



Dance: Rituals of Experience

Jamake Highwater

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This book presents a powerful view of the history of dance, contrasting its role in Western civilization with its significance in other cultures. Highwater--a renowned critic, author, and lecturer on art, theater, music, and dance--links the history of dance to cultural forces as diverse as Karl Marx and Elvis Presley. Beginning with the original, ritualistic, and primal forms of dance, he traces its decline into empty ceremonial forms while all along insisting that dance is a fundamental life impulse made visible in motion--a spontaneous transformation of experience into metaphoric meaning. Considering the historical and creative context from which dance emerged, Highwater goes on to point out the specific contributions and cultural influences of such 20th-century dance giants as Isadora Duncan, Twyla Tharp, Robert Wilson, George Balanchine, Martha Graham, Alwin Nikolais, Erick Hawkins, Jose Limon, Merce Cunningham, Meredith Monk, and Garth Fagan. Also examined are many newer artists, such as Bebe Miller and the Urban Bush Women.

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