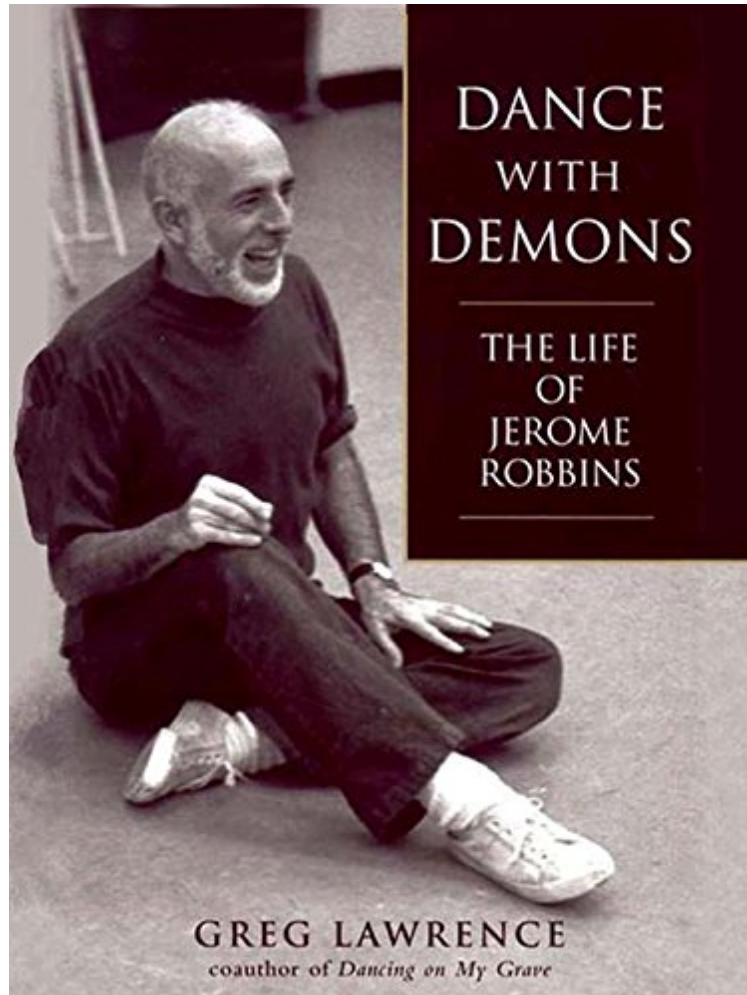


[Read and download] Dance with Demons: The Life Jerome Robbins

## Dance with Demons: The Life Jerome Robbins

Greg Lawrence

ePub | \*DOC | audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF



DOWNLOAD



+

READ ONLINE

#1007158 in eBooks 2001-05-07 2001-05-07File Name: B000OCXGI2 | File size: 23.Mb

**Greg Lawrence : Dance with Demons: The Life Jerome Robbins** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Dance with Demons: The Life Jerome Robbins:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Candid Life of a Driven GeniusBy Timothy HallinanJerome Robbins was a monster to many throughout his career. He was imperious, quick to take offense, both personally and politically treacherous (he turned on friends and lovers as easily as he turned on those whose left-wing sentiments he had once shared, naming names freely when he was called before the House Unamerican Activities Committee). But he was a brilliant choreographer and director; he introduced a modern-day American vernacular into ballet with "Fancy Free" and went on to create, direct, and/or choreograph such Broadway classics as "On the Town," "Peter Pan," "The King And I," The Pajama Game," "Bells Are Ringing", "West Side Story," "Gypsy." and "Fiddler on the Roof," among many others. He imposed a reign of terror on his productions, often (like David Merrick) playing creative principals off against each other, he hogged billing and created whole new ways of being credited (the "name

in a box" thing was his idea), and generally left a trail of bodies wherever he went. In the case of "West Side Story" he re-orchestrated Leonard Bernstein's score while Bernstein removed himself to a bar and got quietly drunk -- and Bernstein was no shrinking violet. But people fought to work with him on virtually every project because he had the golden touch: in addition to the shows listed above, he transformed out-of-town dogs into hits, including "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum" and "Funny Girl." He was bisexual although he leaned toward homosexual, and the book is very good about his relationships, many of which ended in ruins; the one that endured, in off-again, on-again form for decades was with Montgomery Clift. One of the things I like best about this book is that Greg Lawrence neither demonizes nor whitewashes his subject, seeking instead to understand him. And I have to say that in the end we understand Robbins' bad behavior much more clearly than we understand where his astonishing talent came from. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An incredibly researched book. It is definitely a book ...By Elaine Shefer An incredibly researched book. It is definitely a book only for those who are interested in the dance world. This book gives you many insights into the person of Jerome Robbins and makes you appreciate how complicated the human being is. There is no yes or no about the book; i.e. you don't finish it either loving Robbins or hating him but maybe, as all those who worked with him, respecting him. I, being, an old war horse from that period, an old dancer and an x-New Yorker, could really identify with what Lawrence talks about, including ballets, places and dancers. It gave me a tremendous amount of knowledge about the professional world of dance, the people involved and the difficulties of choosing such a lifestyle. More than anything, you can appreciate what a genius Robbins was in a world that is so full of talent and egos. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. tedious and repetitive By dc metro area This book should have been edited to a substantially smaller volume. There was no need to itemize every career effort by Robbins, even the works that went nowhere. After about 300 pages, my interest waned and I started skimming. His upbringing, personality, demons and genius had been well established by this point. It wasn't necessary to have multiple people say essentially the same things over and over again, both positives and negatives. We got the picture. The chapter related to Robbins' relationship with Balanchine was held back until almost the end, this seemed to be a carrot to keep the reader hanging in there.

The first biography of the celebrated Broadway and Hollywood choreographer and director; a complex man of extraordinary genius and overwhelming demons. His work on such legendary shows as *The King and I*, *West Side Story*, *Gypsy*, *Funny Girl*, and *Fiddler on the Roof* made him one of the most influential and creative forces in the history of American theater. His collaborators, friends, and enemies were among the greatest celebrities of stage and screen, including Barbra Streisand, Bette Davis, Stephen Sondheim, Natalie Wood, Montgomery Clift, and Mary Martin. His brilliant contribution to the American Ballet Theater and the New York City Ballet established him as one of the century's great choreographic masters of the form. But in 1998, Jerome Robbins died a haunted man. All of his life, he was tortured by private demons: his conflicted feelings about his bisexuality and his Judaism; his bitter relationship with his parents; his betrayals of others during the McCarthy hearings; and a demanding perfectionism that bordered on the sadistic. Now, this groundbreaking biography, based on hundreds of interviews with friends, family, and colleagues, provides the first complete portrait of the man and the artist; a harrowing, heartbreaking, and triumphant work as complicated and fascinating as the legend himself.

From Publishers Weekly Choreographic and theatrical genius Jerome Robbins was born in 1918 in New York City into a materially comfortable but emotionally bleak Jewish immigrant family in New York City. Lawrence (who coauthored Gelsey Kirkland's *Dancing on My Grave*) points to this emotionally bereft childhood and paternal disapproval ("My son's a fag how can I talk to him?" was reportedly his father's attitude), as well as Robbins's struggles with his Jewish heritage, his sexuality and, most famously, his decision to name names before the House Committee on Un-American Activities in the 1950s, as the definitive aspects of Robbins's life and creative legacy. The sum total of Robbins's work as reported here is staggering; his decades at the heart of the golden ages of American ballet, musical theater, theater and film, as director or choreographer, often in collaboration with such giants as Leonard Bernstein and George Balanchine, left the American public a cultural gold mine. Lawrence interviewed hundreds of dancers, actors, directors, family members and other contemporaries all, whether they loved or hated him, recognized both Robbins's genius and his clearly tortured soul. Most of the remarks herein tell us far more about the speaker than about the subject, but as such, they form an indelible picture of the various eras during which Robbins worked (he was active almost until his death in 1998). Robbins himself made numerous attempts over the years to write his own autobiography, only to abandon them repeatedly when the emotional cost became too great. In the end, Lawrence's account, though comprehensive and lively, can only give us a solid picture of Robbins's times and contemporaries the man himself remains a mystery. Illus. not seen by PW. (May) Forecast: Readers in New York, the center of the ballet and theater worlds, will grab this much-touted book. First serial in *Vanity Fair*; forthcoming reviews in the *New York Times* by Janet Maslin, the *New Republic*, the *Washington Post Book and Variety*; an interview in *New York Blade*; and a May 1 spot on NPR's new show, *Studio 360*, will bring lots of attention. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From *Library Journal* Lawrence (coauthor with Gelsey Kirkland of *Dancing*

on My Grave) tells the life story of legendary American choreographer Jerome Robbins from many different perspectives. Robbins is known for choreographing major Broadway musicals like *West Side Story* and *The King and I* and also many ballets. This biography is dominated by quotes from a variety of sources, including critics, dancers, family, and Robbins himself. Rita Moreno of *West Side Story* is quoted as saying, "What he did that was so unusual [was] that he choreographed for character. He choreographed the way a writer writes." Robbins's demons of the title include problems with his family, his sexual orientation, and his testimony to the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC). The most interesting sections of this hefty tome concern his choreography and its creation, his collaboration with Leonard Bernstein and George Balanchine, and the artistic process. This first full-length biography of this important choreographer is recommended for all libraries. (Photos and index not seen.) Conrad's photographic biography is a good companion to Lawrence's work. Conrad, a screenwriter and longtime friend of Robbins, has combined photographs of Robbins's childhood, insider looks at rehearsals, and lovely photos of performances of his choreography with excerpts from his journals and brief biographical narrative. The result is a heartfelt tribute to a man she clearly loved who contributed much to his art. Recommended for public libraries with broad interest in dance.

Barbara Kundanis, Batavia P.L., IL Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist

American choreographer and director Jerome Robbins was cruel, controlling, given to sudden, childish temper tantrums, willing to do anything to get what he wanted out of his dancers and actors. But what he got was often brilliant. The list of Broadway shows he had a hand in is a roster of classics--*The King and I*, *West Side Story*, *Gypsy*, *Fiddler on the Roof*--and he was also a respected ballet master for the American Ballet Theatre and the New York City Ballet. Lawrence's thick yet graceful biography shows us Robbins the difficult boss and the sensitive artist, the inspired director and the not always very good friend. As the title implies, part of the book discusses Robbins' paranoia, his ambivalent relationship with his father, and his fruitless attempts to psychoanalyze away homosexual feelings. Especially fascinating is the coverage of Robbins' tepid involvement in left-wing causes in the '30s and '40s and his subsequent, all-but-forgotten testimony before HUAC, in which he named names and destroyed careers, perhaps, Lawrence argues, to save his own. Jack Helbig Copyright copy; American Library Association. All rights reserved