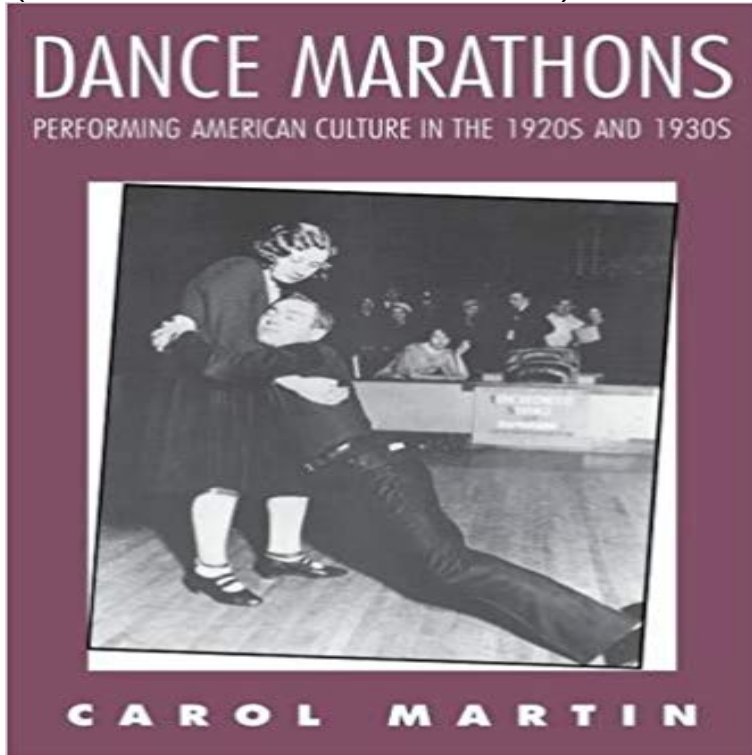


Dance Marathons: Performing American Culture in the 1920s and 1930s (Performance Studies Series)



This penetrating analysis of one of the most extraordinary fads ever to strike America details how dance marathons manifested a potent form of drama. Between the two world wars they were a phenomenon in which working-class people engaged in emblematic struggles for survival. Battling to outlast other contestants, the dancers hoped to become notable. There was crippling exhaustion and anguish among the contenders, but ultimately it was the coupling of authentic pain with staged displays that made dance marathons a national craze. Within the well-controlled space of theatre, they revealed actual lives unpredictability and inconsistencies, and, indeed, the frightful aspects of social Darwinism. In this grotesque theatrical setting we see also a horrifying metaphor?the ailing nation grappling with difficult times.

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