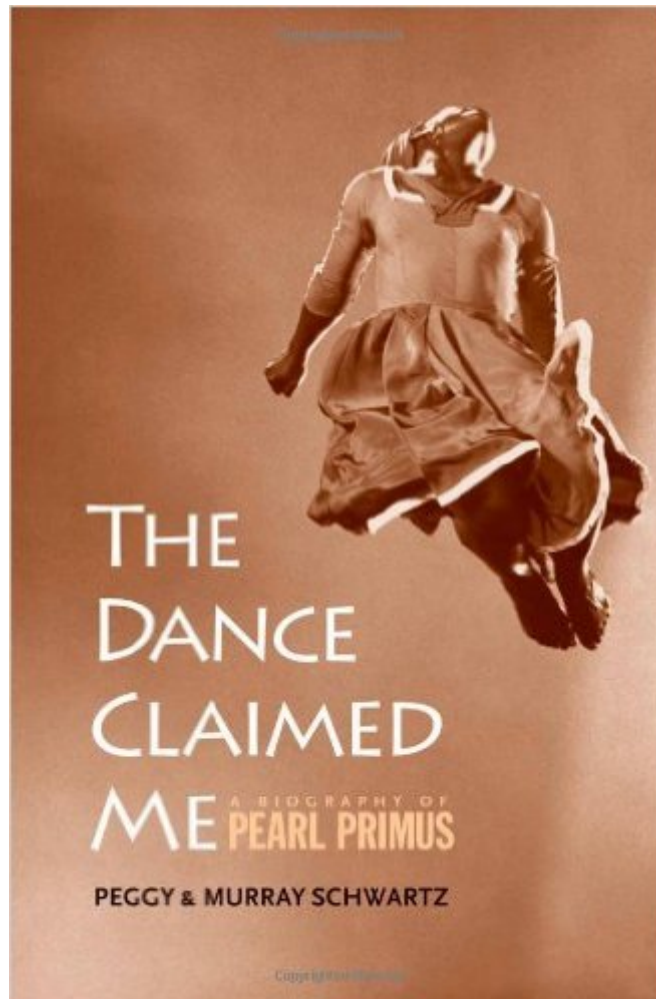


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# The Dance Claimed Me: A Biography Of Pearl Primus



## Synopsis

Pearl Primus (1919-1994) blazed onto the dance scene in 1943 with stunning works that incorporated social and racial protest into their dance aesthetic. In *The Dance Claimed Me*, Peggy and Murray Schwartz, friends and colleagues of Primus, offer an intimate perspective on her life and explore her influences on American culture, dance, and education. They trace Primus's path from her childhood in Port of Spain, Trinidad, through her rise as an influential international dancer, an early member of the New Dance Group (whose motto was "Dance is a weapon"), and a pioneer in dance anthropology. Primus traveled extensively in the United States, Europe, Israel, the Caribbean, and Africa, and she played an important role in presenting authentic African dance to American audiences. She engendered controversy in both her private and professional lives, marrying a white Jewish man during a time of segregation and challenging black intellectuals who opposed the "primitive" in her choreography. Her political protests and mixed-race tours in the South triggered an FBI investigation, even as she was celebrated by dance critics and by contemporaries like Langston Hughes. For *The Dance Claimed Me*, the Schwartzes interviewed more than a hundred of Primus's family members, friends, and fellow artists, as well as other individuals to create a vivid portrayal of a life filled with passion, drama, determination, fearlessness, and brilliance.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book made me wish I could have seen Ms. Primus dance. I yearn to view footage, view photos,

immerse myself in the dance that claimed Ms. Primus. I love this book. It positions this legend properly. Revealing her humanness. The complexity of her character, and the world she lived in. It is really a great read. I learned so much. Am grateful for the care, the honoring, the global history that threads the story.

I gave this rating as I am the Nephew of Dr. Primus. I found the book very informative but I also found certain materials that didn't seem to be based in fact due to what I know of the family history on my Father's side who was her brother. I also feel that there were numerous intrusions of other voices that if you read carefully are marginal to Dr. Primus story. I would recommend the book to others in fact I am sending this copy to a friend in Japan who is interested in my Late Aunt's life. I am aware that there is a lot more material that is held by people about my Late Aunt and I am doing research to bring this information to light.

This biography was tremendous! Peggy and Murray Schwartz truly loved writing about this amazing woman. A perfect marriage of academic inquiry and artistry. I loved reading about Pearl Primus' love of dance, love of African dance, and what it meant to her. The cover image alone should tell you that she had to have been an inspirational dancer. I really wish I could have seen her perform, but this book allowed me to envision her move, think, and feel. In reading this, I learned of Pearl Primus' courage, creativity, and intelligence.

I read a library copy of this book and I had to have my own for reference purposes. Excellent book to have for anyone is interested in dance, history or anthropology of dance.

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