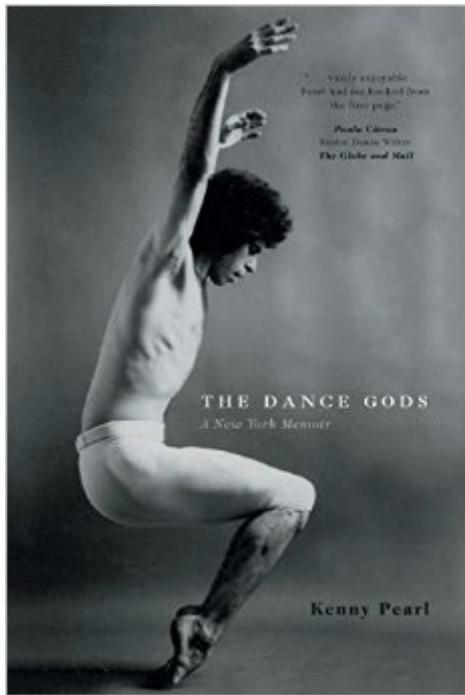


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# The Dance Gods: A New York Memoir



## Synopsis

When Kenny Pearl arrived in New York City, determined to succeed as a dancer, he was penniless, friendless and jobless. His memories shine against the backdrop of the turbulent '60s and '70s, including Vietnam War protests, the military draft and the rampant crime that once plagued the city. From humble beginnings in the hippie-populated Lower East Side, to performing with the greats of the New York modern dance scene-he danced with the companies of both Martha Graham and Alvin Ailey-Pearl's life is one of tenacity, hard work and passion. This is the engaging story of the hurdles he faced on his unique journey and the remarkable people he met along the way.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book is well written, informative, and entertaining. I loved getting an inside glimpse of the life of a New York dancer, as well as a feel for what it was like to live in the City in the 70s. I had a chance shortly after reading it to see a performance of Alvin Ailey Dance Theater, and having the "inside information" from this book made it much more fun.

I have known Kenny Pearl for a few years. He came to stay at our house while teaching during the summers in Vancouver. He struck me then as a very humble man. When I learnt about his book I had to have a copy. I'm so glad I ordered it. He revealed a story that I would never have guessed such was his humility. The book is a must read for any lover of dance, and especially for dancers. Like most autobiographies he gives us a little glimpse into his family. He goes on to tell of his love,

nay passion, for dance and then we are off to the races. I couldn't put the book down. There are so many heart warming stories of his life in New York as an aspiring dancer and his stories of his relationship with the greats is fascinating. You want him at your next dinner party. It is a very sweet and moving story of a great, great dancer who's heart is so pure and who is so humble, I am humbled to say I know Kenny.

It has been said that if you want to understand the pulse of a generation, watch the young artists in New York City. Kenny Pearl was a Toronto based dancer who in 1967, took a great leap forwards by packing his bags and moving to the Big Apple to pursue his dream as a professional dancer. The narrative chronicles his struggles and accomplishments, professional and peripheral, in his career with the renowned Martha Graham and Alvin Ailey dance companies. His travels took him from Manhattan to Moscow to McAllen and back, all amid a backdrop of socially conscious artists drawn to New York from all corners of the world in the swinging sixties and turbulent seventies. Adding to the turbulence were the titular dance gods. Just when the coast seemed clear, there they were to mess things up. But at other times when all hope seemed lost, there they were to provide safe haven. This is the story of a man with a dream and a vision who pursued it and in doing so, learned to believe in his message.

"The Dance Gods" transports you to the wonderful world of Modern Dance right as it is taking off. Kenny's wild adventures through the glorious New York City as he navigates his way from being an aspiring modern dancer, to one of the greats, keeps you on the edge of your seat. He allows us a back stage pass to what it was like dancing for the superstars of modern dance that all dancers greatly admire and study. Kenny's comedic touch and beautiful perspective on life and following your dreams makes this book accessible to anyone, not just dancers. It is a wonderful read that reminds us all not to take love, family, friends, comfort, and our physical well-being for granted.

Kenny's New York memoir is an amazing read. Personally as a new mom of a sweet and very curious little human, reading a book at the moment would seem an impossible task, but I was immediately absorbed in it. I believe baby Amelia enjoyed watching her mom both giggle and cry while turning the pages, pages filled with stories that the author describe in such a way that they make an immediate imprint in your mind. The stories transcend the life of a dancer in the heat of New York City during the 60's and 70's to reminds us how it takes hard work and unlimited dedication to face up to who we really are. Dance lover or not, take this book home with you!

This book was well written, interesting and incredibly inspiring to not just dancers, but to everyone trying to pursue their passion. Kenny brings the city of New York to life with his experiences both in the city and in the dance community. I was constantly left in awe with what he was able to accomplish with hard work, extreme dedication to his passion, and a bit of luck courtesy of the dance gods. All his stories are informative – they give you a glimpse into the major world events going on at the time – and they can be funny, heartwarming or heartbreakingly at times. This is a story that gets you hooked right from the start and doesn't disappoint.

The Dance Gods is a captivating, heartwarming, and nearly sacred glimpse into the life of a dance artist's personal adventure in New York City. I found this a surprisingly rare and generous documentation of a time in a dancer's life that can be truly insecure. Kenny Pearl delves deep into all aspects of his journey to become a professional dancer, sparing no sordid detail or notable success of his experiences. The result is a deeply human and gorgeously inspiring memoir that reads both like a fictional page-turner as well as a historical account of an important era in dance history. Amongst my favorite moments are the tales of Kenny with the Alvin Ailey American dance Theater while on tour, as well as some truly amazing stories about his experience with modern dance legend Martha Graham. All in all, a fabulous read!

This is a fascinating book about an exceptional period in Kenny Pearl's life. What he achieved as a dancer in such a short space of time without extensive early training is almost unimaginable. To go to New York in his early 20s and to fairly quickly become part of the Martha Graham and Alvin Ailey companies is extraordinary. I know I'm using a lot of superlatives. When you read this book I believe you'll find yourself doing the same thing. "The Dance Gods" is a tender, exciting, warmly humorous, honest and beautifully written book. I felt I lived vicariously through his experiences with great pleasure. I encourage anyone interested in dance or the arts in general to run (or dance) not walk to buy this book and then sigh with delight as you turn every page.

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