



Secundaria

2013

Distributed by First Run Features, 630 Ninth Avenue, Suite 1213, New York, NY 10036; 212-243-0600

Produced by Mary Jane Doherty and Lyda Kuth, Nadita Productions

Directed by Mary Jane Doherty

DVD , color, 86 min.

High School - General Adult

Dance

[Reviewed by Laura Jenemann, George Mason University Libraries, Fairfax, VA](#)

Recommended

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Secundaria follows three Cuban ballet students from 2007 to 2010. The students are training at Cuba's National Ballet School (Escuela Nacional Cubana de Ballet), a prestigious program which provides a pathway to the National Ballet of Cuba (Ballet Nacional de Cuba), and often opportunities for dancing outside of Cuba as well.

The Cuban ballet dancers have many of the same struggles as their counterparts elsewhere in the world. For example, the students must perform well in both the studio and the classroom in order to progress in the school. There are injuries and weight issues. Also, students worry about money. Although in this context, the discussion involves the cost of bread for a family.

Director Mary Jane Doherty effectively documents the National Ballet School students in an observational style that uses minimal voiceover narration and interviews. A weakness of this film is that there are no English subtitles during some of the studio footage. Consequently, portions of the film that are the most dance intensive are comprehensible only to Spanish speakers.

This film is **recommended** for those interested in a window on Cuba and its cultural policy, which includes ballet, as well as those who are curious about life in Cuba. Appropriate for high-school through university students, as well as general adults.