
EDUCATION

FLEMING, GLADYS ANDREWS, ed. CHILDREN'S DANCE. Washington, D.C.: AAHPER Press, 1973, 96 pages, \$4.95. (two reviews)

REVIEW NUMBER ONE

Reviewed by Judith Schwartz

The publication of Children's Dance was designed to fill a basic and important need perceived by the Task Force of the Dance Division of the AAHPER. The purpose: to bring together, examine, and clarify the role of dance in the elementary curriculum; offer samples calculated to demonstrate and stimulate the infinite innovative ways in which dance can be integrated as part of the total school program, hence providing children with, as Dr. Gladys Andrews Fleming, Chairperson of the Task Force and Editor of the publication states, "...opportunities to find joy and self-actualization through dance." The goal, successfully met, was to enrich those already teaching dance, and to stimulate others to launch dance programs to help enhance and broaden learning.

The book, a compilation of reports, statements and articles, six years in preparation, gives a broad overview of the state of children's dance. The committee's report of its research design, survey, and especially the comprehensive and detailed Guidelines and Implications and Examples of Guidelines for children's dance, make it possible for the novice teacher and administrator to comprehend, not only the role of dance in the classroom, but what comprises an effective program of dance for children. Articles written by classroom teachers and dance specialists deal with all aspects of dance; as part of the curriculum integrating visual and language arts, science, music, etc., for boys and girls, for boys, for preschool through sixth grades, as an equalizer, and as a folk and aesthetic experience. Included also are excerpts from the proceeding on the Lake of the Ozarks Conference on Children's dance, and the study ends with a fine annotated bibliography of books, records, and audiovisual materials. The intent of the committee was laudatory -- to represent as many points of view as possible. However, the danger inherent in such an approach is that the reader can be overwhelmed.

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Very wisely, I believe, the book focuses precisely on the core issue in children's dance: the role of the teacher. Children's Dance reiterates and demonstrates the need for the open, accepting, creative teacher, the teacher who is able to listen to the children and thus develop with them exciting, self-rewarding experiences.

As Prof. Robert S. Fleming writes, "One is impressed by the human relations overtones in this document and the numerous opportunities for communication through expressive activities", but it does even more. In the words of Prof. Ruth Murray, it points the teacher to an understanding of dance, as she states, "Dance as an art, and as the expressive entity of creative movement, is vital to the development of the total individual."

CHILDREN'S DANCE...continued

REVIEW NUMBER TWO

Reviewed by Maida R. Withers

Children's Dance is a collection of articles about dance, children, and education by dance writers and teachers, physical educators, classroom teachers and administrators. It is one of the products of a six year study by dedicated members of the Dance Division of the American Association of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation Task Force on Dance in Elementary Education.

Due to the breadth of the topic and the diverse directions pursued by the taskforce, a wide range of information is covered, sometimes creating an impression of a lack in pertinent focus. The 96 page book includes a status study of dance*, guidelines for dance in education, testimonials by dance teachers, classroom teachers, and principals about the impact of dance on the children and the school, teacher preparation, dance and boys, ethnic dance, projection on future needs and concerns, resources, and the designation of 28 areas of needed research.

*The status study was reported in full in the June 1971 issue of AAHPER's Journal of Health, Physical Education and Recreation.

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