



Chance and Circumstance: Twenty Years with Cage and Cunningham

Carolyn Brown

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The long-awaited memoir from one of the most celebrated modern dancers of the past fifty years: the story of her own remarkable career, of the formative years of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, and of the two brilliant, iconoclastic, and forward-thinking artists at its center—Merce Cunningham and John Cage.

From its inception in the 1950s until her departure in the 1970s, Carolyn Brown was a major dancer in the Cunningham company and part of the vibrant artistic community of downtown New York City out of which it grew. She writes about embarking on her career with Cunningham at a time when he was a celebrated performer but a virtually unknown choreographer. She describes the heady exhilaration—and dire financial straits—of the company's early days, when composer Cage was musical director and Robert Rauschenberg designed lighting, sets and costumes; and of the struggle for acceptance of their controversial, avant-garde dance. With unique insight, she explores Cunningham's technique, choreography, and experimentation with compositional procedures influenced by Cage. And she probes the personalities of these two men: the reticent, moody, often secretive Cunningham, and the effusive, fun-loving, enthusiastic Cage.

Chance and Circumstance is an intimate chronicle of a crucial era in modern dance, and a revelation of the intersection of the worlds of art, music, dance, and theater that is Merce Cunningham's extraordinary hallmark.

From the Hardcover edition.

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