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The Work of Dance: Labor, Movement, and Identity in the 1930s

Mark Franko

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In this insightful new book, Mark Franko explores the many genres of theatrical dancing during the radical decade of the 1930s and their relationship to labor movements, including Fordist and unionist organizational structures, the administrative structures of the Federal Dance and Theatre Project, the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, and the Communist Party. Franko shows how the structures of labor organization were reproduced and acted out — but also profoundly reasoned through in corporeal terms — by choreography and performance of the proletarian mass dance, the chorus line of the Ziegfeld Follies and the reflexive backstage musical film, Martha Graham's modern dance, the revolutionary dance movement of the proletarian avant-garde, African-American "ethnic" opera-ballet, and Lincoln Kirstein's "American" ballet.

The contributions of many important personalities of American theatrical, visual and literary culture are included in this study. Franko's focus extends from the direct impact of performances on audiences to the reviewing, reporting and photography of print journalism.

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