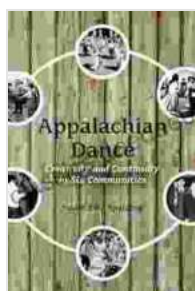


# Appalachian Dance Creativity and Continuity in Six Communities: A Comprehensive Analysis

The Appalachian region of the United States is a treasure trove of cultural heritage, and its dance traditions are no exception. Appalachian dance is a vibrant and diverse art form that has been passed down through generations, reflecting the rich tapestry of the region's history, culture, and landscape.



## Appalachian Dance: Creativity and Continuity in Six Communities by Alicja Urbanowicz

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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This article explores the creativity and continuity of Appalachian dance in six distinct communities: Berea, Kentucky; Brasstown, North Carolina; Burnsville, North Carolina; Hindman, Kentucky; Murphy, North Carolina; and Spruce Pine, North Carolina.

### A Tapestry of Styles

Appalachian dance is characterized by its wide range of styles, including:

- **Flatfooting:** A percussive dance style performed on a flat surface, using quick footwork and intricate rhythms.
- **Buckdancing:** A competitive dance style that involves tapping and shuffling the feet, often performed with a partner.
- **Square dancing:** A social dance style performed by four couples in a square formation.
- **Clogging:** A dance style characterized by rhythmic tapping of wooden clogs on the floor.
- **Round dancing:** A social dance style performed in a circle, with dancers holding hands or linking arms.

Each community has its own unique blend of these styles, influenced by its history, geography, and cultural heritage.

## **Creativity and Innovation**

Despite its strong tradition, Appalachian dance is not static. Communities continue to innovate and create new variations and styles.

For example, in Berea, Kentucky, the Berea College Folk School has been a hub of dance creativity for over a century. The school's faculty and students have developed new dance forms, such as "mountain tap" and "creative clogging," that blend traditional Appalachian styles with elements of other dance genres.

In Brasstown, North Carolina, the Cherokee Indian Reservation is home to a thriving community of dancers who are actively preserving and revitalizing their traditional dance forms. The Cherokee dance style is

known for its expressive movements, intricate footwork, and colorful regalia.

## **Cultural Significance**

Appalachian dance is more than just a form of entertainment. It is a vital part of the region's cultural heritage, helping to define its identity and connect its people.

Dance plays a central role in community gatherings, such as festivals, weddings, and church socials. It serves as a way for people to socialize, share stories, and pass on cultural knowledge to younger generations.

Many Appalachian dancers also see their art form as a way to express their pride in their heritage and to connect with their ancestors. Dance is a powerful way to preserve and celebrate the unique cultural identity of the Appalachian region.

## **Continuity and Preservation**

Despite the pressures of modernization, Appalachian dance traditions continue to thrive. Communities across the region are actively working to preserve and perpetuate this important cultural heritage.

Many organizations, such as the Appalachian Heritage Center in Berea, Kentucky, and the John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, North Carolina, offer classes, workshops, and performance opportunities to promote Appalachian dance.

Individual dancers are also playing a vital role in ensuring the continuity of this art form. They are passing on their knowledge and skills to younger

generations, through mentoring, apprenticeships, and informal gatherings.

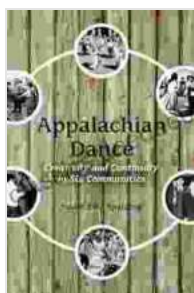
## **A Window into Appalachia**

The diversity and creativity of Appalachian dance offer a unique window into the rich cultural heritage of the region. From the percussive rhythms of flatfooting to the expressive movements of Cherokee dance, this art form reflects the indomitable spirit and enduring legacy of the Appalachian people.

By exploring the creativity and continuity of Appalachian dance in six distinct communities, we gain a deeper appreciation for the diversity and vitality of this extraordinary cultural tradition.

Appalachian dance is a vibrant and dynamic art form that continues to captivate audiences around the world. Its rich tapestry of styles, its enduring cultural significance, and its ongoing creativity and innovation make it a treasure to be celebrated and preserved.

As we delve into the intricacies of Appalachian dance, we not only discover a beautiful and expressive art form, but also a window into the soul of a region that has shaped the story of America.



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by Alicja Urbanowicz

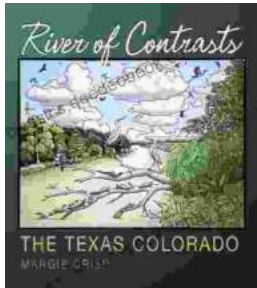
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