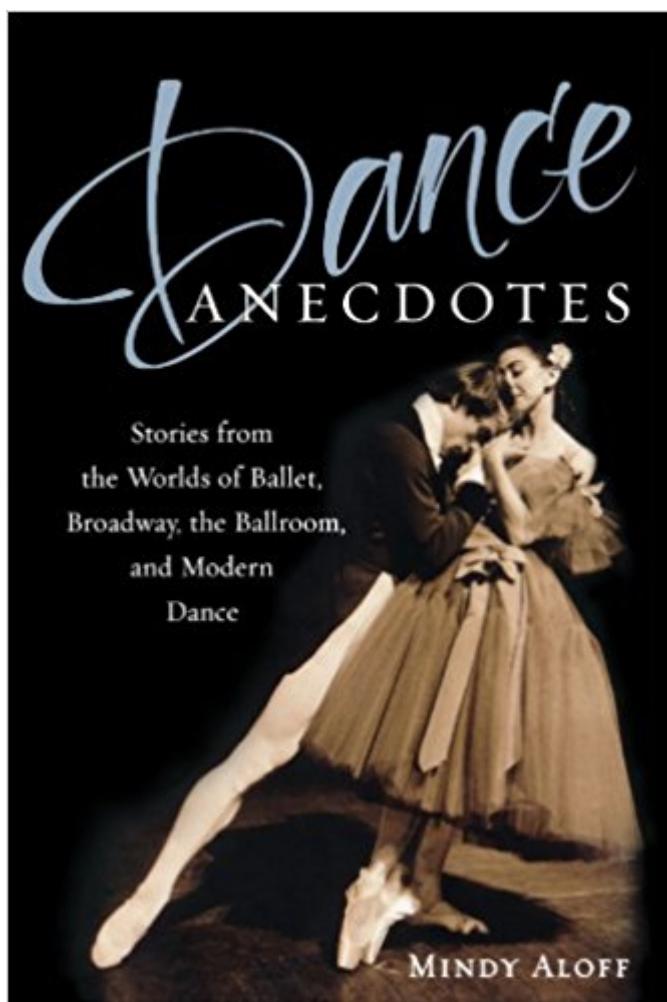


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Dance Anecdotes: Stories From The Worlds Of Ballet, Broadway, The Ballroom, And Modern Dance



Synopsis

Mindy Aloff, a leading dance critic who has written for *The Nation*, *The New Republic*, and *The New Yorker*, has brought together here a marvelous book of stories by and about dancers--entertaining and informative anecdotes that capture the boundless variety and richness of dance as an art, a tradition, a profession, a pastime, an obsession, a reality, and, for the dancer, an ideal. George Balanchine is here, and so are Fred Astaire, Margot Fonteyn, Rudolf Nureyev, Savion Glover, Martha Graham, and Lola Montez, and also stars from other arts--such as Akira Kurosawa and Bob Dylan--who have spoken about dancing with wit or illumination. There are stories about Irene and Vernon Castle, Cyd Charisse and Gene Kelly, Bob Fosse and Gwen Verdon, Paul Taylor and Mark Morris. We read about the charisma and spontaneity of Anna Pavlova, about the secret to Vaslav Nijinsky's success ("I worked like an ox and I lived like a martyr"), about George Balanchine racing to a union dispute with a bag of dimes. Many of the stories are amusing, but some are rueful, even sad, and a few are dark. Aloff concludes the volume with an essay about how dancing has been able to record its past, sometimes over centuries, and about how the art of the dancer, apparently as ephemeral in performance as cloud patterns, turns out, when conditions are hospitable, to be much more hardy and resilient than many people suppose. A glorious promenade of stories that stretch as far back as classical times and as far afield as Japan, India, and Java, this superb collection will be treasured by everyone who loves dance, whether young or old.

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Customer Reviews

Esteemed dance critic Aloff offers up a delicious and provocative pastiche of anecdotes from the world of dance. She describes it as "the kind of collection that one might pick up in a country inn on a rainy day and while away an hour browsing through," which is too modest: the book is easy to pick up but hard to put down. Those who want salacious gossip will have to look elsewhere; Aloff eschews the "smirking delights of shaudenfreude," including only stories she "would want to tell... to someone [she] cared for." The stories are insightful, witty, occasionally juicy and often dark. Aloff is delightfully subjective and partial in her choices. There are dancers and choreographers represented, of course—Petipa, Pavlova, Balanchine, Nureyev, Graham and Astaire. But other artists, such as Shakespeare, Tchaikovsky, Dickens, Colette and Dave Barry (yes, Dave Barry) also figure in these tales. This volume is destined to be bedside reading for those fond of backstage insight and intrigue. (May) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"A fascinating glimpse into the minds of dance greats."--Dance Teacher "A heartfelt homage to dance's best.... Browsing these pages will make an afternoon disappear."--Dance Magazine "Esteemed dance critic Aloff offers up a delicious and provocative pastiche of anecdotes from the world of dance.... The stories are insightful, witty, occasionally juicy and often dark. Aloff is delightfully subjective and partial in her choices.... This volume is destined to be bedside reading for those fond of backstage insight and intrigue."--Publishers Weekly "It is wonderful to read a book which takes you past the curtain, not back stage, but into the very heart and soul of the dancer."--Yvonne Marceau, Founder of the American Ballroom Theater and Associate Director of Dancing Classrooms "In this delightful collection, Mindy Aloff redefines the notion of anecdote as topical fluff. While her book has its share of today's amusing stories, the reader will also find a range of subjects from Ancient Greece to the courts of France to Balanchine and a look, both serious and humorous, at such issues as stagefright, criticism, creativity, and backstage politics. Her selections are not only entertaining but informative."--Nancy Reynolds, Director of Research at the George Balanchine Foundation, and co-author of *No Fixed Points: Dance in the Twentieth Century* "Dance Anecdotes is a collection of amazing originality and range and variety. Mindy Aloff's selections are all new to me, despite fifty years as a dancer and teacher, and of reading on dance. Many of her sources are people we do not usually hear from, and all of them have something precious to tell us. I learned new details about choreography and performance quality. I now know about some important lives. Sometimes I laughed, sometimes I felt very sad, sometimes I felt the warmth of fond

memory, sometimes I felt regret over what I missed. I gained fresh insight even into dance people I knew well myself. I have better understanding of many from the past and present whom I did not know. This book is a necessary addition to any dance-lover's collection." --Suki Schorer, Brown Foundation Senior Faculty Chair at the School of American Ballet, and author of Suki Schorer on Balanchine Technique

This is a disjointed collection of gossips, bits from memoirs of dances and choreographers, etc."Anecdotes" are extremely rarely amusing or illuminating. Save your money

These are not common stories that you would know. It is a wonderful read.

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