



Teaching Dance to Senior Adults

Liz Lerman

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Teaching Dance to Senior Adults is based on a program of dance, exercise, and improvisation developed over an eight-year period under the auspices of the Dance Exchange, a nonprofit arts organization founded by Liz Lerman in 1976. The Dance Exchange is an association of dancers who believe that the skills, discipline, expression, and beauty of dance belong to everyone. It is committed to programs and policies that nurture the growth of the individual, the artist, and the community. This book demonstrates how the creative and physical energies of older persons can find expression through modern dance. Based on a successful technique used with hundreds of senior citizens, the book shows how to work with the elderly to create dances for their own satisfaction and for public performance. Included are seated warm-ups and standing exercises that gradually lead older adults to greater use of their bodies, improvisational techniques that enable individuals to create their own dances, and group dances. The social and therapeutic aspects of the program are discussed in depth. Information on administering and financing dance programs for senior adults is also presented. The significance of this work lies ultimately in its ability to bridge the isolation of artists and of the elderly. The validation and meaning of dance come from positive use of mind and body, the sharing of knowledge, and the resultant joy that occurs when people dance together.

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