and its musical and choreographic structures.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"This book points the way toward that ideal zone of understanding. Austerlitz is a leading scholar of merengue. But he wears his erudition lightly. Through all the exposition he remains a buen elemento, able to pick up a sax and play merengue with his peers. His informants clearly consider him a colleague and share with him aesthetic judgements and considerations... The message of merengue, like rap, mambo, samba, and dancehall, ultimately may boil down to this: subvert the threat of a posthuman future with collective honesties of sweat and motion." --Robert Farris Thompson, from the Foreword "In a well written and organized narrative that avoids academic jargon, the book invites all kinds of readers to the world of 'euphoric sounds' that initially drew the author to this music...One of the most significant contributions of this study lies in its analysis of merengues's stylistic continuities and transformations. A jazz and merengue saxophonist himself since the 1980s, Austerlitz demonstrates a profound knowledge of how merengue 'works' musically, and a sharp ear in identifying significant stylistic characteristics and changes. His familiarity with the medium also gives him access to perceptions and value judgments of other musicians thereby

enriching his analysis...The reader will be delighted with the sounds of all these voices integrated into a coherent historical account. Austerlitz also has an experienced voice. He has a riff that we want to go on hearing." --Mareia Quintero Rivera, *The World of Music*

A fascinating examination of the social history of merengue dance music and its importance as a social and cultural symbol

I was enjoying this book.

If you are looking for a quick yet thorough coverage of this topic then this is the book for you. It is a relatively short book, coming in at 167 pages (not including bibliography but including notes section), yet it covers the whole spectrum of the national music of the Dominican Republic. Mr Austerlitz covers the beginnings of this music all the way through to its current state. It also spends time on Merengue's development during the Trujillo era (a particularly interesting topic to anyone who studies the Dominican Republic). Mr Austerlitz also does a good job of addressing the sociological issues that arise from music and manages to blend well the merengue of the campo with that of the salon. A good read and it even comes with a CD with some very good campo (country) merengue. If you are looking for merengue at its roots then this CD should please you.

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Let me know if you found this useful.

Up in Manhattan's Morningside Heights and its Dominican analogs all over the US, salsa is edged out by the magnificently manic beat of the merengue, whether stirred into Dominican rap and house (the most original as well as the least known versions of the genre) or in the tear-em-down accordion of Fefita La Grande. Austerlitz has all this and a lot more, all the way from the luckless Toma' back in the 1840s (read the book!) Austerlitz covers merengue from rural to hi-society in all its fierce joviality. Read this book and you'll know there's one good thing Trujillo did for the Dominican Republic!

John Storm Roberts

Enjoyed the insight into the history of Merengue and its cultural context. This book has a place on my bookshelf along with "The Latin Tinge" and "The Brazilian Sound."

The book was brand new and was the one I needed for class. I couldn't find it in our book store, but luckily enough, had it! Thanks!

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