



Gwen Verdon: A Life on Stage and Screen

Peter Shelley

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American dancer, singer and actress Gwen Verdon (1925-2000) won four Tony awards for her work on Broadway and also appeared in films and on television. Stricken with rickets as a child, Verdon overcame severe leg deformity through ballet training, making her film debut at 11 as a solo ballerina in the musical *The King Steps Out* (1936). Her theater credits include *Can-Can* (1953-1955), *Damn Yankees* (1955-1956), *Redhead* (1959-1960), *New Girl in Town* (1957-1958), *Sweet Charity* (1966-1967) and *Chicago* (1975-1977). When not dancing on stage or screen, she coached other actors, such as Jane Russell, Lana Turner, Betty Grable, Marilyn Monroe and Shirley MacLaine. This first full-length biography of Verdon covers her life and career, her individual performances and her collaborations with choreographers Jack Cole and Bob Fosse, her husband.

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