



BOOKFILTER'S FEBRUARY 2020 PICK OF THE MONTH

MICHAEL GILTZ | FEBRUARY 12, 2020

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Every month, BookFilter picks the best new theater book, exclusively for Broadway Direct readers.

Dancing Man

By Bob Avian With Tom Santopietro

\$28, University Press of Mississippi

Out now

He's a Broadway legend ... or, he would be if he weren't one of those talented creatures who does the work and happily allows others to dance in the spotlight. Even in Bob Avian's memoir, you'll probably remember the larger-than-life personalities he collaborated with more than you'll remember the choreographer himself. But he's done it all, and theater buffs will savor his story. (Certainly, Michael Riedel is a fan.) Avian danced in the original productions of *West Side Story* and *Funny Girl*. He then worked as a production assistant and became friends with writer/director/producer/choreographer Michael Bennett. Avian would have happily worked with and under Bennett for the rest of their lives if AIDS hadn't cruelly taken that genius away. Before that happened, they did landmark work on *Follies* and *Company*. And, of course, *A Chorus Line* and *Dreamgirls*; Avian won a Tony for co-choreographing the first and producing the second. Any doubts about Avian's greatness ended with the work he did on his own when creating the musical staging of *Miss Saigon*, *Sunset Boulevard*, and *Martin Guerre* (for which he won the Olivier). Now retired, Avian tells his story with all the grace and precision one would expect from one of Broadway's best.

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