

A Dancer in Depth: Paragraphs from a Theatre Life

Stanley Howard Mazin

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A Dancer in Depth is a thoughtful actor's memoir that covers noteworthy professional experiences alongside personal memories.

Stanley Howard Mazin's forthright memoir *A Dancer in Depth* covers time spent on stage, acting, and travelling.

As a child, Mazin's family, and in particular his parents' failed marriage, influenced how he saw the world. He eventually made a choice to become an actor. Thus, he started his career on stage in 1963. He went on to perform in multiple Broadway shows. He also appeared in films including *The Blues Brothers* and *The Wedding Planner*, as well as in sitcoms and television shows.

Rather than telling Mazin's tale in chronological order, the book works to proffer "truthful and honest" recollections from his life and acting career. It proceeds as a "slew of memories," reflecting that its collection makes "up only one person in this world of billions." In the process of its work, it drops anecdotes about the many celebrities whom Mazin worked with, as well as delivering family memories; photographs are included to illustrate some of the moments that it finds to be most important.

A functional picture of how Mazin's career started and developed emerges. The book focuses most on those moments that led to Mazin's success, though, as when a high school friend convinced him to join the Glee Club's ranks of boy singers and dancers; though he had minimal dance training himself, Mazin found that he was far more skilled than the other dancers, some of whom had studied dance more extensively than he had. But Mazin's insider knowledge, and quirky experiences, are the most compelling aspect of the book: for example, in 1997, he was chosen to perform Irish-style dancing in *Titanic*, and he subsequently appeared in a memorable scene as a result.

Mazin's relationships with love, sex, and sexual orientation form the book's third focus: he recalls dating a bevy of girls in high school, including Anita, who "treated him like a brother" and influenced his subsequent relationships with women. An explicit paragraph describes his first sexual experience with a man, focusing on his feelings of discovery, pain, and freedom. He also explores his irrational fear of dying young, and discusses the importance of being honest with the people whom he loved. Indeed, though it records notable experiences, the book strikes a humble tone: "I have learned that every one of us has his own stories, memories, hopes and philosophies [and] there is always more to be added."

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ANNA MARIA COLIVICCHI (July 27, 2022)

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