

Presentation of the Book: The Dance and the Dancer

by Eva Lundqvist and Lesley Leslie-Spinks,
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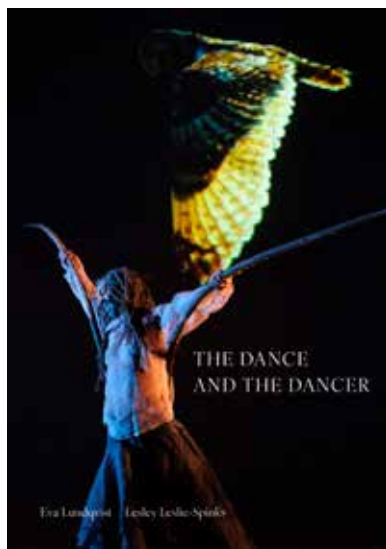
Eva Lundqvist's *The Dance and the Dancer* is a remarkably generous publication that communicates through text, memory, artistic practice and visual material. It creates a conceptual space in which dance can be understood on its own terms. Rather than reducing dance to mere documentation, the book invites readers into a poetic logic in which movement and language coexist while each retains its distinct identity. Through the interplay between written reflection and photographic imagery, an aesthetic world gradually emerges where the boundaries between the dance and the dancer are subtly blurred.

While the book is formally divided into two parts, it actually unfolds as three interrelated sections. This is due to the centrally placed photographic material by Lesley Leslie-Spinks, which does not function as a pause or decorative complement but rather as an active continuation of Lundqvist's text. The written and visual materials together constitute the book's full conceptual and aesthetic content.

Elements of practice: Lundqvist's philosophy of movement

The opening section, titled "Elements of practice," gathers Lundqvist's reflections on the philosophy of movement that has informed her artistic career. Acknowledging that dance cannot be truly captured in a written form, she employs conceptual sublines that articulate various dimensions of her method. One such concept perceives dance as a wordless connection between movement and expression. This formulation highlights Lundqvist's view that the absence of verbal language is not a limitation but rather a form of liberation, enabling dance to operate outside of linguistic constraints.

In this section, Lundqvist recounts an encounter from her early training days that showcases both her strength and sensitivity as a young dancer. This memory underscores the disciplined labour required to cultivate



and release a dancer's inherent potential. Lundqvist then connects these philosophical reflections to the concrete practice she has developed over the course of several decades. Her technique aims to release the dancer's internal energy and render perceptible the possibilities that lie beyond the body's assumed limitations. This involves a continuous two-hour sequence of movement, including travelling phrases, jumps and rotations, through which the body learns to sustain a state of readiness. Familiar movement patterns allow dancers to deepen their sense of energetic precision. At the same time, partnering constitutes a significant element within the practice of dance, introducing a relational dimension grounded in timing and trust.

Images as a visual continuation

The middle section of the book comprises a series of uncaptioned photographs by Lesley Leslie-Spinks. Presented without explanatory text, these images are not conventional illustrations. Instead, they foster visual resonance through which Lundqvist's aesthetic becomes perceptible in terms of the texture, rhythm, atmosphere and presence. The absence of interpretative guidance encourages readers to engage with the photographic material via visual and affective perception rather

than through predetermined meaning. It is in the dialogue between language and photography that the full conceptual structure of *The Dance and the Dancer* becomes evident.

Views of choreographic form

The final section, “Views of Choreographic Form,” deepens readers’ understanding of Lundqvist’s choreographic identity. In this section reflections, autobiographical fragments and contributions from collaborators intertwine to create a layered portrait of the aesthetic language that has developed throughout her career and within the work of her dance company Vindhäxor. Among the contributors is Horace Engdahl, whose early criticism helped make postmodern dance and Lundqvist’s work accessible to a wider public. He notes that she formed a new relationship between the dancer and time and shaped her productions through

an organic structure that grows from a small group of fundamental movements. The structural composition of the text mirrors Lundqvist’s movement practice, which is characterised by organic progression, associative logic and precise formal intention. This section demonstrates how her practice constitutes not only a technical method but also a constellation of experience, embodiment and artistic vision.

Summary: Movement through time and form

The book occasionally falls apart due to its binding, yet through text and pictures, it succeeds in articulating Lundqvist’s aesthetic and technique. This physical fragility resonates with her choreographic approach, in which movement, time, and form exist in continuous dialogue. As Horace Engdahl has noted, she has long explored a new relationship between dancer and time, and in this book she achieves a similar effect in a different form, preserving the same organic development and precise thought that characterise her work.

Bibliographical note: Eva Lundqvist

Eva Lundqvist, born in 1951, is a Swedish choreographer, dancer and pedagogue. She received her formal training at both the Balettkademi in Stockholm and the London School of Contemporary Dance, and she later pursued further studies in New York with Merce Cunningham, Viola Farber and Dan Wagoner. In 1977, Lundqvist founded the contemporary dance company Vindhäxor, for which she has created more than forty choreographic works and developed the movement-based training system that defines her artistic approach. She is widely recognised as a significant figure within the field of Swedish contemporary dance, being particularly known for her organic movement language and long-standing artistic collaborations.

