

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Gus Solomons jr

PERSON

Solomons, Gus, Jr., 1940-

**Alternative Names:** Gus Solomons jr;

**Life Dates:** August 27, 1938-

**Place of Birth:** Boston, Massachusetts, USA

**Residence:** New York, NY

**Occupations:** Dancer

## Biographical Note

Dancer and choreographer Gus Solomons jr was born on August 27, 1938 in Cambridge, Massachusetts to Olivia Stead Solomons and Gustave Solomons, Sr. He attended Cambridge High and Latin School before enrolling at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1956, where he studied architecture. During this time, he began studying dance as a student of Jan Veen and Robert C. Gilman at the Boston Conservatory of Music.

Upon graduation, Solomons moved to New York City to dance in Oscar Brown, Jr.'s musical Kicks and Company, with choreographer Donald McKayle. Solomons joined McKayle's company shortly after, and began taking classes at the Martha Graham School. Solomons' interest in postmodernism developed further at Studio 9, where he shared space with other modern dance colleagues and worked with avant-garde experimentalists, some of whom went on to form the Judson Dance Theater collective. While at Studio 9, Solomons caught the attention of Martha Graham's student Pearl Lang, who cast him in Shira in 1962. In 1965, postmodern choreographer Merce Cunningham asked Solomons to join his company. There, Solomons created roles in How to Pass Kick Fall and Run, RainForest, Place, Walkaround Time, and partnered with Sandra Neels in Scramble. In 1968, Solomons left Cunningham's company after sustaining a back injury. He then collaborated with writer Mary Feldhaus-Weber and composer John Morris on a dual-screen video-dance piece entitled CITY/MOTION/SPACE/GAME at WGBH-TV in Boston, produced by Rick Hauser. Solomons went on to found his own company, The Solomons Company/Dance, creating over 165 original pieces. He became known for his analytical approach and incorporation of architectural concepts as well as his exploration of interactive video, sound, and movement, as depicted in the piece CON/Text. In 1980, Solomons began writing dance reviews, which were published in The Village Voice, Attitude, and The

Chronicle of Higher Education. In 1996, he founded PARADIGM with Carmen de Lavallade and Dudley Williams. Solomons also worked as an arts professor at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts until 2013.

In 2004, Solomons was named the American Dance Festival's Balasaraswati/Joy Ann Dewey Beinecke Endowed Chair for Distinguished Teaching. He received the first annual Robert A. Muh Award from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and served as a Phi Beta Kappa Scholar in 2006.

Gus Solomons jr was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on October 7, 2016.

## Related Entries

**Kennedy-Longfellow School** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Boston Conservatory at Berklee** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Massachusetts Institute of Technology** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Cambridge Rindge and Latin School** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Barbara Dona and Associates** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Drawer**

**Donald McKayle and Company** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1961 to 1964]

**Dancer**

**Martha Graham Dance Company** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1961 to 1965]

**Dancer, Student**

**The Joffrey School** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1962 to 1962]

**Dancer**

**Studio 9** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1962 to 1962]

**Dance**

**Jacob's Pillow** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1962 to 1962]

**Dancer- Kinetic Molpai**

**Barbara Dorn Associates** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1963 to 1963]

**Dance Circle** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1963 to ?]

**Teacher**

**Merce Cunningham Dance Company** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1964 to ?]

**Performer**

**Solomons Company Dance** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1972 to ?]

**Founder, Choreographer**

**Glimmerglass Playhouse and the Canadian Opera** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1994 to 1994]

**Dancer- The Magic Flute**

**PARADIGM Dance Company** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1996 to ?]

**Founder, Choreographer**

**Complexions** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 2001 to 2001]

**Dancer**

**Boy Scouts of America** [MEMBEROF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Bessie Awards Selection Committee** [MEMBEROF]  
[from ? to ?]

**National Endowment for the Arts** [MEMBEROF]  
[from ? to ?]

**American Dance Festival** [MEMBEROF]  
[from 2004 to 2009]

**Balasaraswati/Joy Ann Dewey Beinecke Endowed Chair for Distinguished Teaching**

**Mills College** [MEMBEROF]  
[from 2006 to 2009]

**Phi Beta Kappa Visiting Scholar**

