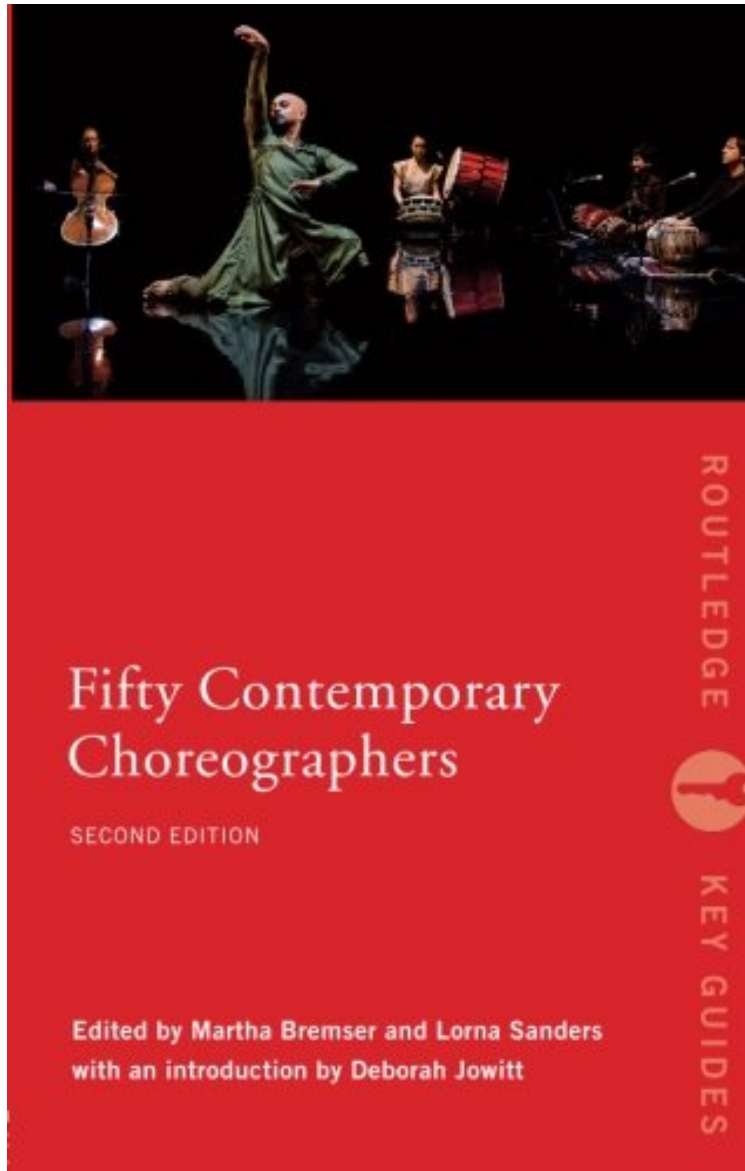


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From Brand: Routledge : Fifty Contemporary Choreographers (Routledge Key Guides) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fifty Contemporary Choreographers (Routledge Key Guides):

6 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Random selection By Royd Climenhaga This may as well be called 50 Random Choreographers. If you were to put a bunch of names in a hat and pull them out at random, you are bound

to come up with a Cunningham here and a Forsythe there, but would be bound to miss whole swaths of what are described in Jowitt's introduction as the most important choreographers of the second half of the 20th Century (no Pina Bausch?). (I may be biased, having published on Pina Bausch, but I don't think ranking her work as among the most influential of the 20th century would be a stretch in any consideration. Similarly, there is a fair representation of Judson era post-modern dance (Trisha Brown, Steve Paxton, etc.), but no Yvonne Rainer? And anything that might veer too far toward the ballet end of the spectrum is simply ignored. OK, Forsythe is here and Jiri Kylian, but no Chris Wheldon? no Balanchine? Maybe the editors had their reasons for omitting certain people, but they do not adequately explain their strategy. They claim they wanted "to suggest a range (geographical and stylistic) of dance phenomena" from Dance in New York in the 1950s (? that would be Martha Graham, Balanchine, Anna Sokolow, etc., none of whom are included here. Maybe they mean New York in the 1960s), British new dance, French nouvelle danse, "and those areas where dance merges into other forms, such as opera, drama, performance art and installation"(no Sasha Waltz, Meg Stuart, etc.) This book fails on all those accounts. A selection like this is bound to be incomplete and skewed, there will always be people left out, and so a pointed editorial eye is necessary, and an explanation for the choices that were made vital. If this book told a different story, that would be fine, but in trying to tell the story described in the editor's minimal introduction, they fail. Including an introduction from Deborah Jowitt helps immensely, but her run down of twentieth century dance also shows everything this book lacks. Jowitt describes the influence of earlier Modern Dance and German Expressionism, which is not contained here. She highlights Cunningham's important influence, which is here, but also brings out the influence of German Tanztheater and Butoh, which are sadly lacking from this volume. Disappointing, as a more comprehensive overview of dance and choreographers is needed right now. Many of the entries are fine in and of themselves, but I can't see how I would use this book in a classroom setting with the gaps it entails, and it's not at all useful for personal reference given the necessary rudimentary overviews it provides. I should note that my review is in response to the 2nd edition of this book. Evidently the first edition covers different artists, and to my mind does a slightly better job of covering some of the basic omissions in the second volume. Maybe the editors felt that after almost 10 years Pina Bausch, Carolyn Carlson, Laura Dean, Douglas Dunn, Eiko and Koma, David Gordon and Kazuo Ohno (all cut from the first volume) were no longer contemporary. A few of those have died, but if that was the cut off, why wasn't that mentioned, and just because they may have died, their work is still very present and influential to the current generation. Merce Cunningham has died, but his work is still included and lauded, as it should be. I just don't understand the rationale for who is left out and who makes the grade.

A unique and authoritative guide to the lives and work of prominent living contemporary choreographers. Representing a wide range of dance genres, each entry locates the individual in the context of modern dance theatre and explores their impact. Those studied include: Jerome Bel Richard Alston Doug Varone William Forsythe Phillippe Decoufle Jawole Willa Jo Zollar Ohad Naharin Itzik Gallili Twyla Tharp Wim Vandekeybus With a new, updated introduction by Deborah Jowitt and further reading and references throughout, this text is an invaluable resource for all students and critics of dance, and all those interested in the fascinating world of choreography.

'Highly recommended' - A. Courtney, Indiana University
About the Author
Martha Bremser is an editor, writer and teacher. She edited the award-winning International Dictionary of Ballet (St James Press, 1993), and currently teaches English Literature and Critical Thinking at Channing School, London. Lorna Sanders lectures within higher education both in the UK and in Europe. She is also course leader for Ballet Education Practice, a teacher training course run by the Royal Ballet School /Royal Opera House Education departments.