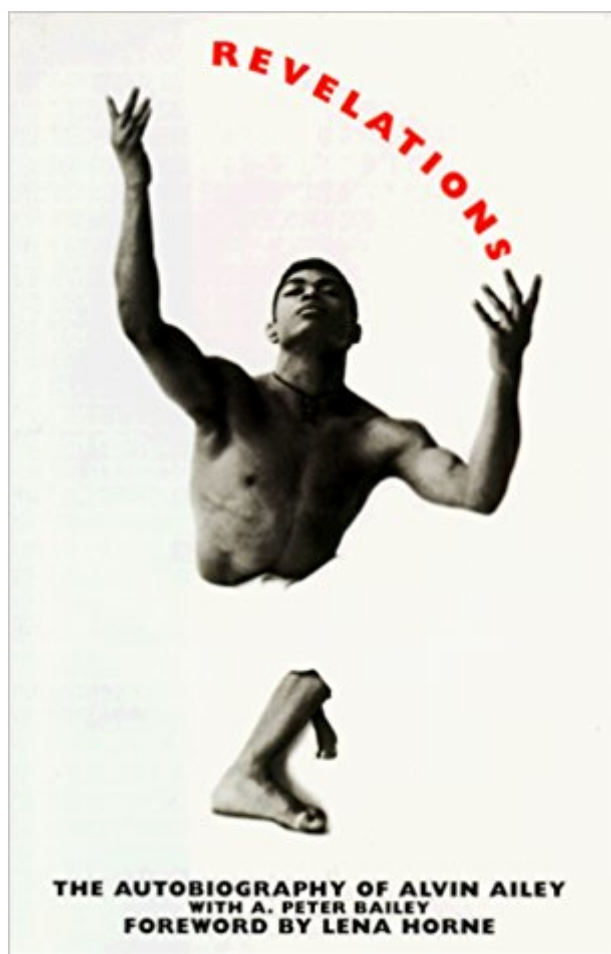


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Revelations: The Autobiography Of Alvin Ailey



Synopsis

Discussing the private life of a pioneer choreographer, an in-depth portrait notes how his father's absence, racism in the dance world, and the Katherine Dunham Company affected his work in such ballets as "Revelations" and "Blues Suite."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Though choreographer Ailey (1931-1989), founder and artistic director of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, lived for 30 years in the public eye, the details of his life and character have remained largely mysterious, glimpsed only in such acclaimed signature works as "Revelations" (1960). The African American dancer, brought up in small-town, segregated Texas, was born to poverty. In his autobiography, he remembers "branches slashing against [his] child's body that is glued to his mother's body as they walk through the mud in bare feet, going from one place to another." Ailey reveals the feelings of inferiority that plagued him throughout his life, from his brief but promising sortie as an actor to his ultimate success in the dance world. He also tells of his single, disappointing conversation with his father, Alvin Ailey Sr.; his mother's rape; his own mental breakdown in 1980, precipitated by the death of his friend and colleague Joyce Trisler; and his descent into drug dependency, leading to his hospitalization. Important people in his life discussed here include Carmen de Lavallade, Maya Angelou and Lester Horton. Ailey's homosexuality is handled with reserve. Coauthor Bailey is a journalist with the Richmond [Va.] Free Press. Photos not seen by PW.- Free Press. Photos not seen by PW. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Revelations, one of Ailey's most famous ballets, is the title he selected for his autobiography, which was richly told to his chosen coauthor, Peter A. Bailey. Bailey did not complete the manuscript until after Alvin Ailey's death in 1989. To that core manuscript, he added interviews with dancers, colleagues, and friends who remembered Ailey and his contribution to the world of dance. Ailey reveals for the first time intimate details of his professional hurdles, personal life, and relationships with family and significant others that influenced his life. He discusses politics and racism and their effect on his dancing, on Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, and on his self-image. The chapters chronicle his life from his childhood days in Texas to his tours abroad to his Broadway productions in New York to his period of manic depression in 1980. Ailey's life was a series of triumphs and disappointments, yet he managed to overcome his insecurities to become a pioneer in the world of dance and a choreographer of international reputation. For those who are familiar with his life and for those who know little, Revelations is a biographical source well worth reading. Lillian Lewis

Great Book

book was in very good condition!! I was pleased. Gives a detailed description on his life a struggles. I love it

I found this book very readable. It cast a different light onto the life of a man everyone new as brilliant. I was very surprised at how frankly this was written. No bars were held, even when Mr. Ailey didn't come across as a shining example. I think great pains were taken to retain the integrity of the story without compromising Mr. Ailey's driving desire for privacy. The voices of many dance stars lent a certain energy to the book. Mr. Ailey made me laugh out loud while recounting details of his well-publicized breakdown. I was left wishing i'd paid more attention to this great dancer while he was yet alive.

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