

The Untold Story of Hijikata Tatsumi And Butoh: A Dance Revolution That Defied Conventions

If you have ever witnessed the mesmerizing movements and haunting expressions in Butoh performances, you might wonder about the origins of this unique dance form. Butoh, an avant-garde art form that emerged in Japan, can be traced back to its founder, Hijikata Tatsumi. This article dives deep into the life and works of Hijikata Tatsumi, uncovering the revolutionary essence of Butoh.

The Early Life of Hijikata Tatsumi: Forging a Path Against All Odds

Hijikata Tatsumi was born on March 9, 1928, in Hakodate, Japan. Growing up in humble surroundings, Tatsumi discovered his passion for dance at a young age. However, his journey towards becoming a legendary figure in the world of dance was filled with hardships and struggles.

Tatsumi's family disapproved of his fascination with dance, considering it to be an inappropriate career choice for a young boy. Despite the opposition, Tatsumi persevered and began his formal training in ballet, while also exploring various other traditional Japanese arts such as Kabuki and Noh theater.



Hijikata Tatsumi and Butoh: Dancing in a Pool of Gray Grits (Palgrave Studies in Theatre and Performance History)

by Karen Dickson (2012th Edition, Kindle Edition)

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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After witnessing the horrors and devastation of World War II, Tatsumi realized that dance could be a powerful medium to express the complexities of human emotions and experiences. He sought to break free from the confines of traditional dance forms and create something entirely new and groundbreaking.

The Birth of Butoh: A Dance of Darkness and Rebellion

In the late 1950s, Tatsumi, along with his collaborator Ohno Kazuo, introduced Butoh to the world. Butoh, meaning "dance of darkness," aimed to challenge societal norms, break free from the constraints of traditional movements, and explore the raw, primal aspects of human existence.

Butoh performances were characterized by slow, controlled movements, grotesque facial expressions, and a deep exploration of the dancers' inner emotions. It was a form of dance that embraced darkness, pain, and vulnerability, serving as a reflection of the collective trauma experienced by the Japanese people during and after World War II.

Hijikata Tatsumi and Ohno Kazuo's collaboration resulted in the creation of landmark Butoh works such as "Forbidden Colors" and "Revolt of the Flesh." These performances left audiences stunned and perplexed, as they defied the conventions of traditional dance forms and pushed the boundaries of what was deemed acceptable in art.

The Influence and Legacy of Hijikata Tatsumi

Hijikata Tatsumi's innovations and rebellious spirit revolutionized the world of dance. Butoh became a powerful form of artistic expression, attracting a global audience and inspiring countless performers and choreographers.

Tatsumi's philosophy in Butoh was deeply rooted in the concept of "ma," meaning "emptiness" or "negative space." He believed that through exploring the darkest corners of human existence, one could find a sense of liberation and awaken their true essence.

His approach to Butoh influenced subsequent generations of dancers, both in Japan and abroad. Tatsumi's unique perspective on dance encouraged performers to embrace their vulnerabilities, confront their fears, and delve deep into their subconscious minds, ultimately giving birth to breathtaking and thought-provoking performances.

The Contemporary Relevance of Butoh and Hijikata Tatsumi's Vision

Today, Butoh continues to evolve and captivate audiences worldwide. Its distinct blend of dance, theater, and performance art pushes boundaries, raises questions, and challenges conventional notions of movement and expression.

Hijikata Tatsumi, while no longer with us, left a lasting legacy that reminds us of the power of art to challenge norms, express inner turmoils, and evoke emotions that are universally understood. His revolutionary spirit lives on through the works of contemporary Butoh artists who continue to carry forward his vision.

: The Enduring Impact of Hijikata Tatsumi And Butoh

Hijikata Tatsumi and his creation, Butoh, unleashed a dance revolution that defied conventions and paved the way for a new form of artistic expression in Japan and beyond. Through his innovative approach to movement, Hijikata Tatsumi explored

the depths of humanity's darkest experiences, giving birth to a dance form that challenges, intrigues, and captivates audiences to this day. As we witness the ever-evolving nature of Butoh, we are reminded of the enduring impact that Hijikata Tatsumi's visionary spirit has had on the world of dance.



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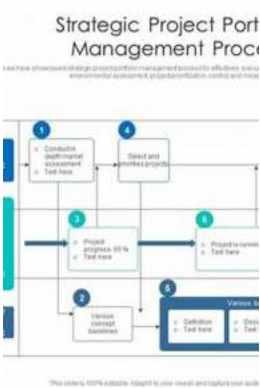


Hijikata Tatsumi's explosive 1959 debut *Forbidden Colors* sparked a new genre of performance in Japan - butoh: an art form of contrasts, by turns shocking and serene. Since then, though interest has grown exponentially, and people all over the world are drawn to butoh's ability to enact paradox and contradiction, audiences are less knowledgeable about the contributions and innovations of the founder of butoh. *Hijikata Tatsumi and Butoh* traces the rollicking history of the creation and initial maturation of butoh, and locates Hijikata's performances within the intellectual, cultural, and economic ferment of Japan from the sixties to the eighties.



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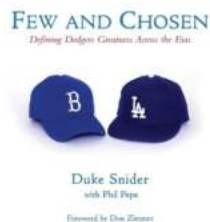
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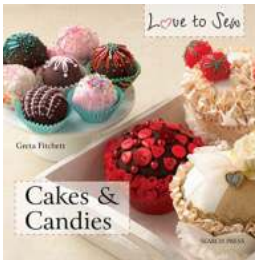
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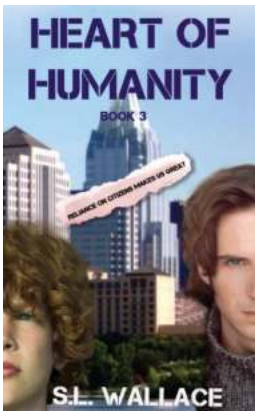
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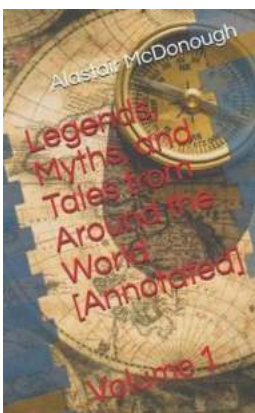
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