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Of the Presence of the Body: Essays on dance and Performance Theory

From Wesleyan

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#379406 in Books 2004-03-24 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.80 x .56 x 6.381, .64 #File Name: 0819566128192 pages | File size: 32.Mb

From Wesleyan : **Of the Presence of the Body: Essays on dance and Performance Theory** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Of the Presence of the Body: Essays on dance and Performance Theory:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Can dance render (perhaps better than respond to) the disaster By Susannah LeMarquand Of the Presence of the Body by Andre Lepecki, is a collection of essays by known dance

scholars, discussing their interpretations of how the politics of the world can inform not only choreographic works but the bodies that participate in these studies of movement. Topics range from Genealogy to Ontology with articles written by such authors as Susan Manning, Mark Franko and Peggy Phelan and Lepecki himself. While some articles are a difficult read, often using terminology and concepts that most might have to explore on their own before continuing, it is clear that we have found a book where each contributor has given the reader many ideas to contemplate in regards to the artistry of dance and how it is influenced by the politics, history and culture of the surrounding world. It also questions how a present body can also help stimulate such choreography and cause the audience to ponder these issues through artistic expression. Of particular interest is Mark Franko's essay *Given Movement: Dance and the Event*. Franko questions the artistic responses to 9/11 and where exactly can dance find its place between performance and event. Asking such questions as Can dance respond to the event? Is response (in the terms of a dance) actually what is called for? Can dance render (perhaps better than respond to) the disaster? His dissection of what it means to create in response to an event could cause choreographers to rethink their own interpretations of movement. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Relevant Critical Essays By Heather White Hagar Andre Lepecki's book *Of the Presence of the Body* exemplifies the power of the collaborative union. All nine authors and their writings embody relevant discussions transpiring in both the academic and professional fields of dance choreography. The performativity of Peggy Phelan's essay is truly compelling. Ms. Phelan's literary approach finely weaves a feministic tapestry of dance criticism, personal relationships, choreographic works, and human existence. Her work brings home the philosophy of the in between moments of art and life. Mark Franko's *Given Movement: Dance and the Event* considers the situation of artistic response to 9/11. Mr. Franko's dissertation re-examines the location of dance between performance and event following the devastating act of terrorism on September 11th. French philosopher Jean-Francois Lyotard suggests one could call an event the impact, on the system, of floods of energy such that the system does not manage to bind and channel this energy; the event would be the traumatic encounter of energy with the regulating institution. Mark Franko goes further by stating, an event happens by passing through the body without the body's ability to contain, bind, or channel energy. Franko believes the method of transmission is what connects the force of the event with the force of the artistic work. Other assembled essays compare and contrast a wide range of cultural, social, and political discourse with various dance works. Lepecki's book has been a wonderful source for my academic research. I highly recommend this book for graduate level dance candidates.

Of the Presence of the Body gathers nine original essays by eminent scholars in the fields of dance and performance studies. Its focus is the historical, cultural and political contexts that inform choreographic and dance practices and critical readings of dance in other words, how dance operates as critical discourse. The question that runs throughout the essays is the theoretical and political problem of how dances come to be seen, how the presence of the body leaves its mark on critical theories and performances. Focusing exclusively on 20th century dance, the interdisciplinary perspectives range from history to race studies, deconstruction, Marxist theory, feminist theory, literary studies and feminist ethnography. The anthology provides an overview of the current methodologies and theoretical developments in the field of dance studies. These essays expand our understanding of the performing body, and their organization around the epistemological problem in dance studies the dynamics of seeing, remembering and writing will make the collection useful for classes in dance criticism and theory, cultural theory, performance studies, and aesthetics. CONTRIBUTORS: Barbara Browning, Ramsey Burt, Thomas De Frantz, Mark Franko, Andr Lepecki, Karmen MacKendrick, Susan Manning, Randy Martin, Peggy Phelan.

"Of the Presence of the Body offers contributions to the fields of dance and performance studies that range from truly extraordinary and intellectually powerful to merely effective and articulate. Seldom are so many strong voices gathered in one place." -- Amy Koritz, Associate Professor English, Tulane University *Of the Presence of the Body* offers contributions to the fields of dance and performance studies that range from truly extraordinary and intellectually powerful to merely effective and articulate. Seldom are so many strong voices gathered in one place. (Amy Koritz, Associate Professor English, Tulane University) This exciting collection of essays, brought together by one of the best critical thinkers on contemporary performance practice, not only provides a lucid and timely insight into the complex relations between presence, embodiment and performance, but also recognizes the field of dance and choreography as a dynamic focus for critical thought that can challenge current cultural, social and political assumptions. (Ric Allsopp, Joint Editor Performance Research; Dartington College of Arts, UK) From the Publisher 6 x 9 trim.