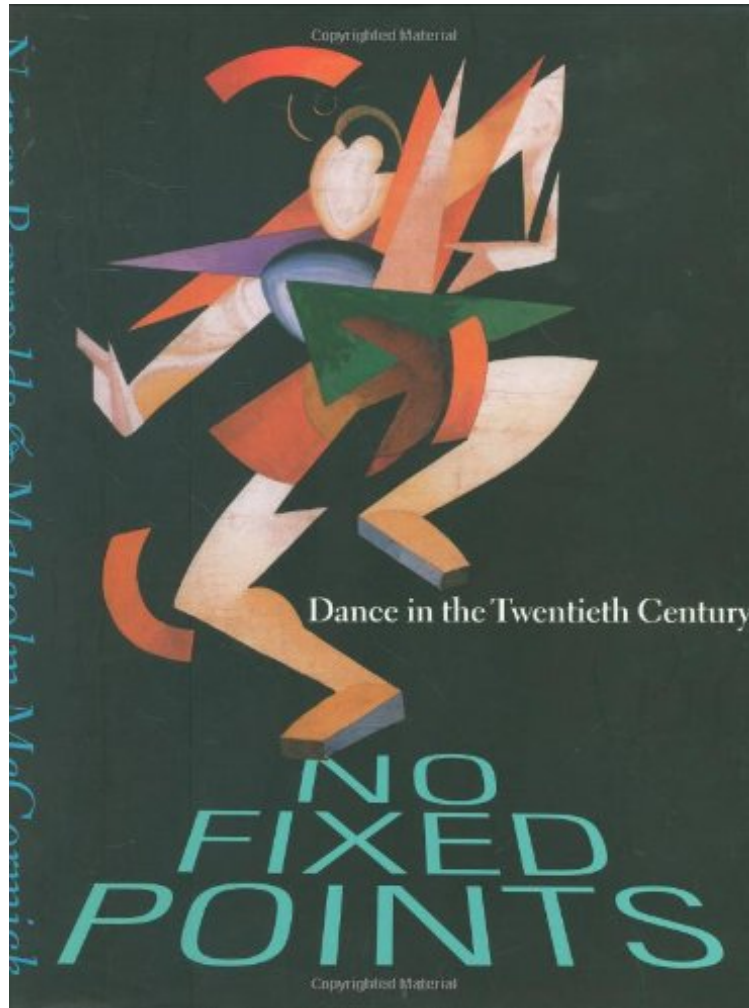


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No Fixed Points: Dance in the Twentieth Century

Nancy Reynolds, Malcolm McCormick
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Nancy Reynolds, Malcolm McCormick : No Fixed Points: Dance in the Twentieth Century before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised No Fixed Points: Dance in the Twentieth Century:

15 of 16 people found the following review helpful. Superb
By Dr. Lee D. Carlson
Dance, in whatever form, is a human activity that is usually done vertically, albeit with occasional (and deliberate) falls to the floor that are recovered with skill and grace. And to appreciate dance fully one must do so vertically, and revel in the accompanying overdoses of perspiration that are liquid proof of its exertions. But one can also appreciate dance from a more intellectual viewpoint, from the comfort of the armchair: as a researcher or as a spectator, as a reader or as a viewer. This book, thick and massive, and packed full of fascinating insights and information, will definitely be of utility to those of the former class. It is a book that must be read cover to cover, as its literary patterns conform to an organized

choreography. Anyone who is heavily involved in dance, either as a professional dancer, a historian, or as a choreographer will have some preconceptions of the history of dance. The content of this book will no doubt challenge some of these preconceptions. In many instances it offers viewpoints, along with references that seem to be contrary to accepted wisdom. For example, it has been asserted in many works that modern dance in America began as a rebellion against ballet, against its rigidity and insistence on structure. Certainly there is anecdotal evidence for this belief, but the authors paint a picture that is somewhat more complicated. Ballet, they say, at least high quality ballet, was not available at the time, and dance in general was viewed as 'virtual prostitution'. Readers will also get introduced to a lot of figures in dance that may be unknown to them, such as Maud Allan, Loie Fuller, Leonid Massine, Nikolai Semenov, Hans von Manen, and Jiri Kylian. But the usual suspects, such as Isadora Duncan, Serge Diaghilev, Anna Pavlova, Mary Wigman, Ruth St. Denis, George Balanchine, Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Vaslav Nijinsky, Charles Weidman, Ted Shawn, Twyla Tharp, Robert Joffrey, Merce Cunningham, and Mikhail Baryshnikov are all discussed in great detail. In addition, it is not just a book on the history of twentieth-century dance in America and Europe, for the authors also discuss this history in Japan and Russia. The book is also full of exquisite photos. It is clear from the reading of the book that the choreographers of the twentieth century had very strong personalities and had their own idiosyncratic views of the nature and philosophy of dance. St. Denis for example held that "dance begins in consciousness, not in the body"; Maud Allan that "there should be nothing to mar the rhythmic sense of continuous harmonious expression"; Isadora Duncan spoke of her ability to "evoke movement out of the well-springs of experience"; and Rudolf Laban spoke of dance being a projection of the deeper levels of the human psyche and that dance "contains the gift of ethical understanding". All revolution and change is brought about by driven individuals who hold to their own vision of what should be. It is also clear that the dance profession survived in many instances on shoestring budgets, with the lack of financial backing due to societal attitudes and prejudices, along with rapidly changing tastes throughout the twentieth century. The diversity of dance styles exploded in the twentieth century, and for dance historians this was both a blessing and a curse. Naturally it gave them much work, but it also required them to attempt a classification of dance movements, the latter of which is often held to be an anathema especially by the practitioners of modern dance. But Rudolf Laban, and other inventors of dance notation, gave all dance, indeed all movement, systemization and codification. The study of dance, and its creation, is made easier by these notational schemes. In the field of geometric topology in mathematics, one learns of transformations that do not have fixed points, i.e. when these transformations act on objects they move every point. The title of this book was inspired by a quotation of Albert Einstein that "there are no fixed points in space." When the book is completed, one is astonished by the incredible amount of change that occurred in dance in the twentieth century. If the developments in dance in this time period are represented by a transformation, one can easily believe that it is very complicated, that it has no fixed points. But what can one say about the twenty-first century? The authors allude to future developments in dance at various places in the book. Can we expect more change that defies current categorization and systemization? As the twentieth century progressed, one observes the importance of technology, with this technology being exploited fully by choreographers, both in lighting, presentation, and staging. In the twenty-first century, we will observe continued use of technology, but this technology will also be responsible for creating new dance forms and patterns. Instead of being used by the choreographer the technology will become the choreographer. And this technology will also perform the dances. When a book like this is written at the end of the twenty-first century, the list of choreographers and dancers it contains will include many that are not human.

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RecommendBy MMeaganBook came exactly as advertised, it's in near perfect condition.
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy CustomerFast clean nice book

This book chronicles one hundred years of dramatic developments in ballet, modern, and experimental dance for stage and screen in Europe and North America. The volume is magisterial in scope, encompassing the history of theatrical dance from 1900 through 2000. Beginning with turn-of-the-century dancer-choreographers like Loie Fuller, Isadora Duncan, Michel Fokine, and a bit later Vaslav Nijinsky, and proceeding through the profusion of dance styles performed today, the book provides an unparalleled view of dance in performance as it changed and grew in the twentieth century. Nancy Reynolds and Malcolm McCormick set dance in broader cultural and historical contexts, examine specific dance works, and explore the contributions of outstanding choreographers, performers, visual artists, impresarios, composers, critics, and other figures. They discuss the breakaway barefoot dance of the early 1900s and demonstrate its links with later forms and styles. With unusual detail, fascinating illustrations, and wide-ranging insights, this book is an indispensable guide to the transformations in the dance scene of the twentieth century.

From The New Yorker This masterly history presents a grand, old-fashioned narrative of the development of ballet, modern dance, and postmodern choreography. Synthesizing a century's worth of observation and opinion, Reynolds and McCormick chart the pendulum swing of styles and isolate individual contributions in a way that is both comprehensive in its coverage and assured in its handling of the smallest details. They highlight the significance of factors as large as government funding and as small as the depth of Baryshnikov's demi-pli. Where tastes differ, they

generally present both sides, yet their tone, fluctuating from awestruck (Balanchine) to archly dismissive (Pina Bausch), makes clear that the authors—both former dancers—care too much about their subject to be impartial. Copyright 2005 The New Yorker. From Booklist. *Starred* Choreography fueled the big bang that gave form to twentieth-century dance, a universe of dazzling innovations, and choreographers are the stars of this vibrantly comprehensive history. Dancers as well as teachers and scholars, Reynolds and McCormick chronicle each remarkable phase in the spectacular evolution of modern and postmodern dance in both Europe and the U.S. with exceptional insight, gracefully entwining incisive biographical profiles of seminal choreographers and dancers with keen and lucid aesthetic analyses. The story of twentieth-century dance is one of synthesis and synergy as choreographers used tradition as a springboard to new lexicons of motion and styles of presentation, and drew on concomitant developments in music, visual art, and popular culture to extend dance's psychological, spiritual, and political reach. The story begins with the pioneering "barefoot" Americans Loie Fuller, Isadora Duncan, and Ruth St. Denis, and flows unceasingly forward to embrace the monumental accomplishments of the all-important Russians, from Nijinsky to Balanchine; the incomparable Martha Graham; and such luminaries as Twyla Tharp, Jerome Robbins, Merce Cunningham, and Arthur Mitchell. All the major players are scintillatingly portrayed in this grand and thrilling survey, and so, too, are dozens of less hallowed but nonetheless significant figures. Donna Seaman. Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved. Nancy Reynolds is the winner of the 2013 Bessie Award for Outstanding Service to the Field of Dance.