

Mary Wigman: A Revolutionary in Modern Dance



Mary Wigman (Routledge Performance Practitioners)

by Mary Anne Santos Newhall

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Mary Wigman (1886-1973) was a visionary dancer, choreographer, and teacher who left an indelible mark on the world of modern dance. Her pioneering work in expressionist dance challenged traditional notions of form and technique, pushing the boundaries of artistic expression.

This book, part of the Routledge Performance Practitioners series, offers a comprehensive exploration of Wigman's life, work, and enduring legacy. Through in-depth analysis of her key performances, theoretical writings, and teaching methods, this volume provides a unique insight into the mind and artistry of one of the most influential dancers of the 20th century.

Early Life and Training

Mary Wigman was born in Hannover, Germany, in 1886. From an early age, she displayed a passion for movement and expression. However, it was not until she encountered the work of the legendary dancer and choreographer Rudolf von Laban that she discovered her true calling.

Laban's emphasis on natural body movement and the exploration of inner emotions深深地吸引了Wigman. She became one of his most devoted students, and under his guidance, she honed her skills as a performer and choreographer.

Expressionist Dance Pioneer

In the early 20th century, the art world was undergoing a period of radical transformation. Expressionism, a new artistic movement that sought to convey inner emotions and experiences through distorted forms and intense colors, was gaining popularity.

Wigman embraced expressionism and incorporated its principles into her own舞蹈作品. Her dances were characterized by their raw emotional power, their exploration of primal themes, and their use of highly expressive body language.

Key Performances and Collaborations

Throughout her career, Wigman created a wide range of groundbreaking performances that pushed the boundaries of modern dance. Some of her most notable works include:

- **"Hexentanz" (1914):** A powerful and evocative dance that depicts the persecution of witches in the Middle Ages.
- **"Die Opfer" (1920):** A haunting and ritualistic dance that explores the themes of sacrifice and redemption.
- **"Totenmal" (1930):** A large-scale dance spectacle that explores the themes of death and rebirth.

Wigman also collaborated with some of the leading artists of her time, including the composer Béla Bartók and the painter Oskar Schlemmer. These collaborations resulted in some of her most innovative and influential works.

Teaching and Legacy

In addition to her performing career, Wigman was also a dedicated teacher and mentor. She founded her own dance school in Dresden in 1920, where she trained a generation of modern dancers.

Wigman's teaching methods emphasized the importance of self-expression, emotional authenticity, and the integration of body, mind, and spirit. Her students went on to become influential dancers, choreographers, and teachers in their own right, ensuring that her legacy continues to inspire generations of dancers.

Mary Wigman was a true pioneer of modern dance. Her groundbreaking work in expressionist dance challenged traditional notions of form and technique, and her passion for movement and expression left an indelible mark on the art form.

This book, part of the Routledge Performance Practitioners series, offers a comprehensive exploration of Wigman's life, work, and enduring legacy. Through detailed analysis, archival research, and personal accounts, this volume provides a unique insight into the mind and artistry of one of the most influential dancers of the 20th century.

Whether you are a dancer, choreographer, scholar, or simply a lover of the arts, this book is an essential addition to your library. It is a testament to the

transformative power of dance and the enduring legacy of a true visionary.

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