

# TAHYA

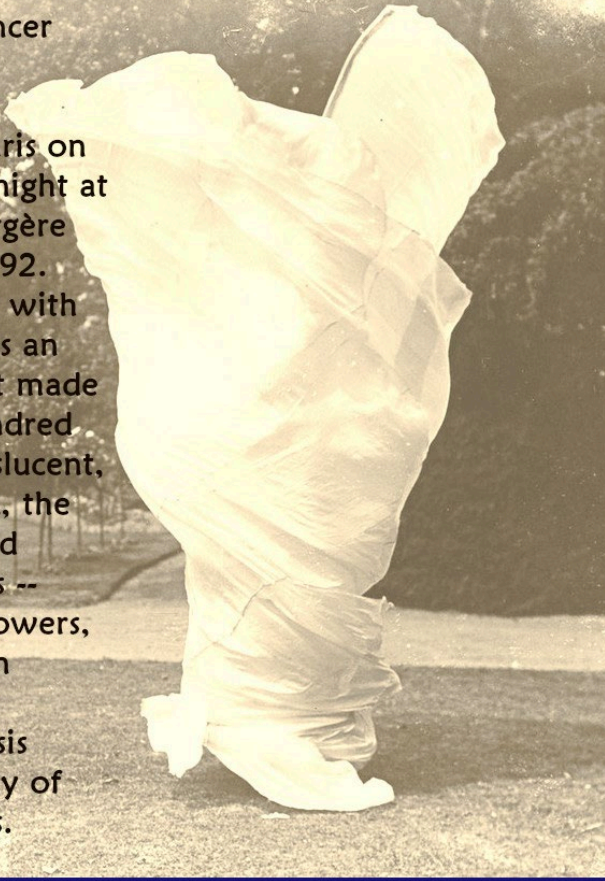
Dancing is the oldest and liveliest of the arts. People in all countries and in all times have expressed their feeling in rhythm and body movement. As civilization progressed, a stylized dance evolved which was exported through the trade routes. The rituals were performed to the accompaniment of flutes, wood clackers, rattles, tambourines, and finger cymbals...

At the dawn of the 20th century two young American women ~ **Isadora Duncan and Ruth St. Denis** ~ dreamed greater things for dancing than were to be found in the dance they saw about them which was pretty much limited to ballet and tap dance. Rejecting the weary ballet and what they felt was its emotional and spiritual emptiness, they claimed for their art values equivalent to those in the sister arts of music, drama, painting and literature. They believed that the body, though trained, should be free to move expressively, free to communicate the profoundest thoughts and feelings.



Miss Ruth strikes a Denishawn pose in "The Peacock" (1914)

American dancer  
Loie Fuller  
(1862-1928)  
conquered Paris on  
her opening night at  
the Folies-Bergère  
on Nov 5, 1892.  
Manipulating with  
bamboo sticks an  
immense skirt made  
of over a hundred  
yards of translucent,  
iridescent silk, the  
dancer evoked  
organic forms --  
butterflies, flowers,  
and flames--in  
perpetual  
metamorphosis  
through a play of  
colored lights.



*At a time when Art Nouveau was all the rage, Fuller burst upon the scene as its living embodiment. A new kind of dancer whose simple movements were highly expressive, she created a fantasy world of dazzling shapes and light play. Every mixed-media artist today owes a debt to her pioneering use of electrical lighting and her synthesis of music, color, light and fabric.* - Anna Kisselgoff. The New York Times, September 24, 1988

Loie Fuller (Born Fullersburg (Hinsdale), Illinois, January 22, 1862. Died Paris, France, January 1, 1928) began her theatrical career as a professional child actress and later choreographing and performing dances in burlesque, vaudeville, and circus shows. Although Fuller became famous in America, she felt that she was not taken seriously by the public. After a warm reception in Paris during a tour, Fuller remained in France and became a regular performer at the Folies Bergère with works such as Fire Dance; she became the embodiment of the Art Nouveau movement. Fuller's pioneering work attracted the attention, respect, and friendship of many French artists and scientists, including Jules Chéret, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, François-Raoul Larche, Henri-Pierre Roché, Auguste Rodin, Stéphane Mallarmé, and Marie Curie. More a theatrician than a dancer, Fuller invented many effects we still use today: the stage surrounded in black curtains to focus attention on the performer; the color-wheel; scenic projection; and, "specials" that are individual lights used to emphasize an effect. She took pieces out of the stage floor, replacing them with glass panels and upwardly directed lights. Fuller held many patents related to stage lighting including chemical compounds for creating color gel and the use of chemical salts for luminescent lighting and garments. She was also a member of the French Astronomical Society. Fuller is responsible for the European tours of the early modern dancers, introducing Isadora Duncan to Parisian audiences and developing the acceptance of modern dance as a serious art form.

Film Footage: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dda-BXNvVkQ>

READ MORE: [metmuseum.org](http://metmuseum.org)

**I am seeing that dance which might be the divine expression of the human spirit through the medium of the body's movement.**



I see America dancing, beautiful and strong, with one foot poised on the highest point of the Rockies, her two hands stretched out from the Atlantic to the Pacific, her fine head tossed to the sky, her forehead shining with a crown of a million stars.

Let her come forth with great strides, leaps and bounds, with lifted forehead and far-spread arms, dancing the language of our pioneers, the fortitude of our heroes, the justice, kindness and purity of our women, and through it all the inspired love and tenderness of our mothers.

- Isadora Duncan  
(1877-1927)



“The dancer's body  
is simply the luminous manifestation  
of the soul.”

- Isadora Duncan



*My whole body  
has become filled with Light.*

*I pour forth my spirit into joy!*

*I sing!*

*I dance!*

*I am arrayed in white,  
for my sufferings and fears  
have departed from me.*

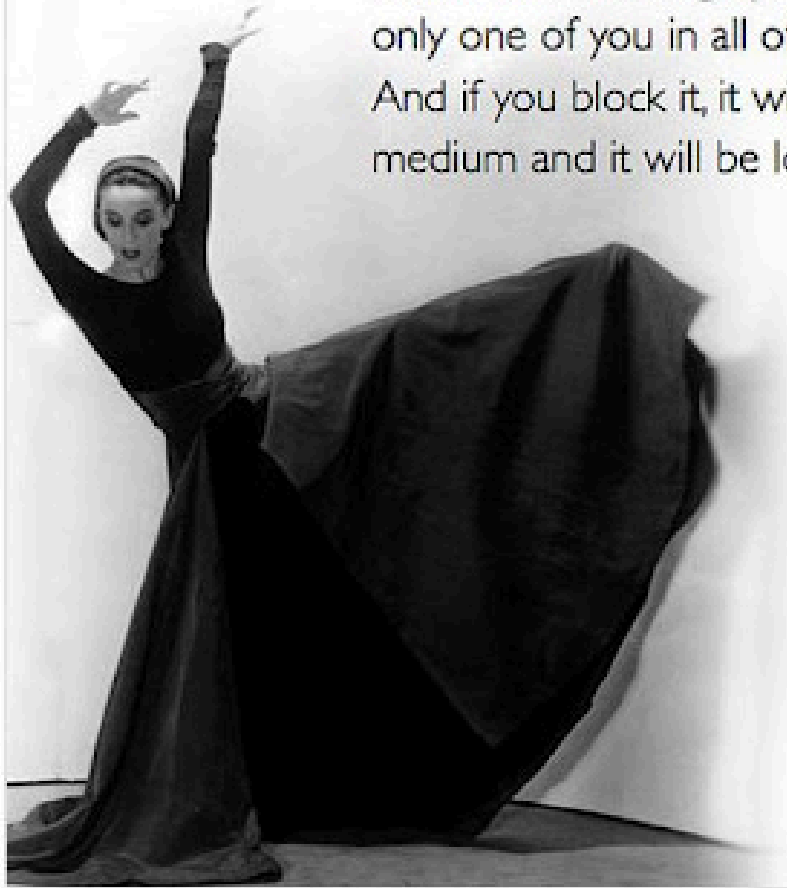
*I dance the eternal  
ecstasy of being.*

*~ Ruth St. Denis*



“There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all of time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and it will be lost.”

— *Martha Graham*



...and then there's the ultimate attractive and seductive dancer whose audiences ~ men and women alike ~ were completely enchanted by her aura of charm and mystery:

## MATA HARI



Read more online: [donhollway.com/matahari/](http://donhollway.com/matahari/) or conduct your own research ~ there are countless books about her!

Mata Hari (1876-1917), born Margaretha Zelle, was born in the Netherlands. She was raised in a middle-class family and was married and divorced by the time she was 25. At 18, Margaretha answered an advertisement in a Dutch newspaper placed by Dutch Colonial Army Captain Rudolf MacLeod, who was living in what was then the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) and was looking for a wife. Margaretha married MacLeod in Amsterdam on 11 July 1895 and took up residence with him in the Dutch East Indies; however, as exotic as she found the music and dance of her new home, she was most unhappy in her marriage and travelled to Paris.



To support herself she became a dancer using Indonesian arts as her inspiration. In correspondence to her relatives in the Netherlands in 1897, she revealed her artistic name of Mata Hari, the word for "sun" in the local Malay language (literally, "eye of the day").

A contemporary of dancers Isadora Duncan and Ruth St. Denis, early pioneers of the modern dance movement around the turn of the 20th century who also looked to Asia and Egypt for artistic inspiration, 1904, Mata Hari began to rise to prominence as an exotic dancer.

Promiscuous, flirtatious, and openly flaunting her body, Mata Hari captivated her audiences and was an overnight success from the debut of her act at the Musée Guimet on 13 March 1905.



She posed as a Javanese princess of priestly Hindu birth, pretending to have been immersed in the art of sacred Indian dance since childhood. Most Europeans at the time were unfamiliar with the Dutch East Indies, and therefore assumed Mata Hari's claims were genuine. A performance with [Hazrat Inayat Khan](#), a Sufi teacher and brilliant musician from India who started "The Sufi Order in the West" lent her credibility at the time.



Ultimately Mata Hari was as famous for her love life as her stage career. She dated businessmen, politicians, and high-ranking officers. The latter was her biggest weakness that most tragically led to her downfall and death.

**MATA HARI IN 1912 WITH THE ROYAL MUSICIANS OF HINDUSTAN UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF INAYAT KHAN**





My dance is a sacred poem  
in which  
each movement is a word and whose  
every word  
is underlined by music.

The temple in which I dance can be  
vague or faithfully reproduced, for  
**I am the temple.**

*~ Mata Hari*



# MATA HARI

a woman who reached mythological status.

Her costuming and dance has inspired countless successors and her lasting legacy is the idea you are not bound to the life you are born into. You can choose your own biography, chase after you dream and become whatever you want!

... epitome of a self-made woman



Live your life as a wise, wild woman.

Theda Bera in *Cleopatra* (1917)



Tahya's focus is to make movement, drumming and dance accessible tools for a vibrant, healthy lifespan. Learn a variety of techniques that enhance your ability to move with fluidity & grace in dance as well as in life. Cultivate healthy habits and ... accessorize; adorn yourself; make your vitality contagious!

For information on classes or to book Tahya for a presentation in your community,  
please visit: [www.TAHYA.com](http://www.TAHYA.com)