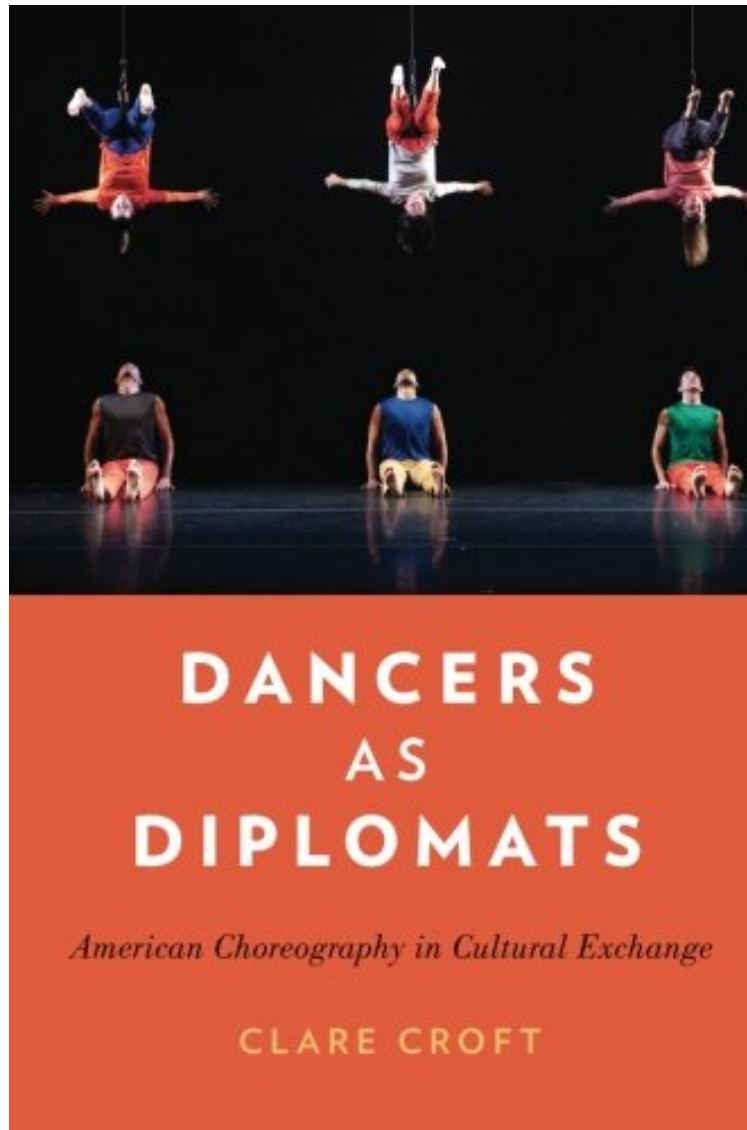


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Dancers as Diplomats: American Choreography in Cultural Exchange

Clare Croft

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13, 2016 *Dancers as Diplomats*, by Clare Croft offers a wonderful insight on the power dance holds in foreign policy. Dance and dancers are the main concern of this book, but also considers key policy events and changes about dance in diplomacy programming. It presents the possibilities of dialogue between nations and people to discover the realities that dancers display more than just movement. Despite DanceMotion performers political tensions experiences in Burma in a repressive regime their presence represented a triumph of international connection between American and Burmese governments. Hence, dancers are intriguing artistic vehicles and messengers of stories, communicating through inspirational expressions that can move people to feel the freedoms within themselves that may not exist in their country and oppression is their way of life. This is a great read for dancers and choreographers that may want to consider the art form and dancers as ambassadors of social change and justice.

Dancers as Diplomats chronicles the role of dance and dancers in American cultural diplomacy. In the early decades of the Cold War and the twenty-first century, American dancers toured the globe on tours sponsored by the US State Department. *Dancers as Diplomats* tells the story of how these tours shaped and some times re-imagined ideas of the United States in unexpected, often sensational circumstances-pirouetting in Moscow as the Cuban Missile Crisis unfolded and dancing in Burma shortly before the country held its first democratic elections. Based on more than seventy interviews with dancers who traveled on the tours, the book looks at a wide range of American dance companies, among them New York City Ballet, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, the Martha Graham Dance Company, Urban Bush Women, ODC/Dance, Ronald K. Brown/Evidence, and the Trey McIntyre Project, among others. During the Cold War, companies danced everywhere from the Soviet Union to Vietnam, just months before the US abandoned Saigon. In the post 9/11 era, dance companies traveled to Asia and Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East.

"Smoothly written with strong, coherent narrative, *Dancers as Diplomats* confirms the importance of dance in US cultural exchange. Researching across Cold War and Post-9/11 ideologies of nation and cultural diplomacy, Croft demonstrates how the international exposure of American dance remains inextricably bound up with Washington-based political economies. An essential offering for anyone interested in cultural studies, dance history, or international affairs, *Dancers as Diplomats* proves that performance might always exceed governmental guidelines and intentions."--Thomas F. DeFrantz, Duke University "Deeply researched, beautifully written, and brilliantly argued, Croft's stunning study of dance and U.S. cultural diplomacy sets a new bar for the field. *Dancers as Diplomats* is indispensable reading for scholars of dance, gender, and cultural diplomacy as well as those concerned with the arc of U.S. cultural politics from the Cold War to the present."--Penny Von Eschen, Professor of History and American Culture, University of Michigan "Dancers as Diplomats is an impeccably researched, highly readable book that demonstrates the significant role that dance and dancers have played in cultural diplomacy. As such, the book will appeal not only to dance studies readers, but also to reader interested in the Cold War, American studies, and history."--Dance Research Journal "Anchored by Croft's on-the-scene observations of the 2012 State Department-sponsored collaboration between the Trey McIntyre Project and the Korea National Contemporary Dance Company, the chapters devoted to DanceMotion U.S.A. provide a crucial first reading of this ongoing effort to revive cultural diplomacy in the twenty-first century."-Journal of American History About the Author Clare Croft is Assistant Professor in the Department of Dance at the University of Michigan.