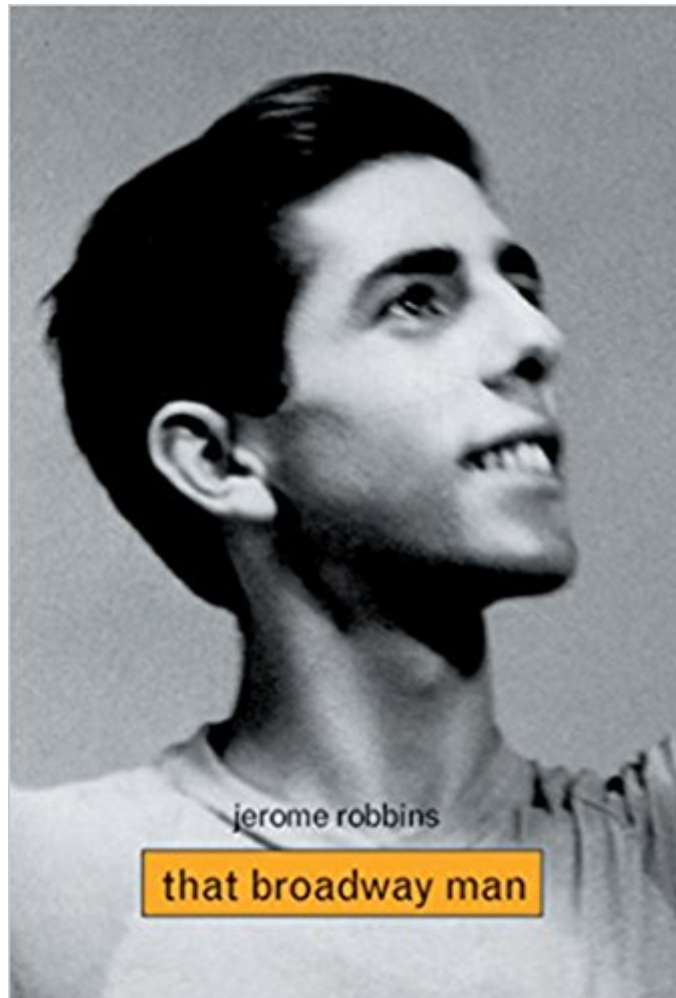




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# Jerome Robbins: That Broadway Man, That Ballet Man



## Synopsis

In this first illustrated book of the celebrated choreographer's life and work, extracts from personal journals and letters with photographs from his own collection reveal how some of the masterpieces of 20th century musical theatre and dance came about.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Lawrence (coauthor with Gelsey Kirkland of *Dancing on My Grave*) tells the life story of legendary American choreographer Jerome Robbins from many different perspectives. Robbins is known for choreographing major Broadway musicals like *West Side Story* and *The King and I* and also many ballets. This biography is dominated by quotes from a variety of sources, including critics, dancers, family, and Robbins himself. Rita Moreno of *West Side Story* is quoted as saying, "What he did that was so unusual [was] that he choreographed for character. He choreographed the way a writer writes." Robbins's demons of the title include problems with his family, his sexual orientation, and his testimony to the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC). The most interesting sections of this hefty tome concern his choreography and its creation, his collaboration with Leonard Bernstein and George Balanchine, and the artistic process. This first full-length biography of this important choreographer is recommended for all libraries. (Photos and index not seen.) Conrad's photographic biography is a good companion to Lawrence's work. Conrad, a screenwriter and longtime friend of Robbins, has combined photographs of Robbins's childhood, insider looks at rehearsals, and lovely photos of performances of his choreography with excerpts from his journals

and brief biographical narrative. The result is a heartfelt tribute to a man she clearly loved who contributed much to his art. Recommended for public libraries with broad interest in dance. Barbara Kundanis, Batavia P.L., IL Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.

"...reproduces fourteen pages from his unpublished journals. Those who thought Robbins an ogre will be astonished by... his vulnerable side." -- Wall Street Journal, May 4, 2001...An enormously readable book, profusely illustrated with numerous photographs, many of which have never been seen previously. -- Backstage, May 4, 2001...Filled with production photos, personal mementos and interviews...anchor[ing] its breezy, compassionate overview with insights in Robbins' own words. -- Los Angeles Times Calendar May 27, 2001, by Lewis Segal...The exhilarating photographs in Christine Conrad's affectionate tribute give evidence of the joy Robbins gave and took in dance. -- Variety, June 24, 2001, by Wendy Smith.The first-ever book on ...Jerome Robbins written by a close friend of thirty years ...by no means the conventional treatment. -- New York Magazine, December 18-25 2000

Sure, Jerome Robbins was one of the few genius innovators in theatre and ballet. But, perhaps, a book written by someone interested in the man's flaws as well as his accomplishments, his failures as well as his triumphs, might have been better reading. Cristine Conrad says in her author's note that she was Robbins' friend for more than 30 years. To my way of thinking, her friendship gets in the way of good reporting. I'm not necessarily looking for a hatchet job on Robbins, but a writer less interested in (what we used to call) brown-nosing, would, most likely, have written a richer book.Why did I give it even four stars? The huge, varied collection of photographs in this book is fascinating and invaluable for anyone interested in Musical Theatre or 20th Century American Ballet.The real, full version of Robbins' life is yet to be written/published.

A lot has been written about Broadway legend Jerome Robbins, and much of whatbiographer Christine Conrad says has already been written. However, this book towers above any others in one respect. It is literally a pictorial biography of the theatre's greatest choreographer. From his birth to his death in 1998 the man is revealed in every aspect. Rare photos of the shows he has worked on and photographs reflecting his private life are throughout the book. Conrad does not go into excruciating detail on the problems some of his productions face: his well known temper; upbraiding actors in front of the cast; or the tantrum he had while "West Side Story" was trying out in Washington DC and Robbins, in a fit of pique, backed up and fell into the orchestra pit much to the

delight of the actors. However, she does include all the highlights of his career and his early childhood. The book blew me away with the bevy of photographs. It is beautifully laid out and edited. A bit spendy but worth every penny. Any musical theatre fan will want this book on their shelves. Put your order in now

What an amazing tribute this book is -- not only to the genius of one of the greatest choreographer's in the history of dance and theater, but to the process of creativity as well. In this brilliant biography of Jerome Robbins, Christine Conrad has given us a work that can speak to every artist, working in every medium, about the passion and commitment it takes to create. Robbins is so eloquently captured on these pages, both in images, and in his own words, that I came away from the book feeling as if I had known him. And, feeling nothing but admiration for his courage, and his determination to excel. He truly was THAT BROADWAY MAN. It was so refreshing to read a biography about a famous person that focused on his work, and his success, instead of just dishing the dirt. I was not particularly interested in his failures; we all have them. I was interested in how he pushed through them and kept going...to give us a body of work so entertaining, and innovative, it literally takes your breath away. The book is absolutely fascinating. Cheers to Ms. Conrad for her intimate, insightful, and intuitive presentation of this extraordinary man.

If a picture -- in that old cliché -- is worth a thousand words, this gorgeous book is worth any number of doorstop-sized biographies. Using hundreds of never-before-seen photographs of Jerome Robbins and his friends, family, and associates (Leonard Bernstein, Aaron Copland, George Balanchine, Mary Martin, Irving Berlin, etc. etc), Christine Conrad has put together a stunning visual record of a great life in the theater, the first about Robbins ever to appear. Here are backstage and rehearsal pictures, family snapshots, rare clippings, production photographs, even reproduced pages from Robbins's own illustrated journals, with captions drawn from Robbins's published quotations; all are given context and coherence by Conrad's spare and perceptive text, which takes the form of introductions to the chronologically-arranged sections of the book. Her privileged, inside view of Robbins (she was, she tells us, a close friend of more than thirty years' standing) is never mawkish, cloying, or self-important; but in the end it is moving the way Robbins's own art, from "Dances at a Gathering" to "On the Town" to "West Side Story," is moving -- because it is funny, tender, and beautiful.

Jerome Robbins is brought to vivid life in this amazing and stunning pictorial biography. Using

hundreds of rare, fascinating, never-before-seen photographs; Robbins' personal journals; Robbins' own words about work; combined with Conrad's insightful narrative, this book shines a light on the man behind the image and takes us inside his working process and his daily life. He was obviously a very private man who shielded his personal life, but Conrad takes us behind the austere public image. Because of her longstanding relationship with Robbins, Conrad was given access to previously unseen early childhood and early dance photographs and Robbins' own drawings and writings. Any creative person in any field will be grateful for the descriptions of his unique working methods. Conrad doesn't gloss over his disappointments or personal failures - the story behind his firing from the film of West Side Story is fascinating - but she chooses to concentrate on illuminating his artistic process and bringing the man to life, with all his quirks, his humor, his fierce dedication to work -- and the great personal sacrifices he made for that work. Don't miss out on a wonderful and original reading experience! I loved it... an absolute treasure.

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