

Review of *Choreographing Your Dance Career* by Janaea Rose Lyn

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*Choreographing Your Dance Career* by Janaea Rose Lyn is a 'must – read' for those contemplating a career in the dance field. It is a clearly written, pragmatic guide to many faces of the industry and is workbook style with questions and exercises to address along the way. It also has lovely illustrations by Laura Higgins Palmer that make it particularly attractive.

While the book is mostly geared to young dancers interested in becoming performers or choreographers in many different styles and contexts, it is also useful for those at various stages of their careers who may not have considered ways to leverage other talents to achieve their ultimate dance goals. To this end, she considers arts administration, technical theatre, and videography, for instance as not only careers in themselves but ways to supplement income. Lyn draws on her own experience to demonstrate examples of this and how it benefited her in the long run.

Indeed, *Choreographing Your Dance Career* is full of wonderful anecdotes that bring to life the many topics covered. This is valuable, because while Lyn discusses the important breadth of everything from how to write a resume, to auditioning, and producing a show, she does so with an open and honest perspective. Rather than making it seem as if these are all straightforward, she reveals the pitfalls she has experienced, and lessons learned with admirable vulnerability. There have been many times she has had to pivot quickly to continue in a field she loves.

A few observations particularly stand out to me. The first is Lyn's discussion of the importance of self-care and a work/life balance to avoid career-ending injury and burnout. Few authors address this topic, and it is a critical aspect of a career in dance. (I know of talented young dancers who ended their ambitions from burnout as soon as graduating high school or college.) Another, is her repeated emphasis on ethics and making sure that dancers and all those involved in their activities, are treated humanely and not taken advantage of. To this end one thing Lyn stresses is the importance of written contracts to clarify expectations and recommendations on the payment of dancers and others involved in producing concerts.

Lyn is a living example of someone who has been resilient in a field that can be extremely harsh. She discusses the importance of having supporters when critics may leave you devastated, and the need to pursue your dreams even if they go against the tide of what is trendy in the present moment. It is truly impressive to allow herself to be so vulnerable in a book that is basically designed to be a practical guide. This approach raises it to a work of passion and care into which she has poured years of experience for the benefit of readers.

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