

## Editor's Note

An emphasis in the Summer 2002 issue of *DRJ* is on dance history and criticism. Several of our essays invite us to consider the different approaches open to dance historians and critics as we attempt to capture and preserve our past. We are pleased to publish a special section honoring the pioneering work of dance critic and historian Deborah Jowitt who has been a major force in the field of dance writing for over thirty years. With her deft and evocative prose, clarity of insights, and generosity of spirit, Deborah has helped train the sensibilities of a new generation of dance writers and thinkers.

The essays in this section—by Lynn Garafola, David Gere, Elizabeth Zimmer, and Carolyn Brown—were originally presented at the Contributions to Research in Dance Award Panel for Deborah Jowitt at the 2001 CORD conference at New York University, organized by dance critic Marcia Siegel. Siegel, who also edited this special section of *DRJ*, chose a range of presenters who, in the spirit of Jowitt, are passionate about their subjects. As she notes in her Introduction: “It seems to me that the work of historians, reconstructors, editors, writers, and critics is a necessity to carry on the dance beyond its ephemeral life on the stage.”

The final piece in this section, “Deborah Jowitt and Marcia Siegel: A Conversation on Robbins and Tharp”—an engaging dialogue between two scholar/critics—poses some fascinating questions about the research and writing process itself and the biographer’s challenge to present and interpret the work and life of her subject.

Dance history of the 1930s—a fertile period when art and politics met with particular fervor—comes alive in this issue of *DRJ*. In “Uniform Bodies: Mass Movement and Modern Totalitarianism,” historian Mary Anne Santos Newhall provides new insights into the intersections between group (or mass) dance forms and modern concert dance. In her piece, Santos Newhall draws on her interviews with former modern dance performers and choreographers Jane Dudley, Eve Gentry, Sophie Maslow, and Marva Spelman, which shed additional light on this highly creative period of dance. The history of 1930s dance dovetails with Lynn Garafola’s finely wrought excavation of the career of Edna Ocko, a leftist dance critic and one of the founders of the New Dance Group, and with Patricia Beaman’s interview with May O’Donnell who, at the age of 96, reminisces about her long tenure as a principal dancer with Martha Graham and her own work as a choreographer.

In other essays, the field of phenomenology of the body is explored as an analytical tool for understanding how dancers acquire an understanding of their bodies in movement. In “Bodily Knowledge: Epistemological Reflections on Dance,” Jaana Parviainen critiques some of the major thinking today in the field of the phenomenology of the body. Her proposed feminist methodology suggests an alternative mode of analysis for the field of *dance* phenomenology in particular. Readers interested in this subject will want to refer to dance philosopher Sondra Fraleigh’s review essay (in our Reviews section) of Maxine Sheets-Johnstone’s *The Primacy of Movement*. Here Fraleigh explores how Sheets-Johnstone’s work extends the philosophical ideas of Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty to help us “elucidate a metaphysics of movement.”

Finally, we are pleased to feature two pieces covering international news. In our *Dance Research Worldwide* section, Katherine Thomas explores the contemporary state of dance

scholarship in Spain. Thomas critiques some of the most significant work of the past twenty years; she also examines several of the major flamenco festivals held in southern Spain, all of them potentially rich resources for ethnographic fieldwork. Ann Axtmann reports on the 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Americas at La Universidad de las Américas-Puebla. The “Dance and Culture” panels featured topics ranging from indigenous Mexican dance to Mayan mambo to French can-can in Mexico. At the conference, discussions about the global migration of dance and transnational borrowing led, in Axtmann’s words, to “a fortifying interdisciplinary exchange.”

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