

Set against the glamorous backdrop of the Iranian National Ballet Company in 1970s Tehran, *ROMANCE AND REVOLUTION* is the compelling memoir of Clair Symonds, a naïve 19 year old Jewish dancer who grew up in apartheid South Africa and who sets off to join the national ballet company in Iran. Within a few months she has met and fallen in love with Arash Alizadeh, a dashing student of architecture. Much to both sets of parents' disdain, they marry, although Clair's Jewish roots are kept strictly under wraps. But Arash proves to be considerably more charming in courtship and seduction than in wedlock and matrimony. Undeterred, Clair decides to marry Arash for a second time.

Does love conquer all? Are religious and cultural differences insurmountable? *ROMANCE AND REVOLUTION* is the uplifting, eye-opening story of one young woman's long and often painful journey of empowerment as, with the Revolution and the advent of the Ayatollahs in Iran, she begins to search for solutions which, hitherto, have eluded her. Is any behaviour acceptable when it comes to romance? Are there any limits at all when it comes to love?

She might as well have been born with *pointe* shoes on her feet. For Clair Symonds was destined, it seems, to spend the best part of her life in dance studios and ballet companies. She spent 5 years with the Iranian National Ballet Company in Tehran before being engaged as a lead in the Irish Ballet Company in Cork. She subsequently travelled all over the world with the Alexander Roy London Ballet Theatre performing in India, Taiwan, Malta and Brunei. Prior to her retirement she appeared regularly at the London Coliseum with the English National Opera. Although she has always claimed that her 'brains were in her feet', she recently disproved that by completing a Bachelor of Arts degree with the Open University. She lives in Montpellier in the south of France.



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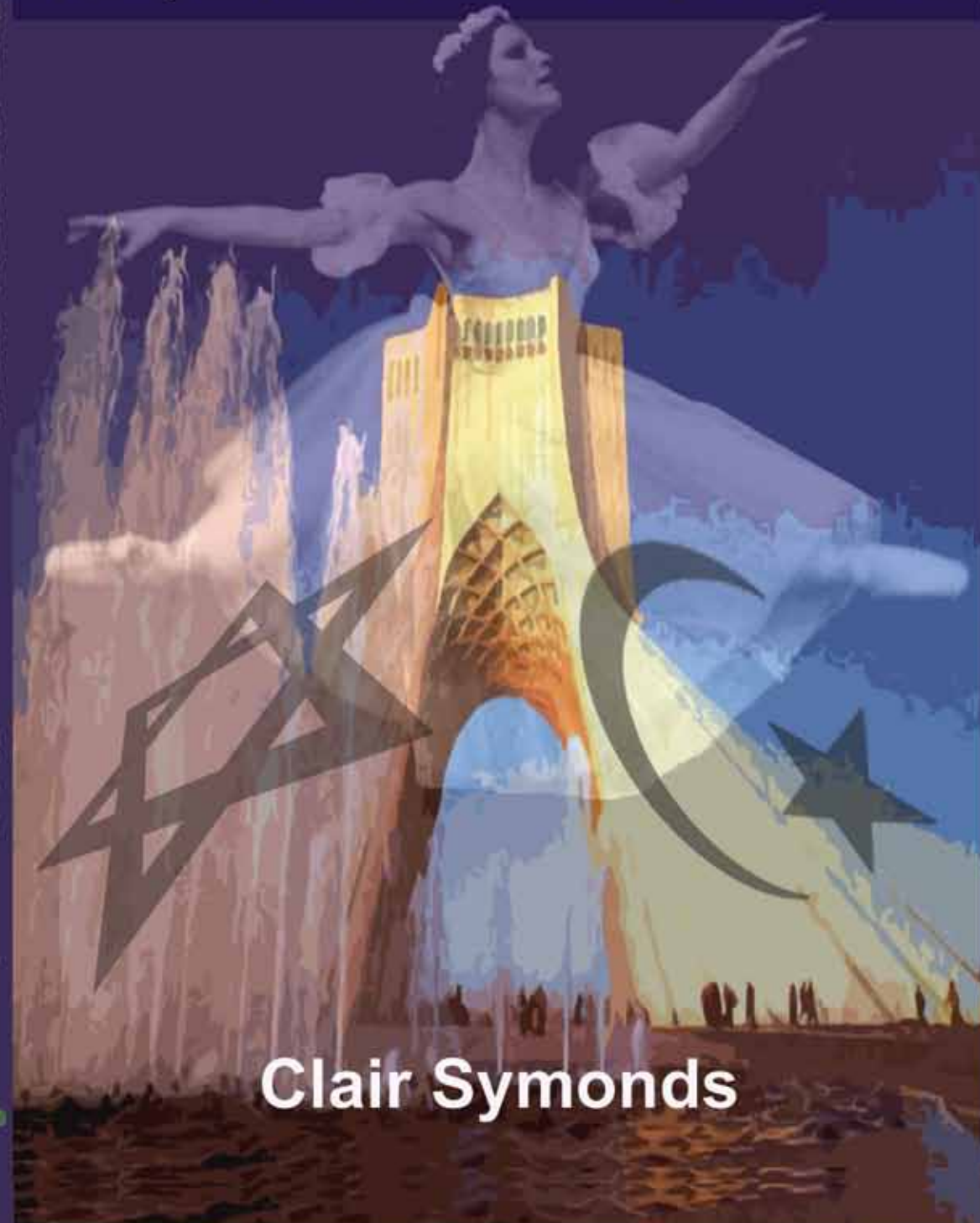
MANTUA BOOKS

ROMANCE AND REVOLUTION

A Leap of Faith at the Iranian National Ballet

ROMANCE AND REVOLUTION

Clair Symonds



Clair Symonds