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# D. Reynolds, Rhythmic Subjects. Uses of Energy in the Dances of Mary Wigman, Martha Graham, and Merce

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*Dee Reynolds*

## RHYTHMIC SUBJECTS

USES OF ENERGY IN THE DANCES OF MARY WIGMAN,  
MARTHA GRAHAM AND MERCE CUNNINGHAM

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D. Reynolds, *Rhythmic Subjects. Uses of Energy in the Dances of Mary Wigman, Martha Graham, and Merce Cunningham*, Binsted, Dance Books, 2007, 328 p.

- ▶ Dance is a uniquely significant art form, whose primary material is not simply 'the body', but energy as it is used and experienced in movement. Energy is central to discourses of modernity and modernism, in which choreographers and dancers can actively intervene through their innovative use of energy. Mary Wigman, Martha Graham, and Merce Cunningham are key choreographers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, whose rhythmic innovations challenged and established norms of energy usage in their socio-cultural contexts, enabling their contemporaries to engage differently with dominant economics of energy.

Dee Reynolds' book explores the rhythmic innovations of these choreographers by combining discussion of cultural contexts with close analysis of specific dance works. Uses of energy in dance are described and analysed with the aid of concepts drawn from Rudolf Laban's writings, and are theorised with reference to historical, social and cultural contexts and to phenomenological and poststructuralist approaches to the embodied subject, constructing the argument that choreographical innovation - including recent work using digital technologies - involves a process of 'kinesthetic imagination'.

- ▶ **Dee Reynolds** is professor of French at the University of Manchester and the author of, among other books, *« Rhythmic Subjects : Uses of Energy in the Dances of Mary Wigman, Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham. »*