

# Part Real Part Dream: Dancing With Martha Graham

Martha Graham, often referred to as the mother of modern dance, was a revolutionary figure in the world of performing arts. Her innovative choreography and expressive movements captivated audiences and challenged traditional notions of dance. In this article, we delve into the mesmerizing world of Martha Graham's dance, exploring the profound impact she had on the art form, her unique choreographic style, and the enduring legacy she leaves behind.

## The Birth of a Legend

Born in 1894 in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, Martha Graham began her dance journey at a young age. Her upbringing was tumultuous, with her father being a physician and her mother a strict Presbyterian. Despite the strict household, Graham's passion for dance was irrepressible. She studied at the Denishawn School of Dancing and Related Arts and quickly garnered attention for her raw talent and ability to express profound emotions through movement.

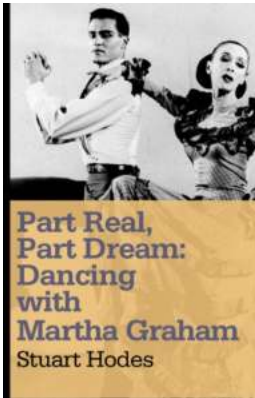
Graham's breakthrough came in the early 1920s when she formed her own dance company, the Martha Graham Dance Company. With this leap, she ushered in a new era of modern dance, breaking free from the confines of classical ballet and embracing a more authentic and emotive style. Her performances combined intense rhythm, dramatic expressions, and bold physicality, setting her far apart from her contemporaries.

## Part Real, Part Dream: Dancing with Martha

**Graham** by Stuart Hodes (Kindle Edition)

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English



File size	: 3228 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 427 pages
Lending	: Enabled



## The Power of Expression

What set Martha Graham apart from other dancers of her time was her ability to create a captivating storytelling experience through her choreography. Each dance piece was meticulously crafted to convey a powerful message or evoke emotions. Graham believed that dance was a medium for exploring the depths of the human spirit, and she utilized every movement to communicate these innermost feelings.

One of her most iconic works, "Appalachian Spring," tells the story of a newlywed couple in a small American town. Through stunning movements and intricately designed sets, Graham captures the optimism, love, and challenges faced by the couple as they embark on their journey together. This piece, like many of her others, resonates with audiences on both a visceral and intellectual level.

## Choreographic Innovations

In addition to her expressive storytelling, Graham's choreographic innovations revolutionized dance techniques and paved the way for future generations of dancers. She developed a philosophical approach to movement, emphasizing the importance of the body's natural instincts and impulses. Graham rejected the idea

of dance being solely aesthetic, instead embracing movement as a form of self-expression and emotional release.

Graham's technique, known as "contract and release," involved intense contractions and expansions of the body, symbolizing the emotional tension and release present in human experiences. This technique challenged conventional notions of dance aesthetics and encouraged dancers to tap into their innermost feelings while performing. It brought forth a sense of vulnerability and authenticity that was often lacking in more traditional ballet forms.

## **A Legacy of Inspiration**

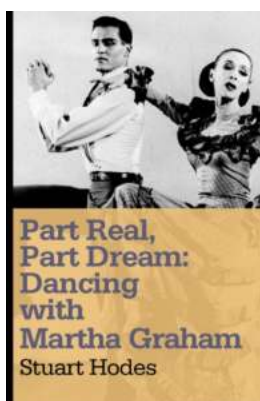
Martha Graham's impact on dance extends far beyond her own lifetime. Her influence can be seen in countless contemporary dance companies and choreographers who have adopted and adapted her techniques. Artists such as Merce Cunningham, Twyla Tharp, and Pina Bausch have all been inspired by Graham's groundbreaking work.

Today, the Martha Graham Dance Company continues to carry her torch, preserving her repertoire while also commissioning new works that embrace her legacy. The company upholds her belief that dance is a universal language, capable of connecting people at a profound level.

## **In**

Martha Graham's contributions to the world of dance are immeasurable. Her innovative choreography, expressive movements, and profound storytelling have left an indelible mark on the art form. She challenged the status quo and redefined what dance could be, creating a new language of movement that continues to inspire generations of dancers. Dancing with Martha Graham is like

stepping into a world where reality and dreams intertwine, and where the power of human expression knows no bounds.



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In *Part Real, Part Dream*, Stuart Hodes gives readers an intensely personal account of his long and acclaimed life as a professional dancer with some of the legends of modern dance. The story of his complex relationship with Martha Graham, with whom he danced with for more than a decade, offers a fascinating backstage seat to the dynamic and rapidly evolving vision of one of modern dance's greatest innovators. Struggling out on the road, being welcomed throughout the world, the troupe continues ahead, fueled by brilliance and bravado.

From bomber pilot to modern dance and Broadway dancer, from choreographer to teacher and dance administrator, Hodes has lived a life in the arts unlike any other. Told with humility, humor and nimble grace, his memoir is a must for dance aficionados, but more importantly, *Part Real, Part Dream* is a great read for

anyone interested in an inside look into a rich, varied creative life in New York City and far beyond.

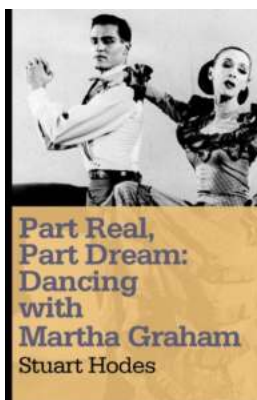
“Now that I’m in my ninth decade, flying, which I did for less than three years, and dancing, which lasted more than fifty, tower over everything but love and family. But it was Martha Graham who captured me.”

– Stuart Hodes, from the Preface

“Stuart Hodes is in a class by himself and his memoir deserves to be among those of the other greats of the dance. It is also a book for anyone interested in the personal journey of the life of the artist. A life that is most certainly “Part Real-Part Dream.”

– Richard Move, from the

Stuart Hodes took his first dance lesson at the Martha Graham School after discharge from a distinguished stint as an Air Force aviator in WWII. He danced in the original casts of *Do Re Mi*, *First Impressions*, *Milk and Honey*, *Paint Your Wagon*, *Peer Gynt*, *Sophie*, *The Barrier*, *To Broadway with Love*, and *Zeigfeld Follies*(1956). He also appeared in *Kismet*, *By the Beautiful Sea*, *Once Upon A Mattress*, *The King and I*, and *The Most Happy Fella*—plus off-Broadway, TV, and nightclubs. He lives in New York City with his wife and daughters.



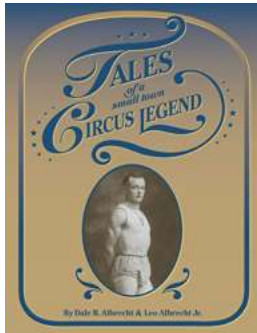
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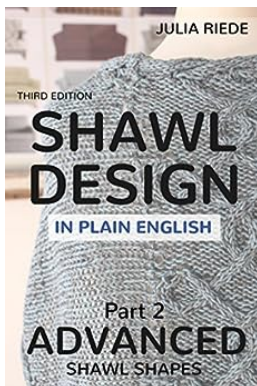
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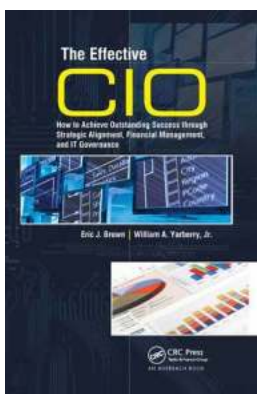
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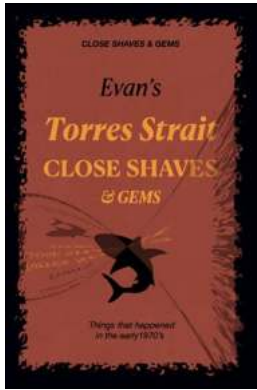
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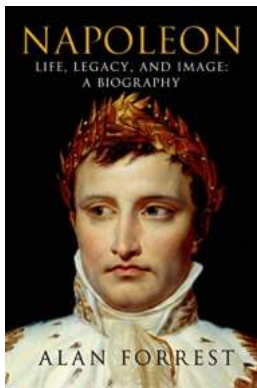
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