

# DANCE REVIEWS

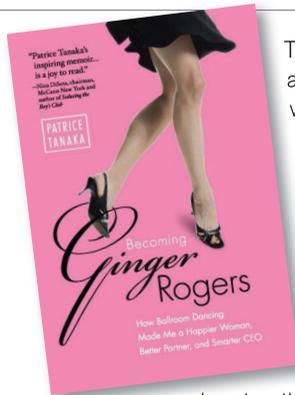
All the latest dance releases

## Ballroom books

Marianka Swain and Zoë Anderson review  
two different takes on partner dance

New York PR guru Patrice Tanaka's dynamic, thought-provoking and, at times, extremely poignant memoir about her personal and professional development through ballroom dancing resonated deeply with me.

From taking her first self-conscious steps to fighting her perfectionism, intellectualising and desire to be in control and finally discovering the liberation of being an "active follower", Tanaka chronicles her dance evolution with great insight and appealing frankness and humour. That she undergoes this transformation during extraordinarily challenging times – dealing with the psychological aftermath of 9/11, facing the impact of the recession and coping with her husband's brain tumour – makes her eventual triumph all the more inspiring.



Tanaka's gift is her ability to recognise what she's learned from ballroom and transfer it to her business, including becoming more attuned to a client's needs through her awareness of non-verbal cues,

embracing the present rather than focusing on past mistakes and overcoming her fear of "the 'F' word", citing ballroom champion Marianne Nicole: "If I fail, I'm not a failure. Dancing allows you to experiment with different ways to succeed."

*Becoming Gingers Rogers* (RRP £9.23) is a timely exploration of the problems faced by high-flying modern women, as well as a persuasive manifesto for the real-world applications

of ballroom – and for the sheer joy of dance.

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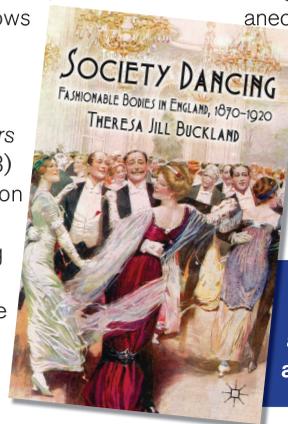
In 1870, when Theresa Jill Buckland opens her study, dancing fashions were set in the private ballrooms of the upper classes. By 1920, they were led by a rising middle class, dancing newly imported dances, such as the tango and the foxtrot, in public hotels and restaurants.

*Society Dancing: Fashionable Bodies in England, 1870–1920* (RRP £50) traces 50 years of change, from state balls to the beginnings of modern competitive ballroom. Buckland's nuanced picture brings out the differences between classes and generations. She draws on memoirs, novels, press reports and satires to report developments in steps, rhythms and dress. Well-chosen pictures underline her points, from an idealised image of a tango tea to the would-be fashionable dancers mocked in *Punch's* cartoons.

This is an academic book, and Buckland jumps briskly through the hoops of scholarly jargon in her introduction. That done, she has a clear style, with a sharp eye for revealing and entertaining anecdotes. She also evokes

how dancing feels: the giddiness of a waltz, the pinch of Victorian corsets, the fun and freedom of jazz. ●

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Both books are available from [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)