



Anthropology of the Performing Arts: Artistry, Virtuosity, and Interpretation in Cross-Cultural Perspective

Anya Peterson Royce

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Anya Peterson Royce turns the anthropological gaze on the performing arts, attempting to find broad commonalities in performance, art, and artists across space, time, and culture. She asks general questions as to the nature of artistic interpretation, the differences between virtuosity and artistry, and how artists interplay with audience, aesthetics, and style. To support her case, she examines artists as diverse as Fokine and the Ballets Russes, Tewa Indian dancers, 17th century commedia dell'arte, Japanese kabuki and butoh, Zapotec shamans, and the mime of Marcel Marceau, adding her own observations as a professional dancer in the classical ballet tradition. Royce also points to the recent move toward collaboration across artistic genres as evidence of the universality of aesthetics. Her analysis leads to a better understanding of artistic interpretation, artist-audience relationships, and the artistic imagination as cross-cultural phenomena. Over 29 black and white photographs and drawings illustrate the wide range of Royce's cross-cultural approach. Her well-crafted volume will be of great interest to anthropologists, arts researchers, and students of cultural studies and performing arts.

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