



# Taken by Surprise: A Dance Improvisation Reader

*From Wesleyan*

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## **Taken by Surprise: A Dance Improvisation Reader** From Wesleyan

This collection of classic and new writings on dance improvisation brings together 21 essays by prominent dancers, scholars and historians. Until now, discussion of improvisation in dance has focused mainly on the postmodern form known as contact improv. Taken by Surprise reflects the development of improvisation as a compositional and performance mode in a wide variety of dance contexts, including dance traditions from around the globe, such as Yoruban masked dance, Indian Bharatanatyam and flamenco.

The book also includes a thoughtful look at computer-aided choreography, a discussion of recent innovations in tap dancing and a section on improvisation in everyday life. Combining primary sources with critical analysis, Taken by Surprise will serve as an indispensable companion to studio work in improvisation, and a much-needed supplement to twentieth century dance histories.

**CONTRIBUTORS:** Ann Cooper Albright, Sally Banes, Bruce Curtis, Kent Despain, Margaret Thompson Drewal, Simone Forti, Susan Leigh Foster, David Gere, Raymond W. Gibbs, JR, Michelle Heffner Hayes, Carmela Hermann, Constance Valis Hill, Rachel Kaplan, Maura Keefe, Victoria Marks, Avanthi Meduri, Steve Paxton, Janice Ross, Karen Schaffman, Nancy Stark Smith, Ellen Webb, Ruth Zaporah.

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## **Taken by Surprise: A Dance Improvisation Reader** From Wesleyan Bibliography

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## **Editorial Review**

### Review

“The concept of improvisation is historically associated with jazz, comedy, or theater, not dance... Among the authors represented are Susan Leigh Foster, Sally Banes, and Janice Ross, as well as dance notable such as Simone Forti, Steve Paxton, and Victoria Marks... best suited to large dance and performing arts collections.”—*Library Journal*

### Review

“For those who strive to legitimize the long-dismissed art and craft of improvisational dance; for those who look for an invitation, or a doorway in; for those for whom the phrase "just improvising" slips (too) easily off the tongue; and for dancers and dance lovers of all persuasions, I recommend this reader. The frank voices in this collection pay tribute to the ranginess of improvisational dance practices and sources while illuminating the deep bodymind investigations that inform its application to contemporary performance.” (Lisa Nelson, choreographer, improvisational performer, coeditor Contact Quarterly dance journal)

"This collection charts the geography of dance improvisation in an entirely contemporary way. Whether personal, artistic, ethnographic, critical, historical, or theoretical, each voice speaks clearly and accessibly. This collection is refreshing, insightful and sophisticated." (Penny Campbell, Director of Dance, Middlebury College)

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## **Users Review**

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