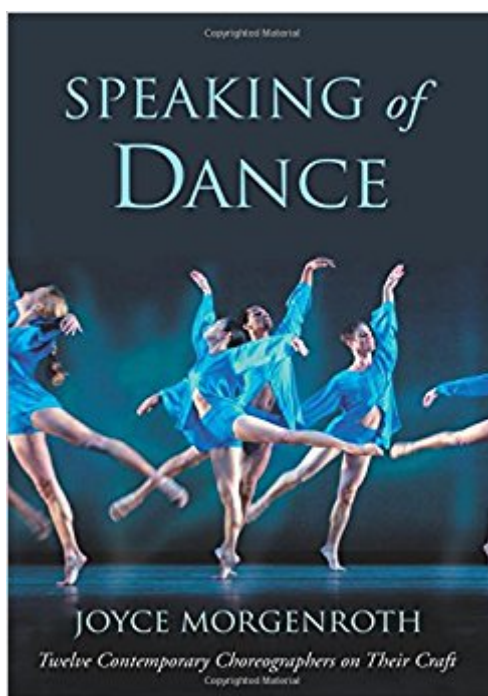


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# Speaking Of Dance: Twelve Contemporary Choreographers On Their Craft



## Synopsis

*Speaking of Dance: Twelve Contemporary Choreographers on Their Craft* delves into the choreographic processes of some of America's most engaging and revolutionary dancemakers. Based on personal interviews, the book's narratives reveal the methods and quests of, among others, Merce Cunningham, Meredith Monk, Bill T. Jones, Trisha Brown, and Mark Morris. Morgenroth shows how the ideas, craft, and passion that go into their work have led these choreographers to disrupt known forms and expectations. The history of dance in the making is revealed through the stories of these intelligent, articulate, and witty dance masters.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Joyce Morgenroth takes the subject of movement to new heights as she develops her deep way of naming it for what it does -- not what it 'looks like' or 'makes us feel'. Her book elevates our field to an actual body of knowledge in print... at long last."-Elizabeth Streb "Rarely does an interview give me back a boost of clarity about my work as yours has done."-Trisha Brown

Joyce Morgenroth is Associate Professor of Dance at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. She is the author of several other books on dance, including *Dance Improvisation* (U of Pittsburgh Press, 1997).

Joyce Morgenroth's work, aptly titled *Speaking of Dance*, allows us the pleasure of actually hearing the voices of the choreographers and, in a very real sense, seeing their work. This simple integrity

of purpose may be a large part of what makes the book so eminently readable. The author signals us with her first introductory words, "Watching dance..." that we are in for a journey from audience point-of-view. Then, Morgenroth neatly take us to the source, her interviews with twelve well-known choreographers. What different sources they turn out to be! Speaking of Dance lets the choreographers tell their stories with the full flair of their personalities. I get who they are without being spoon-fed. They speak in their twelve highly individual styles, just what you hope for from contemporary titans in the dance world. (No doubt much clearer sounding than some of them actually articulated before Morgenroth edited for us.) In speaking they let us into their world. How much each captivates is illuminated almost as much by how they present themselves, perhaps who they are, as by what they have created on the floor...and, in some cases, off the ceilings, on the walls, with the music coupled with each artist's internal vision. In every case I learn

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I use this book as a text for my undergraduate Dance Composition II course. Students love reading the direct words of the choreographers and exploring the choreographers' processes and philosophies to develop their own work.

I like this book alot. In the introduction, we hear the voice of Joyce Morgenroth, author and interviewer. An auspices start. The writing is smart and lively. Morgenroth loves dance, has a keen eye for details, and lots of questions. Through the intro, her energetic and easy writing makes her feel close... and she is willing to take us along into the kitchens and lofts to speak with dancemakers about the alchemy of choreography. First stop, though is a short history of modern dance. We get facts but Morgenroth concentrates on the catalysts that led to explorations. She places each of the artists in the book in context. The interviews start with a short bio but the heft is the voice of the artist. The pieces are spontaneous and intimate and also well-structured. The artists' stories of their histories are funny and human. No matter how well known, it is clear that each artist is still deeply involved with the process of making work. I teach dance composition and after reading Speaking of Dance realized what a priceless resource this is for young people making art. We can't give them a formula, just tips and the courage to get out there and try. This book supports that idea completely.

This book was everything I expected. It came to me quickly and I was very pleased with the

condition of the book.

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