



## Reza Abdoh (PAJ Books: Art + Performance)

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"In ancient cultures, they didn't practice theory in their dances; they wanted to arrive at a state of trance, and I think that's an appropriate approach for the arts: to create a work that is entrancing."?Reza Abdoh

Incorporating interviews, critical essays, reviews, and the complete text of the play *The Hip-Hop Waltz of Eurydice*, *Reza Abdoh* is a comprehensive introduction to this influential and controversial theater artist. By the time he died of AIDS in the spring of 1995 at age 32, Reza Abdoh had written, assembled, and directed well over a dozen works for the stage. In this first complete account of his career, Abdoh emerges as an internationally acclaimed artist who was influenced by a wide range of cultures and sources. Yet he is also distinctly American: a visionary who drew heavily on popular culture to expose sexual, racial, and media obsessions in American society. Despite this influence, Abdoh's works are not typical of American theater, according to theater critic Daniel Mufson, because they vehemently reject sentimentality and happy endings.

Abdoh was born in Iran, raised in England, and lived and worked in New York and Los Angeles. He was the recipient of a CalArts/Alpert Theater award in 1995 and a posthumous "Bessie," the Choreographer and Creator Award for Sustained Achievement. Several of his plays toured extensively in Europe. Aside from directing his own plays, Abdoh worked in other genres and media, ranging from a staging of Verdi's *Simon Boccanegra* to the making of a feature-length film, *The Blind Owl*.

"The aesthetic shock of encountering Abdoh's turbulent work sent me reeling back to relive the shock of discovering the radical new art of the 60's, which changed my life."?Richard Foreman

"Abdoh filled his works with tension: tension born of moral and formal contradictions; tension born of tone oscillating wildly from frenzy to calm; tension born of the negotiation between poetic and profane, traditional and modern, normal and abnormal... One of the surprising aspects of Abdoh's work was that it was able to render wretchedness shocking to a society that ordinarily considers itself numbed to depiction of its own dejectedness."?Daniel Mufson, from the Introduction

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