



## **Reading Dance: A Gathering of Memoirs, Reportage, Criticism, Profiles, Interviews, and Some Uncategorizable Extras**

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Robert Gottlieb's immense sampling of the dance literature—by far the largest such project ever attempted—is both inclusive, to the extent that inclusivity is possible when dealing with so vast a field, and personal: the result of decades of reading.

It limits itself of material within the experience of today's general readers, avoiding, for instance, academic historical writing and treatises on technique, its earliest subjects are those nineteenth-century works and choreographers that still resonate with dance lovers today: *Giselle*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Swan Lake*; Bournonville and Petipa. And, as Gottlieb writes in his introduction, “The twentieth century focuses to a large extent on the achievements and personalities that dominated it—from Pavlova and Nijinsky and Diaghilev to Isadora Duncan and Martha Graham, from Ashton and Balanchine and Robbins to Merce Cunningham and Paul Taylor and Twyla Tharp, from Fonteyn and Farrell and Gelsey Kirkland (“the Judy Garland of Ballet”) to Nureyev and Baryshnikov and Astaire—as well as the critical and reportorial voices, past and present, that carry the most conviction.”

In structuring his anthology, Gottlieb explains, he has “tried to help the reader along by arranging its two hundred-plus entries into a coherent groups.” Apart from the sections on major personalities and important critics, there are sections devoted to interviews (Tamara Tomanova, Antoinette Sibley, Mark Morris); profiles (Lincoln Kirstein, Bob Fosse, Olga Spessivtseva); teachers; accounts of the birth of important works from *Petrouchka* to *Apollo* to *Push Comes to Shove*; and the movies (from Arlene Croce and Alastair Macauley on Fred Astaire to director Michael Powell on the making of *The Red Shoes*). Here are the voices of Cecil Beaton and Irene Castle, Ninette de Valois and Bronislava Nijinska, Maya Plisetskaya and Allegra Kent, Serge Lifar and José Limón, Alicia Markova and Natalia Makarova, Ruth St. Denis and Michel Fokine, Susan Sontag and Jean Renoir. Plus a group of obscure, even eccentric extras, including an account of Pavlova going shopping in London and recipes from Tanaquil LeClerq's cookbook.”

With its huge range of content accompanied by the anthologist's incisive running commentary, *Reading Dance* will be a source of pleasure and instruction for anyone who loves dance.

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