bore those trained in dance or confuse neophytes. Winkler addresses this by providing a glossary of dance terms at the front of the book and by carefully describing the dances in just enough detail. The only criticism I have (which seems to occur in many biographies of dancers) is that many of the photographs have been reproduced in other books on Fosse, and some of them are poorly rendered. Given Fosse's attention to detail regarding design, particularly in terms of costume and lighting, the book would have benefited greatly by having color plates in the center of the book.

Overall, this book represents exceptional scholarship. Many writers on dance in musical theater are finding opportunities to publish chapters in books or essays in journals like the *Studies in Musical Theatre*. Yet, there are still too few writing book-length investigations in this field of study. *Big Deal: Bob Fosse and Dance in the American Musical* fills an important gap in dance scholarship.

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Honest Bodies: Revolutionary Modernism in the Dances of Anna Sokolow

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Monographs on the politically radical generation of dancers and choreographers who came of age in the 1930s are few and far between. With the appearance of Hannah Kosstrin's *Honest Bodies*: *Revolutionary Modernism in the Dances of Anna Sokolow,* we have the second book on Sokolow—a major twentieth-century choreographer of international reach—and perhaps also a promising sign of a second wave of serious scholarly attention to politically radical dance of the 1930s and its aftermath (Franko 1995, 2002; Graff 1997). Sokolow first broke through as part of the proletarian avant-garde of the radical decade, a time that left scant documentation in its wake (the ingenuity required to find so many excellent photographs is to be commended). If Larry Warren's *Anna Sokolow: The Rebellious Spirit* (1991) was an insider narrative, Kosstrin's monograph takes a necessary distance from her subject, although she has included a fair amount of oral history as well (most productively with Ze'eva Cohen; I regret she did not interview Paul Sanasardo). Not quite fully a biography, therefore, but not only an analysis of her aesthetics and ideas either, Kosstrin's book is devoted to Sokolow's activism as it manifested in artistic, political, and personal terms. Kosstrin is selective about the time frame of her study and the works she chooses to focus on. Sokolow's output was enormous, and I would have liked to hear more about her choreography for the Tennessee Williams/Elia Kazan production of *Camino Real* in 1953. Although probably not a major work, this and other theater productions on and off Broadway are passed over in silence, with the exception of *Hair*. The book itself, however, is informed by a deep political commitment that is unique in scholarly terms, but would not have been permissible in Sokolow's own time. There is always a certain drama involved in taking historical distance from such charismatic figures of modern dance. But this distancing is also a sign that, as she recedes from us in history, Sokolow is also in the process of becoming herself for posterity.

Sokolow may be unique for meeting the challenge of the 1930s in the way she did, by combining political commitment with aesthetic sophistication. Having danced for Martha Graham in the 1931 *Primitive Mysteries* and other works, she adapted Graham's vocabulary to her own needs as of 1933 in creating dances of social protest and anti-fascist affect. Through Kosstrin's careful reading of reviews, precious detail is extracted about largely unknown works (it was absolutely out of the question that they could ever have been revived in the Cold War era). Kosstrin's major claim is that "Sokolow expanded the political statements women could make regarding class and race in a 1930s communist milieu that, through its egalitarian claims, usurped women into an oft-assumed male-gendered whole" (32). Kosstrin's general argument about Sokolow's work in the 1930s concerns what she calls "a contrapuntal play between thematic groupings of Jewishness, communism, modernism, and gender" (25). Throughout, Kosstrin emphasizes

how Sokolow harnessed the potential for modernist abstraction in modern dance to create dances of stirring political content "within an aesthetic marriage of experimental form and anti-capitalist content" (17). I applaud Kosstrin for cutting the Gordian knot of Marxism and modernism that has previously blindsighted some aspects of scholarship on this era, although I do not agree that form is always a matter of abstraction, which I take to mean the absence of subject matter.

It is generally known that by the early 1940s Sokolow was only intermittently on the New York concert scene as she chose to work extensively, first in Mexico (1939–1945) and later in Israel (starting in 1953). But the details have never been explained. Kosstrin's discussion of Sokolow's engagement with Mexico and the left politics of *mestizaje* (miscegenation) is fascinating. Equally so is her discussion of Sokolow's work with the Inbal Dance Theatre in Israel and her attention to African and Middle Eastern forms and populations in the Jewish state. These discussions are particularly interesting as well for the way Kosstrin shows how works Sokolow made in Mexico and/or in Israel met with miscomprehension when transferred to New York. Also fascinating is Kosstrin's account of how a work like *Kaddish,* with a specific Jewish context, posed difficulties for a post-Holocaust New York audience. Kosstrin's attention to the makeup of the audience in a particular historical and cultural moment is admirable. Sokolow's failures were in part due to her geographical restlessness and the shifting cultural and geographical conditions in which her work was fashioned. Her deep engagements with indigenous populations in Mexico and Israel, as Kosstrin shows, could and did backfire when the public's or funders' expectations evolved, or when the specificity of a particular milieu clashed with Sokolow's reputation as an international choreographer.

This book chronicles a series of remarkable successes and failures based on legibility as a highly contingent commodity. By the same token, there is a drama that plays out in Sokolow's double commitment to modernism and revolutionary aesthetics that Kosstrin seems more concerned at times to bridge than to problematize. For example, when Kosstrin concludes, "Sokolow alienated the Israeli dance community as she had the Mexican dance community in the 1950s," we sense that the choreographer's versatility in identifying with outsiders across the globe could pose problems of translation despite the so-called universal language of dance (209). Dance is a text because it is paradoxically affixed (I refrain from using the term inscribed) to the place and time of its creation and reception. Perhaps for this reason Kosstrin broadens the meaning of communism across time and expands upon the significance of the choreographer's Judaism to her choreographic poetics. The terms within which Kosstrin claims Sokolow worked are irresistibly and irreducibly plural, and the treatment of identity in this book substantially reshuffles the deck of much contemporary discourse on this subject because of its ability to articulate movement within identity and between identities. For example, one can cite the internal movement between communism, gayness, and Jewishness, which is, in a sense, the book's unstated thesis. Be that as it may, what Kosstrin demonstrates is that Sokolow, who devoted so much of her work to the subject of exile, was herself a displaced person. Striking for a choreographer of Sokolow's renown is that, although she did form companies to show her work, she was in the final analysis an independent artist benefitting only precariously from government support and patronage. Kosstrin speaks only once of a nervous breakdown in the aftermath of a misunderstanding with Joseph Papp that got her dismissed from the first production of *Hair*. One wonders if there were others.

After the radical decade, Sokolow's second and greater success was in the 1950s and 1960s with her most canonical works, *Rooms*, *Lyric Suite*, and *Dreams* (to name but a few), which distinguished her as one of the great choreographers of the twentieth century. In the Cold War period, she thus refashioned her image to be less committed to a particular politics and more about relationships, alienation, and psychological vulnerability. Kosstrin interprets *Rooms* in terms of gayness, which brings yet another dimension to her protean politics. I find the interpretation heterodox, but quite convincing. So, while Kosstrin earlier contrasts Sokolow's approach to choreography with that of Graham, for example, as not abstract or universalizing in Graham's sense, she shows that Sokolow becomes canonical in the 1950s by

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abandoning specific political causes in her choreography. Gay activism was as yet clandestine and thus corresponded to the choreographer's need for veiled political expression. It was, in a sense, an invisible politics. The FBI was spying on Sokolow, and she was not free to move about at will. Thus, her political radicalism needed a cover so that her work could continue without being muted. As Kosstrin shows, this was where modernist abstraction came to her rescue as a survival tactic. "Through modernist universalism, Sokolow negotiated a way to stay ideologically safe while managing to profoundly disturb her viewers through *Room*'s upending gendered and modernist conventions" (175). Three terms in the book that are fairly interchangeable are "modernist abstraction," "universalism," and "formalism." It seems to me, that if we were to grant modernist formalism a role in revolutionary choreographic creation, then we must reconsider the blanket use of these terms to describe modern dance, whose aesthetics may not always be as transparent as they are made to appear by the general approach to this period in dance studies. While Sokolow stands out in the book as an example of a crossover figure who eludes boundaries, the terms remain rigidly applied to the work of Graham and others, whereas I think it can be more productive not to pigeonhole artists.[1]

Anyone that knew her can vouch that Sokolow was a person of extraordinary intensity, which leads me to question the keyword, "honesty," in the title as much too passive for the burning forthrightness and uncompromising scrutiny of life that Sokolow's work placed before us in the starkest of terms. Kosstrin makes us aware of Sokolow's ideas and ideals, but the person remains distant until late in the book when informants describe her working methods. What Kosstrin does deliver is the coolness of historical distance, but combined with a commitment to what mattered most to Sokolow, which she also felt constrained to camouflage in the McCarthy era. Kosstrin blows Sokolow's cover, but she does so in a way that Sokolow herself may well have appreciated.

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Note

1. In saying that expression itself can have a politics, I argued and still maintain that "modernism is a more flexible and ambivalent critical category" than we frequently assume (Franko 1993, ix).

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