



Philosophical Aesthetics of Dance

Graham Mcfee

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This work is a comprehensive account of central issues in the philosophical aesthetics of dance, intended for the interested general reader as well as for the postgraduate student. Its fundamental consideration is of dance works that are artworks. Typically these are performables: they can be re-performed on another occasion or in another place. So discussion begins from whether or not two performances are of the same dancework: that is, from issues of 'work-identity'. Here, notationality (rather than an extant notated score) is stressed, and the idea of an adequate notated score for a dancework is introduced to reflect the normativity of scores. The text explores (a) the making of dance - in particular, locating the conceptual role of authors of dances; (b) the distinctive role of the dancer; and (c) the understanding and appreciation of dances. Both dance-making and dance-understanding are addressed since the 'identity' issue can arise in the staging of a particular dance; whether the perspective is that of the choreographer or that of the dancer; where the concern is with the appreciation of a particular dancework; or, again, when a dancework from the past is being reconstructed. In this text, the reader moves on from the author's previous 'Understanding Dance' (1992). Like that work, this one draws on a range of examples of danceworks from ballet to modern dance, especially as they are represented in dance-criticism. The work contrasts the performance traditions of various dance trainings through which dancers learn to understand dance with traditions of performance for danceworks as acknowledged by audiences. A detailed discussion of the nature of our interest in dance and some historical reflections on the use of examples are also included. This book is a major intervention into the philosophical aesthetics of dance by a philosopher who has devoted much of his professional career to the consideration of dance. It presents a discussion of many of the key topics from the field, rooted in a general framework for philosophical aesthetics.

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