

# Book Report

Go to the head of the class with these five new titles.



## EDUCATIONAL



**Balanchine The Teacher: Fundamentals That Shaped the First Generation of New York City Ballet Dancers**  
by Barbara Walczak and Una Kai

University Press of Florida

**In a nutshell:** An in-depth manual that sheds light on the teaching methods of George Balanchine.

Walczak and Kai, two former Balanchine students, pay homage to their beloved teacher by sharing his innovative teachings in this exhaustive book. Each recounts personal lessons learned from the ballet master, giving an inside look at how he organized and developed classes between 1940 and 1960. The material includes barre and center exercises for 24 classes, common corrections and appropriate class music. Despite the lack of visual elements, the authors manage to vividly detail his style. This guide is for all levels of teachers who wish to pass on Balanchine's methodology to advanced students. —*Courtney Rae Allen*



**Dance and Culture: An Introductory Reader for Middle and High School Levels**  
by Wendy Oliver

National Dance Association

**In a nutshell:** An insightful textbook designed to help young teens gain a general understanding of dance's global evolution.

Oliver aims to help high school students "view dance through a cultural lens" in this classroom-friendly manual. She describes how movement traditions from around the world evolved within specific cultures, were influenced by international exposure and came to shape styles in America. (The roots of tap and jazz, for

example, can be traced back to Irish step and African slave dance.) Oliver presents the material in textbook format, with bulleted lists, highlighted passages, review questions, class activities and pop references that make it easy to digest. While those wanting to delve deeper into each area will need to look elsewhere, this book is a handy resource for teachers and students seeking to understand dance in cultural rather than purely technical terms. —*Kirsten Spearman*

## CHILDREN'S



**A Dictionary of Dance**  
by Liz Murphy  
Blue Apple Books

**In a nutshell:**  
An easy-to-read,

illustrated alphabetical introduction to the fundamental elements of dance.

Murphy presents a fun and colorful way to introduce little ones to the basics of dance. She assigns a dance term to each letter of the alphabet—A for "arabesque," B for "break dancing," C for "choreographer," etc.—illustrating and defining each one so that children will find it easy to grasp the concepts. A variety of dance forms, musical and stage terms and parts of the body are covered in a way that is sure to sustain the interest of budding performers—even male dancers. Murphy's artwork features a multiethnic cast and has an appealing collage-esque, coloring-book feel. —*Tracy Krisanits*

## BIOGRAPHY



**Quick, Before the Music Stops: How Ballroom Dancing Saved My Life**  
by Janet Carlson

Broadway Books

**In a nutshell:** A touching tale about restoring life through a passion.

In this memoir, Carlson shares how her unexpected return to ballroom dance, after competing successfully for seven years, sparked a midlife quest for self-discovery, and ultimately helped her move on from a divorce and reconnect with her daughters. Through dance, she regained her confidence and realized how trust and communication are essential not only in partner dance, but in personal relationships as well. The book's most important lesson is that having a passion can instill enthusiasm and happiness into one's life. Carlson's vulnerable yet determined tone provides heartwarming inspiration for dancers and non-dancers alike. —*Elizabeth Louise Hatt*

## PHOTOGRAPHY



**Ailey Ascending: A Portrait in Motion**

by Andrew Eccles  
Chronicle Books

**In a nutshell:** A stunning photographic collage that combines the beauty of still life with the allure of movement as art.

With opening remarks by Artistic Director Judith Jamison and famed playwright Anna Deavere Smith, among others, this photo book chronicles Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater over the course of its 50th anniversary year. Photographer Andrew Eccles' images capture everything from Ailey school children to company performances of *Revelations* and *For "Bird"*—*With Love*. Through portraits, performance shots and behind-the-scenes looks, Eccles highlights the beauty of the company's dancers and the structural magnificence of their new home, the Joan Weill Center for Dance. —*KS*

