

Democracy Moving

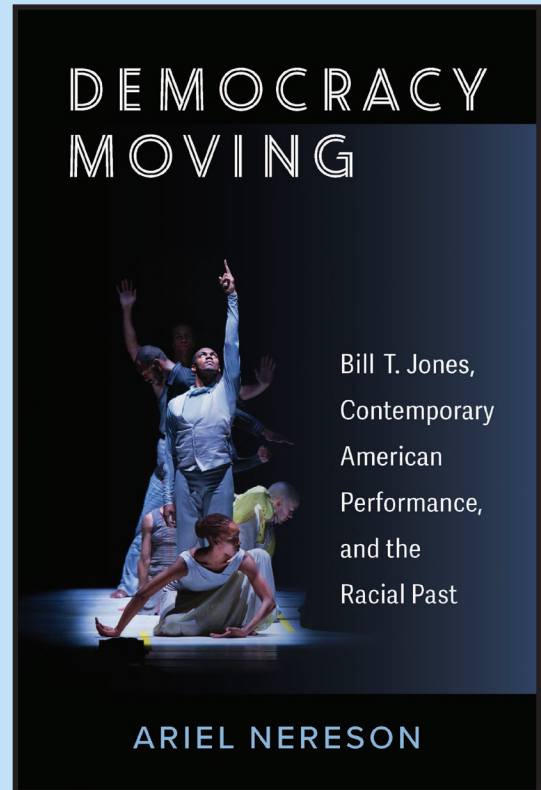
Bill T. Jones, Contemporary American Performance, and the Racial Past

Theater: Theory/Text/Performance

On the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth, renowned choreographer and director Bill T. Jones developed three tributes: *Serenade/The Proposition*, *100 Migrations*, and *Fondly Do We Hope . . . Fervently Do We Pray*. These widely acclaimed dance works incorporated video and audio text from Lincoln's writings as they examined key moments in his life and his enduring legacy. *Democracy Moving* explores how these works provided both an occasion and a method by which democracy and history might be reconceived through movement, positioning dance as a form of both history and historiography.

The project addresses how different communities choose to commemorate historical figures, events, and places through art—whether performance, oratory, song, statuary, or portraiture—and in particular, Black US American counter-memorial practices that address histories of slavery. Advancing the theory of oscillation as Black aesthetic praxis, author Ariel Nereson celebrates Bill T. Jones as a public intellectual whose practice has contributed to the project of understanding America's relationship to its troubled past. The book features materials from Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company's largely unexplored archive, interviews with artists, and photos that document this critical stage of Jones's career as it explores how aesthetics, as ideas in action, can imagine more just and equitable social formations.

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