

Watkins

Pyramids at the Louvre

Music, Culture, and Collage from Stravinsky to the Postmodernists

A pyramid in front of the Louvre. Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and The Rite of Spring. Schoenberg and Shirley Temple. Just as the odd juxtapositions of Modernism produced a new way of seeing, so now collage, in the hands of Glenn Watkins, offers a new perspective on the art of our age. A rich and revealing picture of twentieth-century music and the arts, Watkins' work shows us what our present Postmodern aesthetic owes to our Modernist past. Behind the many guises of Modernism we find an appetite for opposing impulses: the exotic and the home-grown, high and low, black and white, the passionate and the cool, the cerebral and the instinctive. Watkins shows us these oppositions at play in the music of Stravinsky and Ravel, Debussy and Schoenberg, Ives, Satie, Hindemith, Ellington, and Gershwin, in the art of Picasso and the Cubists, Cocteau, Léger, Brancusi and Noguchi, in the anthologies of Nancy Cunard and Main Locke, in the ballet companies of Sergei Diaghilev and Rolf de Math, and in the performances of Josephine Baker. Throughout, collage asserts its power to enlighten through juxtaposition, resist resolution, sponsor pluralism, and promote understanding of an order that eludes all edicts. The masks of Oskar Schlemmer, of Japanese No drama, and of the commedia dell'arte, the mythologies attendant to the retrieval of folk traditions and the emergence of jazz, and the mass relocation of artists in a time of war—all have a place in this depiction and assessment of the legacy of Modernism. A heady exploration of questions surrounding Primitivism, Orientalism, and technology as they surface at either end of our century, this book exposes the millennial preoccupations mutually invested in our search for "first times" and our convictions about "the end of culture"

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