

## FIGURE 6.18

Pearl Primus.

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*Snow*, created in 1959, which portrayed life along the famous railroad line.

**Donald McKayle** (b. 1930)—McKayle studied with Graham and Cunningham, among others. His choreography calls attention to the black experience and is currently performed by such companies as the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company and the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre.

**Alvin Ailey** (1931–1990)—A student of Lester Horton, Ailey developed his own company in the mid-1950s. Called the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, the company is located in New York. Ailey was always concerned with making his dances accessible to the audience. He combined modern, jazz and world dance to create a unique style. The Ailey company and school, still in existence today, is world-renowned.

**Eleo Pomare** (1937–2008)—Like Beatty's works, Pomare's choreography often represented the struggles of blacks in America. His powerful *Blues for the Jungle*, created in 1972, was a realistic look at life in Harlem. He studied with Kurt Jooss in Germany and eventually established his own company that made their New York City debut in 1966.

### The Post-Moderners

**Alwin Nikolais** (1912–1993)—A student of Hanya Holm, "Nik" is best remembered for his choreography that explored the use of lighting, costumes and props in a purely theatrical way. Nik was not concerned with showing emotion on stage, but rather motion, and is known as one of the forerunners of the post-modern movement. In 1970, along with fellow choreographer **Murray Louis** (b. 1926), he established the Nikolais-Louis Dance Lab in New York, as well as the Nikolais-Louis Dance Company established in later years. Louis, once a student of Nikolais, continued the artistic directorship of the Nikolais-Louis Dance Company after Nikolais' death. Today, the Nikolais/Louis Foundation for Dance, in collaboration with the Ririe/Woodbury Dance Company, tours and performs repertory by Nikolais and Louis.

**Merce Cunningham** (1919–2009)—Cunningham came to dance because of tap dance lessons he received at a young age. He was a dancer with the Martha Graham Dance Company for five years before establishing the Merce Cunningham Dance Company in 1953. He developed the Cunningham technique, in which the spine acts as a spring and can coil, twist and turn. His technique also employs intricate direction changes and many shifts of weight throughout a given phrase of

movement. He created dances that were devoid of meaning and were “movement for movement’s sake.” He is credited with being “the father of post-modern dance.”

**Anna Halprin** (b. 1920)—One of the leading figures in the Judson Dance Theatre, Halprin had, as a student, studied the more formalized techniques of her predecessors. Today, she is best-known for her work in improvisation.

**Paul Taylor** (b. 1930)—In a career spanning both the modern and post-modern movements, Taylor was both a student of Martha Graham and a dancer with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. He is considered to be one of the forerunners of the post-modern movement. In 1955, Taylor began to create his own dances and in 1961 formed his own company. Taylor’s choreography is a combination of athletic dynamics and beauty. Today, the Paul Taylor Dance Company is world-renowned.

### The Post-Moderners: Second Generation

**Robert Ellis Dunn** (1929–1996)—Dunn, a musician, taught dance composition and improvisation classes at the Cunningham School in the 1960s. In 1962, he organized the first dance concert at the Judson Memorial Church in New York and thus began the activities of the Judson Dance Theatre.

**Viola Farber** (1931–1998)—As a choreographer, Farber was very much influenced by her former teacher, Merce Cunningham, although some of her works were on the comical side. Farber began her own company in 1953. She is also known for succeeding Alwin Nikolais as artistic director of the *Centre National de Dance Contemporaine* in France.

**Dan Wagoner** (b. 1932)—Wagoner came to New York in the late 1950s and danced with the Martha Graham, Merce Cunningham and Paul Taylor companies before he established his own company in 1969. Dan Wagoner and Dancers performed for almost twenty-five years, but had to disband because of financial reasons.

**Yvonne Rainer** (b. 1934)—A student of Cunningham, Rainer was one of the founding members of the Judson Dance Theatre. Rainer was concerned with reducing dance movement to a minimum, without the inclusion of emotion, theatricality, or spectacle. Today, Rainer is still an active choreographer.

**Simone Forti** (b. 1935)—A student of Anna Halprin, Forti’s works took on an improvisational feel, much like those of her teacher. Today, a master teacher herself, Forti continues to create works from an improvisational base.

**Rod Rodgers** (1938–2002)—For several years, Rodgers was a member of the Erick Hawkins Dance Company. In the mid-1960s he formed the Rod Rodgers Dance Company, which performed choreography that was a mix of modern and jazz. He was also a founding member of the Association of Black Choreographers.

**Steve Paxton** (b. 1939)—Paxton is best-known for developing “contact improvisation” (see *Chapter 7: Improvisation and Creative Movement*). Paxton was also a founding member of the Judson Dance Theatre and was a student of Cunningham.

**Trisha Brown** (b. 1940, see Figure 6.19)—Another founding member of the Judson Dance Theatre, Brown’s choreography employed the use of repetition. She created intricate movement patterns that seemed to logically build from one movement to the next.



FIGURE 6.19

Trisha Brown.

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Having stepped down as director of the company, the Trisha Brown Dance Company will disband after a farewell tour.

**Lucinda Childs** (b. 1940)—Another student of Cunningham and founding member of the Judson Dance Theatre, Childs' use of repetition of movement and phrases were a trademark of her choreography. Childs has provided choreography for mixed-media performances such as Robert Wilson's *Einstein on the Beach*.

**Gus Solomons, Jr.** (b. 1940)—Solomons danced with the Martha Graham and Cunningham Dance Companies, among others. In addition to choreographing, Solomons is a dance reviewer for *Dance Magazine* and other publications.

**Twyla Tharp** (b. 1942)—Tharp worked with both Cunningham and Taylor and later developed her own company and created a movement style that was a blend of several dance forms, including ballet, modern, tap and jazz. Although seemingly "loose," Tharp's choreography is technically difficult, with its use of a relaxed torso but dynamically charged arm and leg movements. Tharp has also choreographed on several ballet companies and for a short while was a resident choreographer for American Ballet Theatre in New York. In 2002, she created the Broadway musical *Movin' Out*, with music by Billy Joel.

**David Gordon** (b. 1943)—Once a student of Cunningham and founding member of the Judson Dance Theatre (as well as its offspring, the Grand Union), Gordon has been choreographing since the early 1960s. His dances, many filled with comical moments, combined movement and text. The David Gordon Pick-Up Company is comprised of dancers who are also skilled actors, including Gordon's wife, **Valda Setterfield** (b. 1934).

**Meredith Monk** (b. 1943)—Another student of Cunningham, Monk combined her talents as a musician and writer within her works. Her dance aesthetic differed from most of the Judson Dance Theatre members in that her dances were full of symbolism and emotion. Today, Monk presents mixed-media events that include her original choreography, music and text.

**Margaret Jenkins** (b. 1944)—Jenkins is the artistic director of the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company, which is based in San Francisco. She creates narrative works in which the dancers, through the use of improvisation and the development of movement phrases, are often collaborators.

**Lar Lubovitch** (b. 1944)—A student of Martha Graham, Anna Sokolow and José Limon, Lubovitch danced with a number of modern dance companies before creating his own. His choreography, which combines highly charged movement phrases with intricate floor patterns, has made the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company one of the best-loved in America.

**Laura Dean** (b. 1945)—The use of repetition, particularly spinning and spins that move in intricate patterns around the stage, are among the tools that Dean used in her choreography. She was a Cunningham student and a founding member of the Judson Dance Theatre. Today, her company, Laura Dean Musicians and Dancers, still employs the techniques she developed in the 1960s.

**Kei Takei** (b. 1946)—A choreographer whose dances appear to be as sacred as primitive rituals, Takei came to the United States from Japan in 1966. Her use of repetition is essential in her work, which has a mesmerizing effect on the audience. Her company, Moving Earth Orient Sphere, has been performing a series of dances for many years, all with the word "light" in the title.

**Ulysses Dove** (1947–1996)—Dove performed with many leading dance companies, such as the Merce Cunningham Dance Company and the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre. His choreography received critical acclaim, and has been seen on such companies as the American Ballet Theatre, New York City Ballet and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre.

## The Next Wave

**Pina Bausch** (1940–2009)—Bausch was a German choreographer whose company *Wuppertaler Tanztheater* (dance-theatre), combined dance and theatre to create disturbing pictures of real-life situations. Many of her dances dealt with gender issues, specifically focusing on fear and brutality.

**Garth Fagan** (b. 1940)—Jamaican-born Fagan was a student of Martha Graham, Pearl Primus and Alvin Ailey, among others. His company, Garth Fagan Dance, uniquely blends modern, jazz and world dance. Based in Rochester, New York, his company is internationally known. He also created the choreography for the Broadway production of *The Lion King*.

**Judith Jamison** (b. 1944)—Jamison was one of Alvin Ailey's principal dancers for many years. He created several roles and dances specifically for her, including

the beautiful solo *Cry*. After Ailey's death in 1990, Jamison assumed the position of artistic director of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, remaining in this position until 2011, and becoming Director Emerita after her retirement.

**Jennifer Muller** (b. 1944)—Jennifer Muller/The Works is a company that often blends several genres into one dance. It is not uncommon to see a Muller work that includes modern, ballet, jazz, text and singing. Her work is sometimes referred to as dance theatre and is often inspired by Eastern philosophy. Another signature of her choreography is the inventive partnering sequences that her dancers perform.

**Liz Lerman** (b. 1947)—One of our country's most political choreographers, Lerman's dances are always a commentary on societal and political issues. The use of dance and text is a trademark of her work, as is her intergenerational dance company, The Dance Exchange. Lerman also directs *Dancers of the Third Age*, a company with members over age sixty.

**Bebe Miller** (b. 1949)—Miller's works are among today's most highly acclaimed in the modern dance world. Using a variety of music, such as classical pieces and the music of Jimi Hendrix, Miller's works are thought-provoking and dramatic.

**Elizabeth Streb** (b. 1950)—Streb's company, Elizabeth Streb/Ringside, is known for its fierce athleticism that has sometimes been called "violent," although she does not see it as such. Streb has expanded the definition of dance to include movements that seem to defy gravity and use space unlike any other dance company. Her dances often include props or set pieces, such as walls or boxes, that the movements center around, in, under, over, etc., and provide the viewer with images unlike any they have ever seen before in a dance concert.

**Eiko** (b. 1951) and **Koma** (b. 1947)—These dancers from Japan present what seems to be Butoh-inspired choreography, although they refer to their technique as "Delicious Movement." Their movements are performed so slowly that at times the audience does not see their transition from one movement to the next. Their dances usually have dark and dramatic themes.

**Joe Goode** (b. 1951)—Goode resides on the West Coast where he is a choreographer, theatre director and teacher. After dancing with the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company, he formed the Joe Goode Performance Group (in 1985). Mostly all of his dances incorporate

movement, music, text and singing. Much of the work he creates has been influenced by the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

**Maguy Marin** (b. 1951)—A Spaniard born and raised in France, Marin trained in classical ballet as a young child and was eventually introduced to modern dance. She danced in Maurice Béjart's company for three years, and then eventually established the *Compagnie Maguy Marin*. Her choreography has been categorized as dance-theatre, and she is known as one of France's most innovative choreographers. Some of her most popular works, such as *Cinderella* and *Coppelia*, were created for the Lyons Opera Ballet.

**Bill T. Jones** (b. 1952, see Figure 6.20)—Artistic director of the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company (Zane is now deceased, a victim of the AIDS virus), Jones's choreography follows a strong narrative and dramatic line

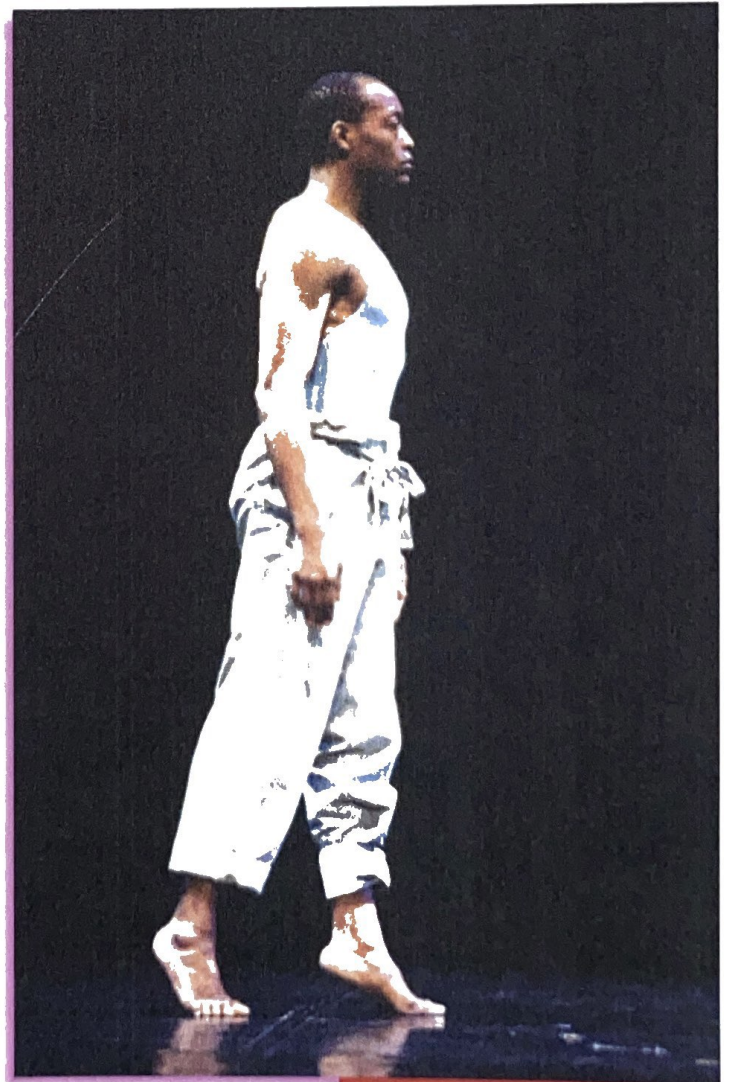


FIGURE 6.20

Bill T. Jones.

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and are both poignant and controversial. One of his dances, *Still/Here* (1994), created a major controversy. Because of Jones's use of people with terminal illnesses in the dance, critic Arlene Croce refused to review the dance, which she said was "victim art." Because of this disagreement, the dance world, as well as the popular media, began a long and heated debate on "victim art" and Jones's *Still/Here*.

**Ralph Lemon** (b. 1952)—Lemon's emotion-filled dances were the driving force of his popular company (which has disbanded). He is concerned with showing real ideas and real people in his works. His unique movement style combines physical strength and strong technique with pedestrian gestures and free-flowing movements.

**Ohad Naharin** (b. 1952)—Naharin began dancing with the Batsheva Dance Company in Israel. He was then invited by Martha Graham to join her company in New York. While there, he was also a scholarship student at the School of American Ballet. In 1980, he made his debut as a choreographer, and to date has choreographed on major dance companies, including Nederlands Dans Theatre, Frankfurt Ballet, Hubbard Street Dance and Rambert Dance Company. He is now the artistic director of the Batsheva Dance Company, which is based in Israel.

**Peggy Baker** (b. 1952)—Baker, a Canadian, has won international acclaim for her choreography and performances. From 1981–88, she was a dancer and rehearsal director with the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company. In 1990, she toured with Mikhail Baryshnikov's White Oak Dance Project. Today, she is the Artistic Director of Peggy Baker/Solo Dance.

**Margie Gillis** (b. 1953)—Gillis is a Canadian artist mostly known for her solo work. Her ability as a solo artist is outstanding and she is known worldwide as a spectacular performer. She has said that she uses dance as a catharsis to express joy, sorrow and uncertainty.

**Molissa Fenley** (b. 1954)—Once the artistic director of a small company, Fenley began performing almost exclusively as a solo artist. Her works are primarily abstract and her movements are a display of pure, clean lines. Today, she still performs as a soloist, as well as with her company, Molissa Fenley and Company.

**Homer Avila** (1955–2004)—A dancer with Momix and the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company, Avila was an outstanding performer. In 2001, he lost a leg and hip to a rare form of cancer, but continued to perform even

after his surgery. A dedicated and inspiring performer, Avila performed up until the time he died.

**Art Bridgman** and **Myrna Packer**—This modern dance duet company has been collaborating since 1978. In their latest work, they have been exploring integrating live performance with video technology and have developed the concept of "video partnering." Their theatrical choreography has strong emotional and visceral appeal, and their partnering sequences are daring and exciting.

**David Dorfman** (b. 1956)—Dorfman came to dance late in life, having been an athlete throughout much of his youth. He began dancing in college, and though he had originally set out to be in the business world, he ended up receiving an M.F.A. degree in dance. He now has a company, David Dorfman Dance, which is based in New York and performs dynamically and emotionally charged dances, often blending movement, music and text. He has also been known to do community projects, working with people of all levels of dance experience.

**Mark Morris** (b. 1956)—One of today's leading choreographers, Morris is well-known for his sophisticated use of music in his dances. Now residing in the United States, his company also had a three-year residency in Brussels, where he was the artistic director of the *Theatre Royal de la Monnaie*. In 2001, the Mark Morris Dance Center was opened in Brooklyn, NY.

**Doug Varone** (b. 1957)—Varone's company, Doug Varone and Dancers, is one of the most dynamic and exciting companies performing today. Varone is extremely versatile, creating dances that range from being abstract to those that have strong emotional content. In 1997, he choreographed and staged the Broadway musical, *Triumph of Love*.

**Susan Marshall** (b. 1958)—Marshall formed her dance company, Susan Marshall and Company, in 1982. She is known for taking gestures and pedestrian movements and utilizing them in her highly dynamic and athletic choreography. She is concerned with showing emotion and human interaction in her choreography.

**Stephen Petronio** (b. 1958)—Petronio danced with Trisha Brown from 1979–1986. In 1984, he founded the Stephen Petronio Dance Company. Petronio has been known to create very emotional and intellectual dances, and often uses costumes that blur and confuse sexual identity.

**Sarah Skaggs** (b. 1958)—Interested in blending social and concert dance, Skaggs has created a unique dance vocabulary for her choreography that she has set on numerous dance companies. In 1991, she developed her company, Sarah Skaggs Dance, which performs in both traditional dance settings as well as in site specific works.

**David Parsons** (b. 1959)—Parsons was a dancer with the Paul Taylor Dance Company for nine years. He left Taylor's company in 1987 to begin his own, the Parsons Dance Company, which is internationally known today. Parsons' choreography is dynamically charged and he encompasses a broad range of emotions in his dance repertory.

**Doug Elkins** (b. 1960)—A self-proclaimed "style thief," Elkins combines ballet and modern dance with break dancing and hip-hop to create his unusual choreography. In his dances, Elkins presents the audience with humorous contradictions, such as men in women's clothing and break dancing done in Catholic school uniforms.

**Sean Curran** (b. 1961)—Formerly a dancer with Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company, Curran is now an exceptional choreographer in his own right. After performing in the Broadway show *Stomp* for four years, Curran began making and presenting dances with the Sean Curran Dance Company, that are personal expressions shown through a wide range of themes and dynamics.

**Michael Clark** (b. 1962)—Formerly a ballet dancer, Clark came to modern dance after arriving in the United States from Britain and studying at the Cunningham school. He is one of Britain's most controversial choreographers. His dances, many of which use rock music and stylized clothing, are some of the most innovative dances seen today.

**John Jasperse** (b. 1963)—Jasperse began to choreograph and perform professionally in 1985. In 1989, he established the John Jasperse Company, now called John Jasperse Projects. He is known for doing experimental work influenced by a post-modern aesthetic.

**Andrea Woods** (b. 1964)—Woods is the Artistic Director of Soulworks/Andrea E. Woods and Dancers based in Brooklyn, NY. She performed with Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company from 1989–95. She is a dynamic performer with powerful stage presence. Her work is created with inspiration from the African Amer-

ican experience and presented as African American folklore.

**Ron Brown** (b. 1966)—Brown is the founder and artistic director of the Ronald K. Brown/Evidence Dance Company. In his choreography, he fuses modern dance with West African dance, a combination that is exciting and inspiring to observe. His highly physical choreography has been described as storytelling through the body. Today, he is one of the most sought-after choreographers, setting dances on college students as well as professional dancers, such as those of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre.

**Shen Wei** (b. 1968)—Shen Wei is a Chinese-born American choreographer, visual artist and director. He creates original works that include dance, painting, sound, sculpture, theater and video, demonstrating a blend of Asian and Western aesthetics. In 2000, he founded the contemporary dance company Shen Wei Dance Arts.

**Wayne McGregor** (b. 1970)—McGregor has been recognized as one of the most innovative choreographers of today. In 1992, Wayne McGregor Random Dance Company was formed and became the first resident company at the new Sadler's Wells. Since 2006, he has been resident choreographer of the Royal Ballet. He has also created dances for the Australian Ballet, Stuttgart Ballet, and San Francisco Ballet. His 2010 piece *Far*, which features a pin board of 3,200 LED lights, has been seen worldwide.

**Crystal Pite** (b. 1970)—Pite is a Canadian choreographer and dancer who performed with Ballet Frankfurt, where she worked with William Forsythe. In 2002 she created *Kidd Pivot*, which integrates movement, music, text and visual design. The company tours their innovative performances around the world.

**Miguel Gutierrez** (b. 1971)—This dance and music artist is the artistic director of Miguel Gutierrez and the Powerful People, a company whose work questions the nature of existence, and presents a collaborative mix of dance, music and media. He prefers to be called a "dance artist" and not a choreographer. Gutierrez is the recipient of numerous grants and awards and a 2002 "Bessie" Award for his work as a dancer in John Jasperse Company.

**Robert Battle** (b. 1973)—This choreographer creates fast-paced, frenetic movement that requires the dancers to dance with abandon. A former dancer with the

Parsons Dance Company, he developed his own company, Battleworks Dance Company, in 2001. In 2010, he was named the Artistic Director of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, succeeding Judith Jamison.

**Tania Isaac** (b. 1975)—A native of St. Lucia, West Indies, Isaac is interested in giving voice to social concerns and creating community through art. A former dancer with Rennie Harris Puremovement and Urban Bush Woman, Isaac is now the artistic director of Tania

Isaac Dance. Her work is bold and sensual.

**Travis Wall** (b. 1987)—Wall is a contemporary dance choreographer. He made his television appearance as a competitor on the show *So You Think You Can Dance* in 2012, he was hired to choreograph the dancers on the show, receiving critical acclaim for his work on the show's season 10.