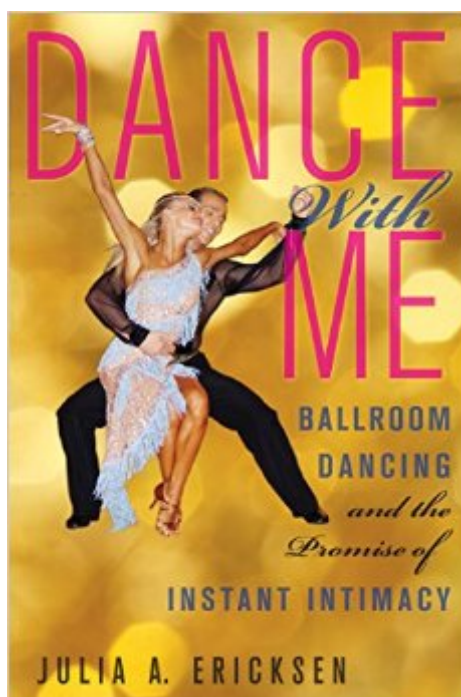


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# Dance With Me: Ballroom Dancing And The Promise Of Instant Intimacy



## Synopsis

Click here to listen to Julia Ericksen's interview about Dance with Me on Philadelphia NPR's "Radio Times" Rumba music starts and a floor full of dancers alternate clinging to one another and turning away. Rumba is an erotic dance, and the mood is hot and heavy; the women bend and hyperextend their legs as they twist and turn around their partners. Amateur and professional ballroom dancers alike compete in a highly gendered display of intimacy, romance and sexual passion. In *Dance With Me*, Julia Ericksen, a competitive ballroom dancer herself, takes the reader onto the competition floor and into the lights and the glamour of a world of tanned bodies and glittering attire, exploring the allure of this hyper-competitive, difficult, and often expensive activity. In a vivid ethnography accompanied by beautiful photographs of all levels of dancers, from the world's top competitors to social dancers, Ericksen examines the ways emotional labor is used to create intimacy between professional partners and between professionals and their students, illustrating how dancers purchase intimacy. She shows that, while at first glance, ballroom presents a highly gendered face with men leading and women following, dancing also transgresses gender.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

You can't learn Ballroom Dance from a book, but still there are far too few books about Ballroom Dancing! In part this void has opened because the best (professional) ballroom dancers spend all their time developing as dancesport competitors, and not writers. Luckily, this book provides a lot of the information one might pick up by osmosis from long association with top-level professionals, in a well written and attractively structured format. Julia Ericksen is an excellent writer, a Ph.D. with

writing skills polished by years of writing academic articles and books and correcting students' work. She is also a top academic researcher, able to tease information out of interview subjects. Here she turns her attention to world of Ballroom Dancing, and specifically gathers together a great deal of information about competitive Pro-Am dancing, i.e. dancing where one partner is a professional teacher and the other is a student, somewhat like Dancing with the Stars. While she does cover social dancing and amateur couple dancing, the novel emphasis here is on the lives that professionals lead while teaching amateur competitors and while competing professionally. She has (anonymous and non-anonymous) interviews with the leading professional competitors today and discusses in detail the attitudes of, for example, Russian expatriate dancers, Male professionals versus Female professionals, and students coping with the high financial cost and time commitment required to compete at the highest levels. There are many very nice photos of professionals performing and some also of amateur and social dancers.

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