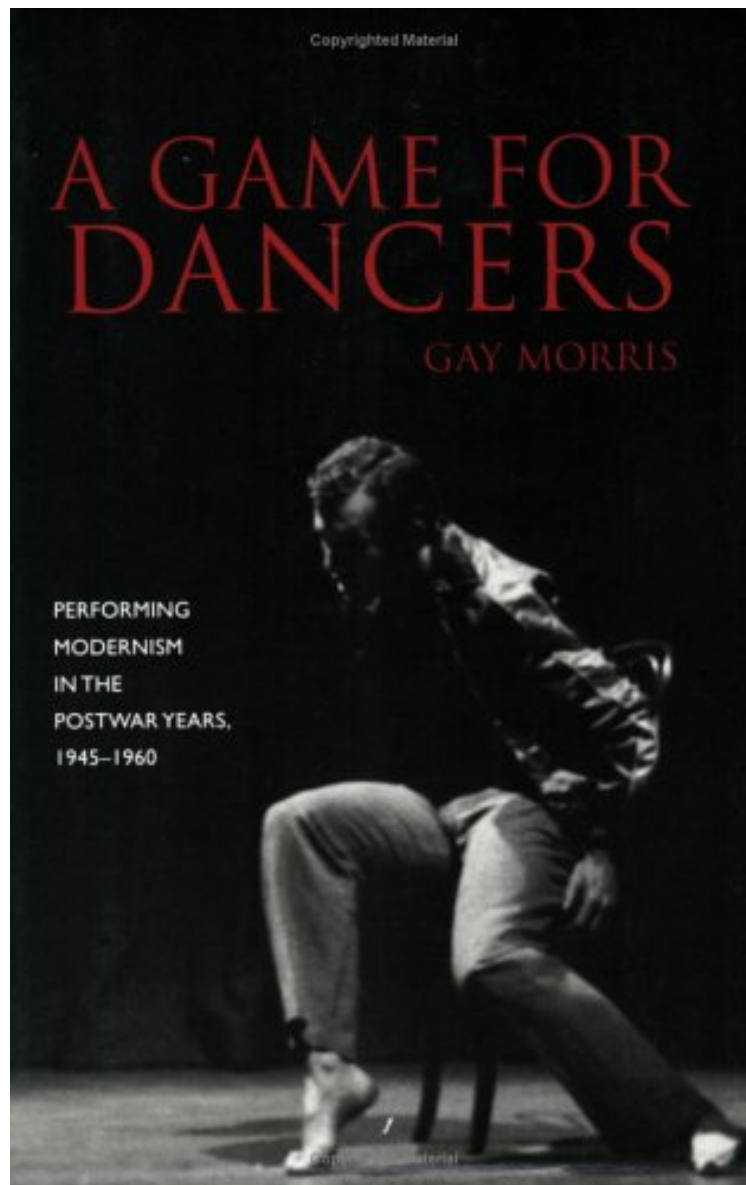


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A Game for Dancers: Performing Modernism in the Postwar Years, 1945-1960

Gay Morris

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Gay Morris : A Game for Dancers: Performing Modernism in the Postwar Years, 1945-1960 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Game for Dancers: Performing Modernism in the Postwar Years, 1945-1960:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An in-depth look at developments in American concert dance post-war and during the Cold WarBy Kailua GypsyGay Morris has provided a valuable analysis of the developments in American dance, especially modern dance, in the Cold War period from 1945-1960. The concept of "modernism" is ever-changing. What was modern yesterday has become institutionalized today. Therefore, "modern dance" is also always in transition. Morris has researched extensively and provided many reports from contemporary dance, music and art critics with their response(and sometimes the audiences as well)to new trends in dance. Of special interest are the chapters concerning Martha Graham, George Balanchine(he is rightfully included as a pioneer and innovator in dance), Merce Cunningham, and three important African-American choreographers, Katherine Dunham, Pearl Primus and Talley Beatty.0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A study of the challenge posed to American modern dancers as the Cold War seized hold of American cultureBy Midwest Book ReviewDance and art critic Gay Morris presents *A Game For Dancers: Performing Modernism In The Postwar Years 1945-1960*, a study of the challenge posed to American modern dancers as the Cold War seized hold of American culture and the genre became categorically institutionalized. Chapters discuss the changes, for better or worse, imposed upon ballet, African-American vanguardism, modernist theory, and much more. A handful of black-and-white photographs illustrate this scholarly and serious-minded scrutiny of a critical phase of the evolution of an art form.0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Bueno Prize WinnerBy JimT"A Game For Dancers" was awarded the de la Torre Bueno Prize by the Society of Dance History Scholars.The prize is awarded annually to a book published in the English language that advances the field of dance studies. Named after Jos Rollins de la Torre Bueno, the first university press editor to develop a list of titles in dance studies, the Bueno Prize has recognized scholarly excellence in the field since 1973.

A Game for Dancers examines the difficulties American modern dancers faced as the Cold War took hold and the genre became institutionalized after its pioneering phase. It draws on the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu to explore the interconnections between art and politics while paying close attention to modern dance's ambivalent relationship to the market. At the heart of the book is an inquiry into modernism itself, and how dancers struggled with modernist ideas of abstraction and autonomy while rarely questioning them. Crucial, too, is the issue of embodiment, which appeared to answer modernist skepticism of representation and aid modern dance's elusive pursuit of independence. Subjects include modernist dance theory, the emergence of new constituencies including African-American choreographers, and the work of Merce Cunningham and Alwin Nikolais, whose objectivism was declared a new modern dance vanguard in the 1950s.

This valuable book unearths a new perspective on dance in New York, a perspective based on attitudes, actions, aesthetics, and definitions of dance by major choreographers and dance writers/theorists and on the ways they dealt with broad cultural and social issues. Morris looks at the evolving new form of dance drama; modern dancers fighting against the commercialization of Broadway and Hollywood; dancers interest (or lack of interest) in developing their own personal style and vocabulary; narrative versus abstract corporal movement; and new ballets by George Balanchine, Anthony Tudor, Agnes de Mille, and Jerome Robbins challenging modern dances vanguard position. Especially significant are Morriss insightful analyses and interpretations of the writings of John Martin, Edwin Denby, and John Cage and their faith in the corporal intelligence of dance; of how Anna Sokolow, Sophie Maslow, and the New Dance Group Company tried to embody minority communities and identity in their dances; of how Ronnie Aul and Donald McKayle gained greater access while still losing ground in discrimination and stereotyping; and of the demanding objectivism of Merce Cunningham and Alwin Nikolais and the right of dancing to be its own subject matter.Choice