Shawn, Ted (1891-1972) Encyclopedia Article

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Ted Shawn is regarded as the father of American modern dance. Born Edwin Meyers Shawn, he began dancing as a form of physical therapy for his paralysis. He recovered, and became a partner and later husband to dancer Ruth St. Denis, who had become famous for her religious solo dances. The couple formed a pioneering dance company and training school called Denishawn in 1915, which toured across America and the world. Shawn often explored Christian and other world religion themes, and was the first American choreographer to combine nudity with movement. After leaving Denishawn, he created the first all-male dance troupe in America, called simply Men Dancers, and Jacob's Pillow, an international dance festival and training center in Massachusetts. Shawn was responsible for establishing dance as a legitimate career for men in America, inspiring generations of dancers and choreographers.

Further Reading:

Mumaw, Barton, and Jane Sherman. *Barton Mumaw, Dancer: From Denishawn to Jacob's Pillow and Beyond.* New York, Dance Horizons, 1986.

Shawn, Ted. *One Thousand and One Night Stands.* Garden City, New York, Doubleday, 1960.

Terry, Walter. *Ted Shawn, Father of American dance: A Biography.* New York, Dial Press, 1976.