New Volume Surveys Historical and Contemporary Jewish Dance

Seeing Israeli and Jewish Dance, with 182 illustrations and photographs, is a beautiful, dazzling, encyclopedic work about Israeli folk dance and Jewish dance in the Diaspora that quite simply deserves a place in any Judaica library.”

—Mordecai Specktor, American Jewish World

New in June 2011 from Wayne State University Press, Seeing Israeli and Jewish Dance explores the evolution of Jewish dance through two thousand years of Diaspora, in communities of amazing variety, and amid changing traditions. Choreographer, dancer, and dance scholar Judith Brin Ingber and other eminent scholars consider dancers individually and in community, defining Jewish dance broadly to encompass religious ritual, community folk dance, and choreographed performance. Taken together, this wide range of expression illustrates the vitality, necessity, and continuity of dance in Judaism.

In seven parts, this volume covers topics including Jewish dance artists of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries; the dance of different Jewish communities, including Hasidic, Yemenite, Kurdish, Ethiopian, and European Jews in many epochs; historical and current Israeli folk dance; and the contrast between Israeli and American modern and post-modern theater dance. Along the way, contributors see dance in ancient texts like the Song of Songs, the Talmud, and Renaissance-era illuminated manuscripts, and plumb oral histories, Holocaust sources, and their own unique views of the subject. A selection of 182 illustrations, including photos, paintings, and film stills, round out this lively volume. Many of the illustrations come from private collections and have never before been published, and they represent such varied sources as a program booklet from the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair and archival photos from the Israel Government Press Office.

Seeing Israeli and Jewish Dance threads together unique source material and scholarly examinations by authors from Europe, Israel, and America trained in sociology, anthropology, history, cultural studies, Jewish studies, dance studies, as well as art, theater, and dance criticism. Enthusiasts of dance and performance art and a wide range of university students will enjoy this significant volume.

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