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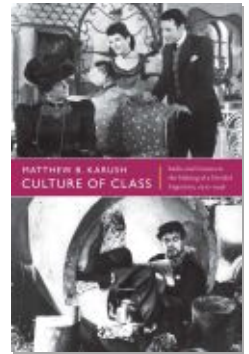
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In an innovative study of the cultural history of Argentine movies and radio in the decades before Peronism, Matthew B. Karush demonstrates that competition with jazz and Hollywood cinema shaped Argentina's domestic cultural production in crucial ways, as Argentine producers tried to elevate their offerings to appeal to consumers seduced by North American modernity. At the same time, the transnational marketplace encouraged these producers to compete by marketing "authentic" Argentine culture. Domestic filmmakers, radio and recording entrepreneurs, lyricists, musicians, actors, and screenwriters borrowed heavily from a rich tradition of popular melodrama. Although the resulting mass culture trafficked in conformism and consumerist titillation, it also disseminated versions of national identity that celebrated the virtue and dignity of the poor, while denigrating the wealthy as greedy and mean-spirited. This anti-elitism has been overlooked by historians, who have depicted radio and cinema as instruments of social cohesion and middle-class formation. Analyzing tango and folk songs, film comedies and dramas, radio soap operas, and other genres, Karush argues that the Argentine culture industries generated polarizing images and narratives that provided much of the discursive raw material from which Juan and Eva Perón built their mass movement.

"This is an extremely important study. Matthew B. Karush transforms the way we think about private lives and political conflict by weaving together research on the working-class origins of populism, commoners' understandings of consumption, and representations of social roles on the big screen and over the airwaves. Class identities, he argues, were central to Argentina's deep changes in the lead-up to Perón's triumph. Tracking the fascinating evolution of film and radio gives us a whole new way to think about how culture, politics, and market life intersected to remap Argentine society. Karush has written a tremendous book."

—JEREMY ADELMAN, Princeton University

"In *Culture of Class*, Matthew B. Karush provides a new cultural history of interwar Argentina and the origins of Peronism. His point of departure is the proliferation of new forms of popular mass media, which he argues simultaneously intensified class conflict and bolstered populist forms of respectability. In this outstanding book, Karush also shows how the popular mass media enabled the peripheral 'modernization' of Argentine national culture."

—FEDERICO FINCHELSTEIN, author of *Transatlantic Fascism: Ideology, Violence, and the Sacred in Argentina and Italy, 1919–1945*

MATTHEW B. KARUSH is Associate Professor of History at George Mason University. He is the author of *Workers or Citizens: Democracy and Identity in Rosario, Argentina (1912–1930)* and a coeditor of *The New Cultural History of Peronism: Power and Identity in Mid-Twentieth Century Argentina*, also published by Duke University Press.

On the cover: top, film still from *Puerta cerrada* (courtesy of Archivo General de la Nación); bottom, film still from *Chingolo* (courtesy of Museo del Cine Pablo Ducrós Hicken).

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