



Serpent of the Nile: Women and Dance in the Arab World



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Serpent of the Nile: Women and Dance in the Arab World

Wendy Buonaventura

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A celebration of the female dancers of the Arab world and their impact on the West, this book explains the origins of this ancient art, which has survived in the face of commercialism, religious disapproval and changing times. Focusing on the 19th- and early-20th centuries, the book shows how Arabic dance came to be influenced by Western ideas about art and entertainment. But the influence was two-way. In the heyday of Orientalism, Arabic dance exerted a powerful influence on the Western imagination - on such writers and artists as Flaubert, David Robers and Jean-Leon Gerome, and imitators Colette and Mata Hari. Their fascination was often based on common fantasies about the women of the Middle East. Yet, as the book's illustrations show, this obsession also produced evocative images. At the turn of the century, the genre also had an impact on fashion, theatre and popular entertainment.

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208 pages

Review

'A delight to browse through and just as interesting to read...sumptuously illustrated.' Time Out 'A lively and lavishly illustrated excursion into the history of the solo woman's dance.' The New York Times Book

Review About the Author

Wendy Buonaventura is an Anglo-Italian dancer and writer. Her first book on Oriental dance was published in London in 1983. Serpent of the Nile was chosen as The Observer Book of the Year. She has also written and presented programmes for the BBC World Service. She has pioneered the development of Arabic dance as a theatre art in the West and her work has been featured at festivals throughout Europe and in the United States.

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