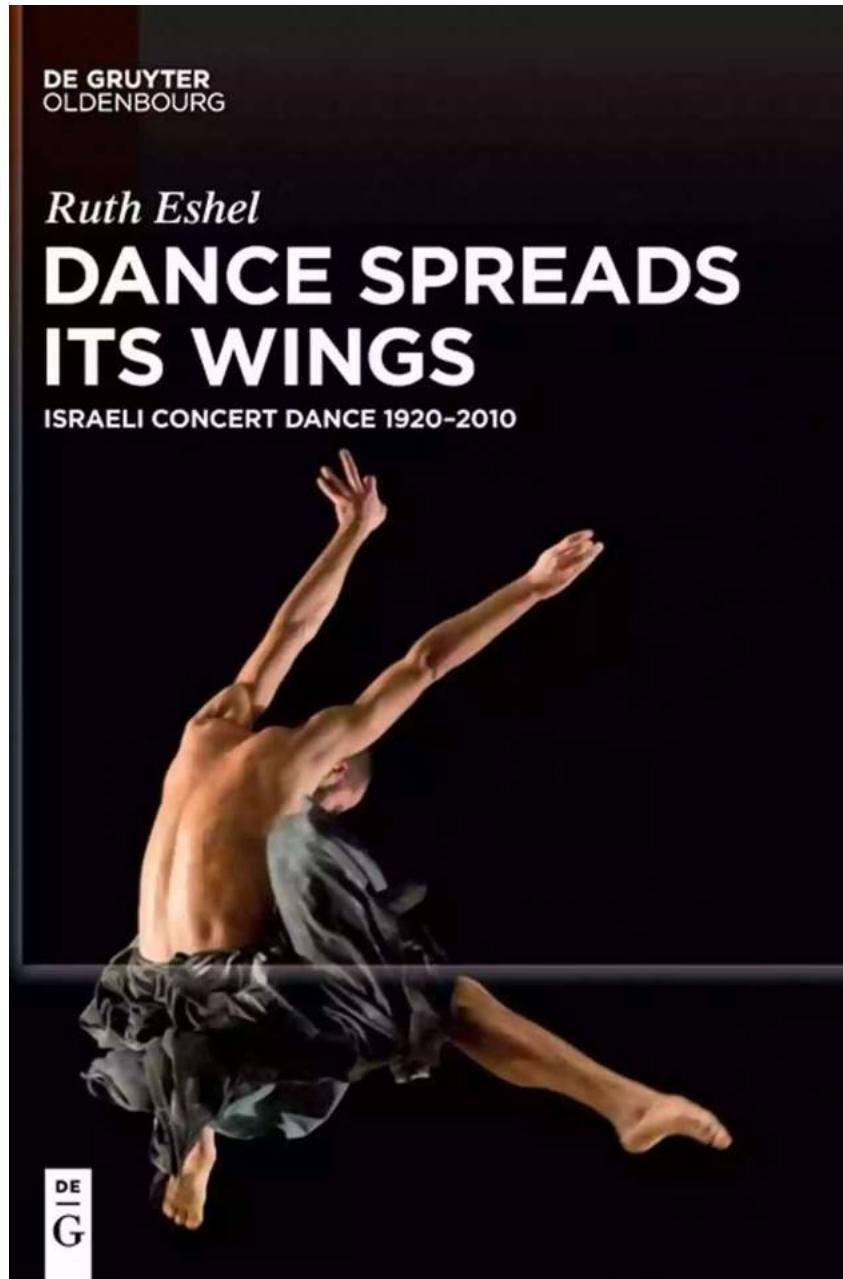


Dance Spreads Its Wings: Israeli Concert Dance 1920-2010

In the vibrant world of concert dance, Israel has emerged as a powerhouse of talent and creativity. From its early beginnings in the 1920s to the present day, Israeli dance has spread its wings, captivating audiences around the globe with its unique blend of tradition, innovation, and cultural expression.

The alt attribute for this image: Dance Spreads Its Wings - Israeli Concert Dance 1920-2010



Dance Spreads Its Wings: Israeli Concert Dance 1920–2010 by Ruth Eshel(Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

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Shaping the Roots: 1920-1948

Israeli concert dance traces its roots back to the early 20th century when Jewish immigrants began settling in Palestine. These pioneers brought with them a rich tapestry of traditions from various countries, which paved the way for the development of a unique Israeli dance style.

One of the key figures during this period was Gertrud Kraus, an Austrian dancer and choreographer who established the first Jewish dance studio in Jerusalem in 1927. Kraus's influence helped shape the foundation of Israeli concert dance by combining elements of modern dance with traditional Jewish folk dances.

Another important figure in the development of Israeli dance was Sara Levi-Tanai, who founded the Inbal Dance Theater in 1949. Levi-Tanai developed a distinct artistic style that blended modern dance with Yemenite Jewish culture, creating a sensation in both Israel and abroad.

Dancing through Independence: 1948-1970

With the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the Israeli dance scene experienced a surge of creativity and innovation. Dance companies such as the Batsheva Dance Company and the Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company were founded during this period, solidifying Israel's position as a hub for contemporary dance.

One of the most influential figures during this era was Martha Graham, an American modern dance pioneer who visited Israel and became deeply inspired

by the nation's dance traditions. Graham's visit sparked a renaissance in Israeli dance, as local choreographers incorporated her techniques while maintaining their unique cultural identity.

During the 1960s and 1970s, Israeli dance began to explore new genres and experimental forms. Choreographers such as Ohad Naharin and Rami Be'er pushed the boundaries of traditional dance, creating works that were both thought-provoking and visually stunning.

The Contemporary Era: 1970-2010

From the 1970s onwards, Israeli concert dance continued to evolve and diversify. The Suzanne Dellal Centre for Dance and Theatre was established in 1989, becoming a major hub for dance performances and artistic collaborations.

One of the most significant developments in Israeli dance during this period was the rise of Gaga, a movement language created by Ohad Naharin. Gaga, with its emphasis on sensation, instinct, and exploration, has become a transformative force in the world of contemporary dance, influencing dancers and choreographers worldwide.

Israeli concert dance also began to incorporate multimedia elements, combining dance with technology, visual arts, and music. This interdisciplinary approach further expanded the possibilities of artistic expression, allowing Israeli choreographers to experiment with new forms of storytelling and connectivity.

Dance in Israel has truly spread its wings over the past century, establishing itself as a dynamic and influential force in the world of concert dance. From its early beginnings to the present day, Israeli dance has evolved, adapted, and taken flight, captivating audiences with its rich cultural heritage and innovative artistic vision.



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Why did dance and dancing become important to the construction of a new, modern, Jewish/Israeli cultural identity in the newly formed nation of Israel? There were questions that covered almost all spheres of daily life, including “What do we dance?” because Hebrew or Eretz-Israeli dance had to be created out of none. How and why did dance develop in such a way? *Dance Spreads Its Wings* is the first and only book that looks at the whole picture of concert dance in Israel studying the growth of Israeli concert dance for 90 years—starting from 1920, when there was no concert dance to speak of during the Yishuv (pre-Israel Jewish settlements) period, until 2010, when concert dance in Israel had grown to become one of the country’s most prominent, original, artistic fields and globally recognized. What drives the book is the impulse to create and the need to dance in the midst of constant political change. It is the story of artists trying to be true to their art while also responding to the political, social, religious, and ethnic complexities of a Jewish state in the Middle East.



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