

Perkins, Dexter. *Hands Off: A History of the Monroe Doctrine*. Rev. ed. Boston: Little, Brown, 1955. In part a summary of a three-volume study by the same author and the considered judgment of the authority on the Monroe Doctrine.

Styron, Arthur. *The Last of the Cocked Hats: James Monroe and the Virginia Dynasty*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1945. Less a biography than a collection of the author's favorable opinions of Monroe. Written in a spritely manner, but there is more style than substance.

SEE ALSO: John Quincy Adams; Aaron Burr; Henry Clay; DeWitt Clinton; Dolley Madison.

RELATED ARTICLES in *Great Events from History: The Nineteenth Century, 1801-1900*: May 9, 1803: Louisiana Purchase; 1811-1840: Construction of the National Road; February 17, 1815: Treaty of Ghent Takes Effect; February 22, 1819: Adams-Onís Treaty Gives the United States Florida; December 2, 1823: President Monroe Articulates the Monroe Doctrine; December 1, 1824-February 9, 1825: U.S. Election of 1824.

LOLA MONTEZ

Irish-born dancer and actor

Montez was a dancer and actor who inspired the work of poets, playwrights, musicians, painters, kings, and politicians. She traveled extensively as a performer and was romantically linked to the king of Bavaria and famous writers and composers. Toward the end of her career, she turned away from scandalous stage antics to lecture on "female beauty," recommending temperance, exercise, and cleanliness over cosmetics as safeguards of beauty.

BORN: February 17, 1821; Grange, County Sligo, Ireland

DIED: January 17, 1861; New York, New York

ALSO KNOWN AS: Elizabeth Rosana Gilbert (birth name); Marie Dolores Eliza Rosanna Gilbert; Lola Montes

AREAS OF ACHIEVEMENT: Music, theater

EARLY LIFE

Lola Montez (MAHN-tehz) was born Elizabeth Rosana Gilbert. Her mother, Eliza Oliver, claimed to be a descendant of a Spanish family of high pedigree. She married Edward Gilbert, a British army officer of the Imperial Regiment in 1820. Most accounts paint a lonely picture of Elizabeth's childhood, part of which she spent in India, where her father died in September, 1823. A year later, her mother married a man named Patrick Craigie.

In late 1826, when Elizabeth was not quite six years old, she was sent back to England, where she arrived the following year. She later wrote in her memoirs that she did not see her mother again until 1837, when her mother apparently tried to marry her off to an aging man. The

sixteen-year-old Elizabeth instead eloped with an army officer named Thomas James. The couple later married legally on July 23, 1837, in Ireland. However, James's commission to India in 1839 was the death knell for what was apparently a doomed union. Two years later, Elizabeth returned to London alone. By most accounts, she was by this time a particularly striking young woman. She had vivid blue eyes, ivory skin, ebony hair, and a curvaceous figure.

LIFE'S WORK

The erratic stage career of Lola Montez began in 1842, after the fact that Elizabeth had had an adulterous affair with a man named George Lennox was discovered, and her husband petitioned for a legal separation. Elizabeth then reportedly studied under the gifted actor Fanny Kelly before taking up dance instruction in Spain. Her return to London as a "Spaniard" must have appeared authentic because she was engaged by the director of Her Majesty's Theatre, Benjamin Lumley. Elizabeth danced the Spanish cachucha dance *El Olano* (also spelled *El Oleano*) for her debut on June 3, 1843, before the king of Hanover, Queen Adelaide, and the duchess of Kent. It was probably around this time that Elizabeth began calling herself Lola Montez, as Lumley billed her as "Donna Lola Montez of the Teatro Real, Seville."

Lola's specialty at that time was so-called "Andalusian" dances. The fact that she performed in both *El Olano* and *La Sevillana* at Covent Garden in July, 1843, suggests that her dancing skills were impressive, otherwise, she would not have gotten such engagements. European performances followed: the *El Olano* in Dresden, Germany, in early August, 1843; *Le Bal de Don Juan* at

In 1824, the unity of the party was shattered by a contest between several strong rivals for the presidency. William H. Crawford, Monroe's secretary of the treasury, secured the caucus nomination from a rump group of congressmen, but other contenders, including Adams, Jackson, and Henry Clay, threw the vote into the House of Representatives. Clay threw his support to Adams, who won the presidency. In the aftermath, new coalitions were formed and eventually another two-party system emerged.

Monroe did not exert any political leadership during this period. It was not his temperament to operate in the new style of politics emerging as the Age of the Common Man. In many ways, he was obsolete when he left the presidency. His last years were spent making claims upon the government for past service. He received \$29,513 in 1826, and he got an additional \$30,000 in 1831, but this did not stave off advancing bankruptcy. In 1830, upon the death of his wife, he moved to New York City to live with a daughter and her husband. He died there on July 4, 1831.

SIGNIFICANCE

Monroe, the third of the Virginia triumvirate, has generally been ranked below his two predecessors in intellectual ability, although he has been ranked higher than either for his administrative skills. Monroe was more narrowly partisan and sectional, but he tried to be a president of all the people. The question has been raised, however, as to what extent he understood the role of the president as a party leader. It is to be noted that the party disintegrated under his presidency, but that may be a result, in part, of the decline of the Federalist Party as an effective opposition.

During his last years, Monroe was much concerned about his reputation. His concern reflects the essentially political cast of his mind. His letters throughout his life concerned almost exclusively political matters. An experienced and even a sensitive politician, he was an anachronism by the end of his presidency. Monroe was the last representative of the generation of the Founders. His idea of government by consensus was out of place in the new democratic politics of the Age of the Common Man.

Monroe's legacy was his Americanism. If he was at times narrow and sectional, he was always an American. His Monroe Doctrine aptly expressed the feelings of his fellow Americans that the Western Hemisphere was where the principles of freedom would be worked out and show the way to Europe and the rest of the world. His

career was long and successful, and his public service, if not brilliant, was useful to his country.

—C. Edward Skeen

FURTHER READING

Ammon, Harry. *James Monroe: The Quest for National Identity*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971. The most comprehensive biography. This book is well researched and well written. The interpretations are favorable to Monroe.

Cresson, William P. *James Monroe*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1946. Until Ammon's book, this was the standard biography. Engagingly written, it lacks rigorous analysis. The point of view of the author is also favorable to Monroe.

Cunningham, Noble E., Jr. *Jefferson and Monroe: Constant Friendship and Respect*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003. This 80-page book describes the relationship of the two men that began when Monroe was a military aide to Jefferson during the Revolutionary War.

_____. *The Presidency of James Monroe*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996. Cunningham outlines the major domestic and foreign policy issues that confronted Monroe during his two terms in office, including the first Seminole War, the Missouri Compromise, and the Monroe Doctrine. He portrays Monroe as a cautious president, lacking the education or intellect of Jefferson or Madison, but still an effective leader.

Dangerfield, George. *The Era of Good Feelings*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1952. Brilliantly written, this work, though superficial in many places, is still an excellent account of Monroe's presidency.

Hart, Gary. *James Monroe*. New York: Times Books, 2005. An analysis of Monroe's presidency by Hart, a former U.S. Senator from Colorado. In Hart's view, Monroe, a former military man, was concerned about homeland security in the United States, and initiated a series of treaties, annexations, and military actions aimed at securing the United States from foreign attack.

Monroe, James. *The Autobiography of James Monroe*. Edited by Gerry Stuart Brown. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1959. Monroe's own view of his early career (the narrative extends only to 1805). Partly written to advance his claims upon the government, and partly to leave his own record of his career, Monroe's narrative does not always achieve objectivity.

the Paris Opera on in March, 1844; and *Der Verwunschene Prinz* in Munich, Germany, in October, 1846. During this period, her rumored lovers included the Polish composer Franz Liszt; Alexandre Dujarier, a Parisian journalist; the French novelist Alexandre Dumas, *père*; and King Ludwig I of Bavaria.

Between late October, 1846, and early 1848, Lola's acting career stalled as she played mistress to King Ludwig in Bavaria. Meanwhile J. S. Coyne's farce *Lola Montez: Or, Countess for an Hour* was licensed by the Lord Chamberlain in London and debuted at the Haymarket Theatre on April 26, 1848. Curiously, Lola's earlier, anonymously written piece, *Lola Montez: Ou, La Countess d'une heure*, was not licensed on the grounds that it pertained to a living monarch—King Ludwig. Coyne's adaptation of her play was later reprised as *Pas de Fascination; Or, The Catching of a Governor* at the Haymarket Theatre on May 22, 1848.

In 1851, Lola returned to the stage after she reportedly married George Trafford Heald—who was apparently an officer in the Life Guards—on July 19, 1849. However, several weeks later, she was charged with bigamy. She jumped bail, fled London, and roamed through continental Europe before taking dance instruction from the noted Parisian ballet instructor Jardin Mabille. She returned to dancing in September.

Lola made her American debut at New York City's Broadway Theatre in an original ballet called *Betty the Tyrolean* on December 29, 1851. After four performances there, she danced a *pas d'Andalusia* in the grand Spanish ballet *Un Jour de carnaval à Seville* (carnival day in Seville) on January 5, 1852. Her career was boosted by numerous, well-publicized benefit nights, in which performers received most of the box-office proceeds, and a widely reported incident in which Lola evidently pummeled a man backstage in Boston in April.

Lola performed in C. P. T. Ware's drama *Lola Montez in Bavaria* when it premiered in New York on May 25, 1852, and toured St. Louis and New Orleans afterward. Meanwhile, her publicity was supplemented by occasional stories about her physically assaulting men. For example, she boxed her dancing master George Smith about the ears in June, 1852, and assaulted the prompter of the Varieties Theatre New Orleans in April, 1853. Lola's public sensations were coupled with her performances such as the spider dance, a saucier version of *La tarentule*, an Italian folk dance. The popular American actress Caroline Chapman later achieved an even greater success by performing her own version of the spider dance in San Francisco in June, 1853.



Lola Montez. (Library of Congress)

Lola began a tour of California goldfields after she met and married the editor of the *San Francisco Whig* Patrick Hurdy Hull on July 2, 1853. Rumors that she was seeking a divorce from Hull began to surface as early as October. In June, 1855, she sailed to Australia in the company of yet another lover, Noel Folland (sometimes spelled Follin). In August, she opened *Lola Montez in Bavaria* at Sydney's Victoria Theatre. Her other staple pieces included *The Follies of a Night* by James Robinson Planche, *Maidens Beware*, *Anthony and Cleopatra*, and the comedy *Morning Call*. Into addition to her spider dance, which she presented in Australia in September, she performed the *Neapolitan Sattirella*, the *El Olle*, and a nautical hornpipe.

After separating from her theatrical company, Lola went to Melbourne. As in America, her feisty temper became a hallmark of her Australian tour. She publicly horsewhipped the editor of the *Ballarat Times* in February, 1856, and later accused him of slander. Soon afterward, she herself was so viciously attacked by the wife of her manager that she was unable to perform. When she sailed back to San Francisco in June, 1856, Folland mysteriously disappeared overboard.

After reaching the United States, Lola performed in

San Francisco and New York but by August, 1857, her attentions were shifting from dancing to lecturing. In lecture tours through the United States and Canada, her topics included "Beautiful Women," "Heroines and Strong-Minded Women of History," "Gallantry," "Comic Aspects of Fashion," and "Slavery." Her abrupt change of careers later inspired the Reverend Francis Lister Hawks's tract *Is Not This a Brand Plucked Out of the Fire? The Story of the Penitent: Lola Montez* (1867).

Some researchers have suggested that syphilis, which Lola may have contracted from Alexandre Dumas, *père*, was the cause of her death in New York on January 17, 1861. She appears to have been survived by a daughter named Elise who had been fathered by the French journalist Dujarier, with whom she had had an affair during the 1840's.

SIGNIFICANCE

The many enduring cross-cultural narratives that Lola Montez inspired lie at the heart of her significance. King Ludwig's infamous decision to make her the "Countess of Lansfeld" in 1847 remains as compelling a part of her legacy as the nuggets of gold that prospectors are said to have thrown onto her stages during her Australian tour in 1855.

Just as Montez influenced others, she had her own influences. For example, her authentic costuming and use of iconic props were influenced by prima ballerinas such as Fanny Elssler and Maria Taglioni. Lola's garter and *mantilla* became trademarks of her blatant sexuality, and the Spanish flavor of Elssler's *La tarentule* was certainly the source for Lola's spider dance. Lola's advocacy of female emancipation in her lectures was probably encouraged by women such as the French writer George Sand and soprano Madame Rosina Stoltz.

More significant, perhaps, was Lola's extraordinarily aggressive role in the construction of her own public persona. Years before the great French actor Sarah Bernhardt gained notoriety on and off the stage, Lola made herself famous with her stage antics and inflammable temper. The name "Lola Montez" became synonymous with the male "breeches" that she sometimes wore, the pungent cigars she smoked, and her involvement in controversial political issues, such as women's rights.

Interestingly, Lola's Australian tour coincided with a tour of the American lecturer Caroline H. Dexter, who spoke on the hazards of contemporary women's attire

and advocated wearing "bloomers." Lola met Dexter during her voyage to Australia. Afterward, Dexter's attention must have been drawn to Lola's often critical press. In September, 1855, Dexter wrote to *Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Review* to denounce the "unwholesome prejudice against the foully stigmatized and deeply injured Lola Montez." The letters that both Dexter and Lola wrote to Australian newspapers are significant. They remain as rare examples of mid-nineteenth century women who succeeded in having their "political" views published under their own names. Because of this, both Dexter and Montez rank as remarkable figures in early Australian media history.

—Nicole Anae

FURTHER READING

- D'Auvergne, Edmund B. *Lola Montez: An Adventuress of the Forties*. London: T. W. Laurie, 1909. Despite its age, still a seminal source on Montez's life.
- Goldberg, Isaac. *Queen of Hearts: The Passionate Pilgrimage of Lola Montez*. New York: John Day, 1936. This book retains its merit as an important reference.
- Hall, Humphrey, and Alfred John Cripps. *The Romance of the Sydney Stage by Osric*. Sydney: Currency Press, 1996. Includes information regarding Lola's early life and gives details of her Australian tour.
- Holdredge, Helen. *Lola Montez*. London: Alvin Redman, 1957. A meticulously researched source on Montez's entire life.
- Lola Montes: The Tragic Story of a Liberated Woman*. Melbourne, Vic.: Heritage Publications, 1973. This anonymously published text extensively acknowledges the work of Goldberg, Holdredge, and D'Auvergne and pays particular attention to Montez's tour of the Australian goldfields.
- Seymour, Bruce. *Lola Montez: A Life*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996. Thorough and nearly definitive biography. Should be read in conjunction with John W. Frick's review in *Victorian Studies* 40, no. 4 (Summer, 1997): 688-689.

SEE ALSO: Sarah Bernhardt; Alexandre Dumas, *père*; Fanny Elssler; Franz Liszt; Adah Isaacs Menken; George Sand; Ellen Terry.

RELATED ARTICLE in *Great Events from History: The Nineteenth Century, 1801-1900*: March 12, 1832: *La Sylphide* Inaugurates Romantic Ballet's Golden Age.