



Moving Lessons: Margaret H'Doubler and the Beginning of Dance in American Education

Janice Ross

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Moving Lessons is an insightful and sophisticated look at the origins and influence of dance in American universities, focusing on Margaret H'Doubler, who established the first university courses and the first degree program in dance (at the University of Wisconsin). Dance educator and historian Janice Ross shows that H'Doubler (1889–1982) was both emblematic of her time and an innovator who made deep imprints in American culture. An authentic "New Woman," H'Doubler emerged from a sheltered female Victorian world to take action in the public sphere. She changed the way Americans thought, not just about female physicality but also about higher education for women.

Ross brings together many discourses—from dance history, pedagogical theory, women's history, feminist theory, American history, and the history of the body—in intelligent, exciting, and illuminating ways and adds a new chapter to each of them. She shows how H'Doubler, like Isadora Duncan and other modern dancers, helped to raise dance in the eyes of the middle class from its despised status as lower-class entertainment and "dangerous" social interaction to a serious enterprise. Taking a nuanced critical approach to the history of women's bodies and their representations, *Moving Lessons* fills a very large gap in the history of dance education.

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