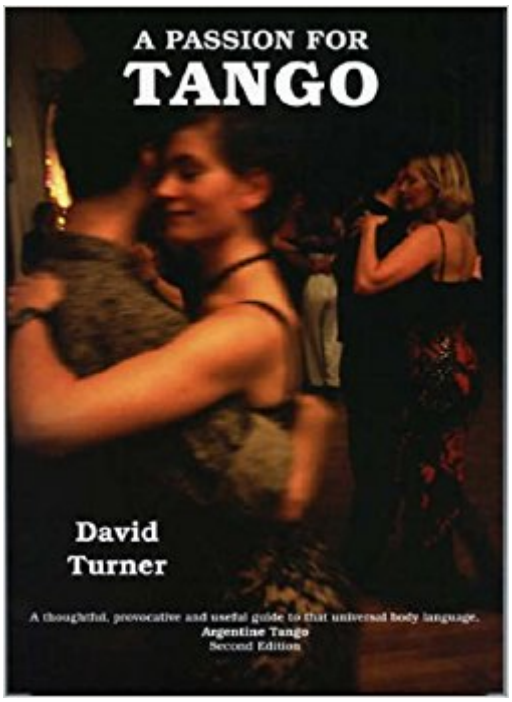
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A Passion For Tango: A Thoughtful, Provocative And Useful Guide To That Universal Body Langauge, Argentine Tango



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Synopsis

This book really helps you understand what it is about tango that makes it so appealing to dancers and so addictive. Not only does David Turner tell you about the history of it but also the background of logic that allows you to understand why certain movements work. He has lots of great exercises for improving connection between partners and helpful tips about ochos, giros, ganchos etc. This book is quite different from so many other books about tango. It’s the perfect companion book for anyone who wants to follow up a class. You can dip into it as you want, but because of the light and amusing way it is writen, you might want to read it all the way through. David writes, not from the perspective of a teacher, although he is one, but from the viewpoint of a learner so, every now and then, you get a sort of "Aaaah!" moment when something you felt yourself comes up.

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Customer Reviews

This book really helps you understand what it is about tango that makes it so appealing to dancers and so addictive. Not only does David Turner tell you about the history of it but also the background of logic that allows you to understand why certain movements work. He has lots of great exercises for improving connection between partners and helpful tips about ochos, giros, ganchos etc. This book is quite different from so many other books about tango. It’s the perfect companion book for anyone who wants to follow up a class. You can dip into it as you want, but because of the light and amusing way it is writen, you might want to read it all the way through. David writes, not from the perspective of a teacher, although he is one, but from the viewpoint of a learner so, every now and

then, you get a sort of "Aaaah!" moment when something you felt yourself comes up.

David Turner is a self-described UK tango addict of many years. He writes that he has had his share of bad teachers, good teachers, a trip to Buenos Aires, frustrations, leading, following,successes, teaching, etc. etc. In his own words, he pictures his role in this book as a "useful older brother, a couple of years up the school ladder. You know, someone who is approachable for help but not so far advanced that he can't remember how it felt to struggle?" Before reading this quote, I had referred to him as "Uncle David," and viewed the book as a helpful long letter. In this book he gives a chatty, perhaps overly wordy, review of tango from his perspective of place and time.If you know tango, you know that the learning curve, especially for leaders, is long and steep. Someone with 11 weeks of group classes and daily home practice is still in pre-school in this world. Please keep in mind, that it is with this limited experience that this review is written. Many have far more experience, and their mature opinions will surely differ from those given here.First off, Turner gives a brief, strange, entertaining review of the history of tango, including origins in Buenos Aires (hereafter BsAs), migration of the dance to Europe, USA and the world. A review of derivatives (Ballroom tango, show tango, tango nuevo, "authentic Argentine tango" taught as a sequence dance -- bizarre), and the inevitable resulting fights, ranging from childish spats to all-out war. In his review, one could perhaps quibble with his statement: "although the history of tango is fascinating in its own way, it contributes only a little, in a practical sense, to the [way] we are taught." I have my doubts, as will be explained later. For a fuller, and more documented review of tango history, you may try the book "The Meaning of Tango" by Christine Denniston. She has interviewed many dancers who were actually in the milongas in the first half of the 20th century. Also try the interviews on the website of Monica Paz.Turner reviews just about all the basic technical aspects of tango as taught in Europe, USA, Canada, etc. He disdains teaching by the basic 8 or any other sequence method. He thinks teaching should involve exploring concepts and their manifestations. Other topics are leading, following, a short section on the walk, including "Authentic walk" parallel versus cross system,soft knee, bent knee, various embraces, and explanation of the commonly taught figures. Some of the discussions of body movements are difficult to follow, but that may be just the nature of such descriptions. The photographs help. His description of leading an ocho were a real help. The concept of the leader pivoting his torso about the central axis, followed by pivoting on a vertical axis through the appropriate shoulder (he likens this to opening a door with the opposite shoulder as a hinge) was extremely helpful. The only other place I found such a good depiction was at the KÃƒÂ¶ln website amor-al-tango dot .de. But you must know German to work with the site.The book

does a good job of covering about half of the tango story. It gives a good account of what the student outside of Argentina, and possibly inside Argentina too, is likely to encounter from a few years of classes and workshops teaching patterns. And if that is what you want, Turner's book is for you. You will be dancing what they call in BsAs, "tourist tango." There is a good quantity of explanation and helpful tips for various tango moves, pitfalls to avoid, and goals to strive for.As such, it is a pretty good roadmap. But the map has two areas labeled "terra incognita:" biomechanics and the social style of BsAs. If you are hoping for a serious analytical review of tango, you will be disappointed. There is no understanding of the underlying reasons or biomechanics of the moves. Although Turner considers himself a mix of tango "techie" and "feelie," there is no real analysis of any of the mechanical or physical technical aspects that would come immediately to mind by one who deals routinely with things, and the skill set of the very people who created tango in the first place and the like-minded people who currently find tango leading so appealing. There is, for instance, no discussion, or virtually no discussion, of posture or chest lead and minimal discussion of doubletime. Similarly, Turner writes that he finds the BsAs porteÃƒÂ o walk to be appealing but baffling, and thinks that he, at over 6 feet, is too tall. His review of the movement of the older milongeros of BsAs is lacking. He only notes that they are the better dancers in BsAs. Although he recognizes this as better dancing, his book is devoted to the "tourist tango" or "gringo tango," which is currently taught in classes and workshops outside Argentina. It is an odd, lifeless, low-level show tango adapted for the dance floor.If you want to start on the remaining half of the story, you could begin with the webside tangoandchaos dot org, by Rick McGarrey. His detailed review of the porteÃƒÂ o walk, from frame-by-frame video analysis of older BsAs milongueros is particularly convincing. Aside from his technical work, his opinions are formed from an insider's view of the BsAs tango. McGarrey was struggling like the rest of us, when he left Tucson, Arizona for a five-week tango vacation to BsAs. Then, in his own words: "In 2001, just as the Argentine economy was hitting rock bottom, I wandered into a basement club on Esmeralda Street in downtown Buenos Aires. It wasn't a tango club, but I'd heard someone say that a famous milonguero was going to give a lesson there. Although I arrived on time, the place was dark and deserted--except for two men talking quietly at the bar. . . . A minute later a woman came down the stairs and sat down with to the two men. . . . It wasn't until months later that I began to realize that the men at the bar watching me practice that night were two of the best tango dancers in the world. Both of them would eventually become like uncles to me... and the woman sitting with them would become my wife." Over the years, he used his analytical training in sports competition to study the milongueros and milongueras (including his wife) with video camera and frame-by-frame analysis of technique. This

led to study, training, and drills. Without spoiling the story, I can let you know that social tango in BsAs has specific forms that developed to perform specific historical functions. It is not just a mattter of style. There is a very specific tango walk, and there are good biomechanical reasons for it. There is a specific tango posture, and there are good reasons for it. And there is a specific tango embrace (at least for crowded indoor milongas), and there is a good reason for it. Despite variation, there really seems to be an "authentic Argentine tango," McGarrey provides documented physical video evidence of it, and tango history will help you learn it. He is not selling anything. Well worth the read. Also check out YouTube videos of older BsAs milongueros and milongueras.Conclusion:This is a good, easy to read overview of tango as taught and danced in the style of Europe, USA/Canada, etc. The star rating is based on this objective. You could probably gather much of this yourself by taking off a few weeks and reading on the web. But you would have to sort the good from the bad and synthesize it yourself. However, if you want a serious analysis of BsAs social tango and the mechanics behind it, you will have to look elsewhere. Start with McGarrey, Denniston, and Paz, mentioned above. You can get the Kindle version of Turner's book for under ten dollars. Is it worth it? I think so.

I was looking for a good Tango instruction book, with out much luck, until I took a chance on this one through an search. David Turner makes this instruction fun and alive. His experiences about challenges with making a movement work and solutions take this beyond a simple how-to book. He has learned both the followers and leaders parts so he can truly help both sides of the "conversation".He is funny and experienced but not condescending. I appreciate he uses the Spanish names for the patterns, because I really want to learn that the thing I just did was a "ocho", and not that "cute little twisty thing". I make this point because one book I bought (and returned) had lovely step instructions, but did not use the Spanish names. A Tango student must be able to have the common language.There are photo instructions which will help anyone with a little floor experience. He is hep to same-sex dancers and they will appreciate the discussion using the terms "leaders" and "followers", rather than "men and women".David Turner is a Brit, regrettably for us Yanks, but he features the Bay Area's own Homer Ladas, and scored extra points in my book for that!

This is a sophisticated take on the basics (and some not-so basic topics) written from the author's wealth of experience. In has a huge amount of insight on the mechanics and lead-follow, and some of deeper topics of connection. I regard this as the best tango book I have found to date, and I

frequently go back to it.

I've danced tango for a decade. This is the best explanation of the dance,the important variations of the dance, the importance of connection, interpretation of musicand the problems that we have in learning the dance. Strongly recommended.

Its interesting.

If you're serious about learning tango this is the book to get. It breaks down every step in a way that dance instructors frequently can't or don't. Absolutely get this book!

I am amazed at how Dr. Dave Turner managed to collect and present in his book such vast amount of information about tango, which sometimes can be subject to fantasies and even misunderstandings.As tango dance instructor, especially non-Argentine born, I found that this book is a valuable reference material to keep nearby. From the origin of tango to the latest scoops of milonga (tango dance) scenes in Buenos Aires and from different styles of dance to variety of dance steps with detailed descriptions and clear illustrations, I can find everything I need to know in order to appreciate the complex and intriguing world of tango dance.

Like anyone who is an avid tango dancer, I look for great books (as well as videos and music) on my favorite pursuit. This book not only delivers the nuance and details tangueros are hungry for, but in an articulate, riveting way that leaves no technicality out - but never at the expense of the passion the author has for the dance itself. This is for the newcomer or experienced tango dancer - and it offers a shifting perspective of teacher/author to student of the dance/author - to the benefit of the reader. Grab it while you can!

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