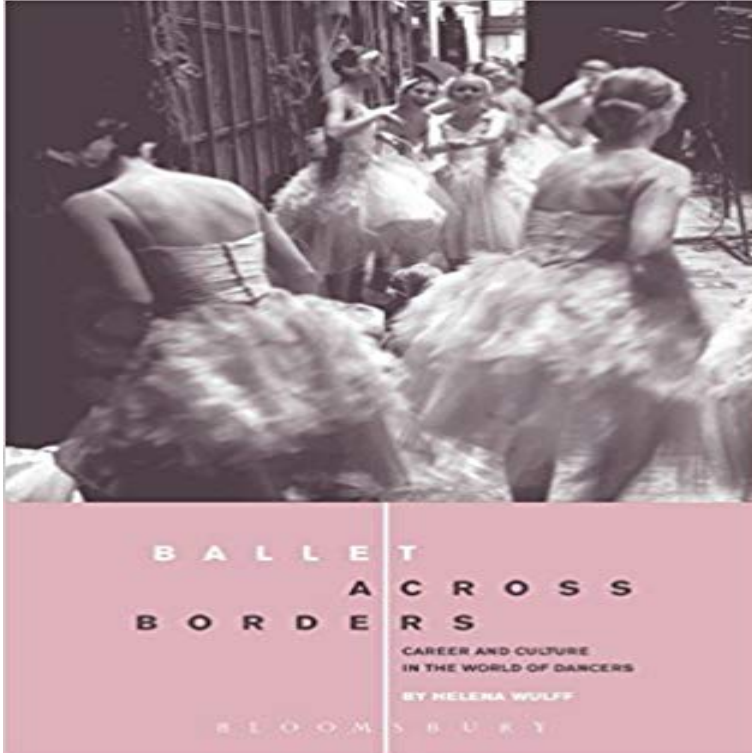


Ballet across Borders: Career and Culture in the World of Dancers



This absorbing book is ballets biography -- a revealing examination of a closed world, its competition and camaraderie, sexual politics, intimacies, pressures and, not least of all, its magic. Ballet companies have endeavoured to hide what is going on backstage lest the reality of highly strung nerves, constant fatigue and pain from injuries tarnish the illusion of ethereal figures and seemingly weightless steps in polished performances. But the audiences perceptions of fairy-tale worlds onstage are far removed from the experiences of the dancers themselves. The author, who trained to be a dancer, has been given an entree to this private world that few outsiders ever see. Books on ballet tend to focus on performance. In contrast, this book, which draws on extensive fieldwork with major companies such as Londons Royal Ballet, the American Ballet Theatre in New York, the Royal Swedish Ballet and the Ballett Frankfurt, is about dancers - how their careers are made and unmade and what happens in dance companies offstage. Anyone interested in the culture of ballet or the theatre, as well as students of anthropology, dance, performance and cultural studies, will want to read what really goes on when the curtain comes down.

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