



Judson Dance Theater: Performative Traces

Ramsay Burt

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"The Judson Dance Theatre "explores the work and legacy of one of the most influential of all dance companies, which first performed at the Judson Memorial Church in downtown Manhattan in the early 1960s. There, a group of choreographers and dancers--including future well-known artists Twyla Tharp, Carolee Schneemann, Robert Morris, Trisha Brown, Yvonne Rainier, and others--created what came to be known as " postmodern dance." Taking their cues from the experiments of Merce Cunningham, they took movements from everyday life--walking, running, gymnastics--to create dances that influenced not only future dance work but also minimalism in music and art, as well as the wedding of dance and speech in solo performance pieces.

Judson's legacy has been explored primarily in the work of dance critic Sally Banes, in a book published in the 1980s. Although the dancers from the so-called "Judson School" continue to perform and create new works--and their influence continues to grow from the US to Europe and beyond--there has not been a book-length study in the last two decades that discusses this work in a broader context of cultural trends. Burt is a highly respected dance critic and historian who brings a unique new vision to his study of the Judson dancers and their work which will undoubtedly influence the discussion of these seminal figures for decades to come "Performative Traces: Judson" "Dance Theatre and Its Legacy "combines history, performance analysis, theory, and criticism to give a fresh view of the work of this seminal group of dancers. It will appeal to students of dance history, theory, and practice, as well as all interested in the avant-grade arts and performance practice in the 20th century.

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