

ONLY WHEN I DANCE

Discussion Guide

1. The filmmakers of **ONLY WHEN I DANCE** spent nearly two years casting their two lead characters. Why do you think they finally decided on Irlan and Isabela?
2. The film presents many challenges facing aspiring ballet dancers, such as race and class. What can we learn from Irlan's and Isabela's experiences confronting these prejudices? What other prejudices exist in the world of ballet?
3. How is Isabela's experience as a female dancer different from Irlan's? How is Irlan's experience as a male dancer different from Isabela's?
4. Director Beadie Finzi states that she wanted to "present a fresh and honest portrait of [Rio de Janeiro]." Do you believe she achieves this? How does the representation of Rio in this film compare to recent Brazilian films, such as *City of God* and *Elite Squad*?
5. Discuss some of the possible challenges of filming a documentary during such a pivotal time in the characters' lives.
6. In the beginning of the film, Irlan expresses his desire to leave the Complexo do Alemão, and ballet is seen as his way out. Discuss the potential of the arts to empower people and transform their lives.