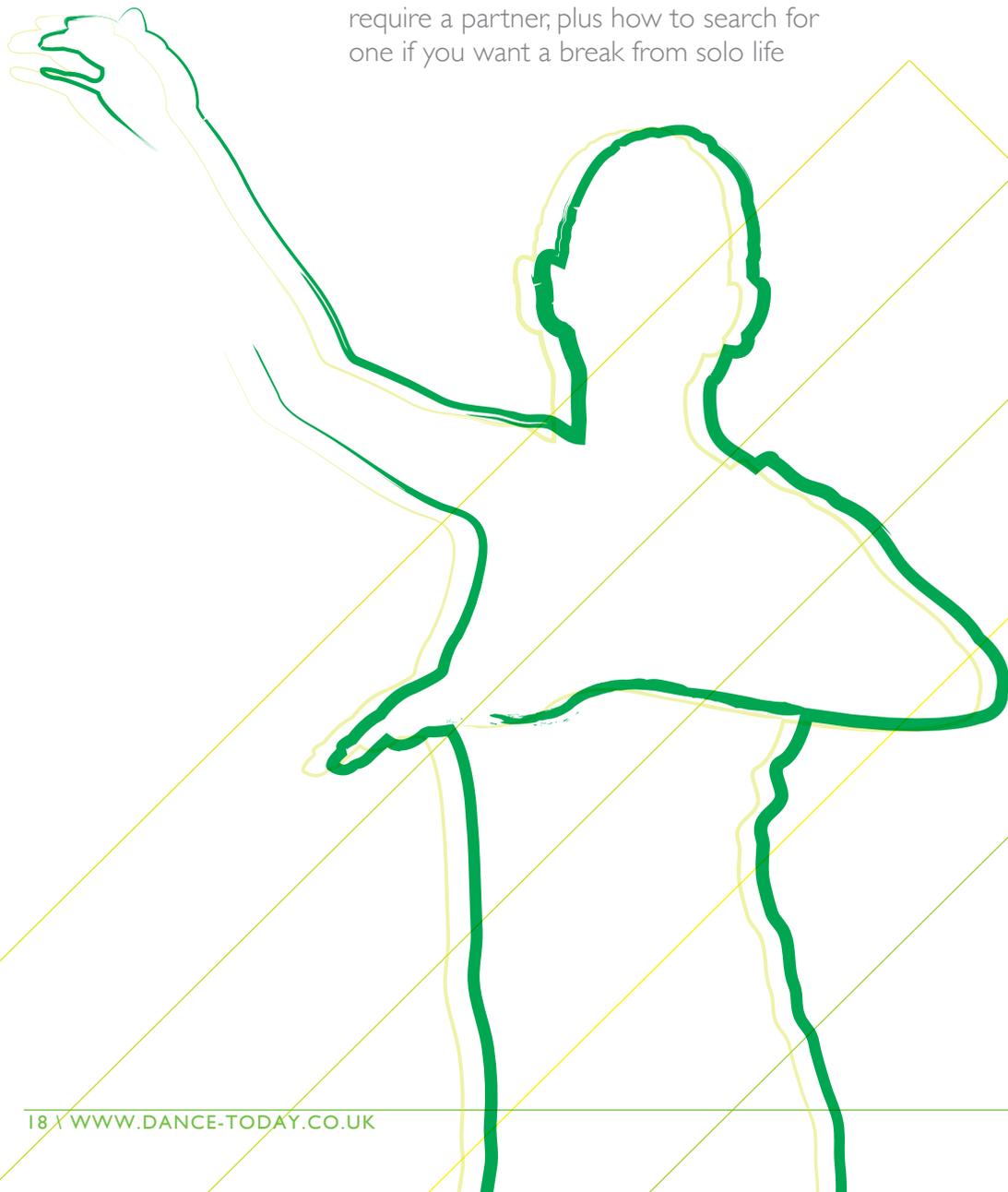


GOING SOLO

Marianka Swain recommends the best ballroom classes and activities that don't require a partner, plus how to search for one if you want a break from solo life



CLASSES

Danceworks, Devon

Our *Dance Today* Teacher of the Year has lots on offer for solo dancers at her studio, including the Latin In Line class and popular Singles' Night. www.danceworksdevon.com

FitSteps, UK-wide

These fun ballroom fitness classes are the brainchild of *Strictly's* Natalie Lowe, Ian Waite and Mark Foster (see page 12 for more). Work on your technique – and your waistline – without the need for a partner. www.fitsteps.co.uk

Simply Dancing Partners, London

Experienced partners on hand at every class, plus private lessons and events. Covers all the ballroom styles and now branching out into Argentine tango and salsa as well. www.simplydancingpartners.co.uk

Zumba, UK-wide

Inigorating fitness classes for solo dancers with a variety of options for different ages and experience levels. www.zumba.com

P&K Hurst Dance Studios, Cheshire and Greater Manchester

Solo Latin Fusion classes give you the chance to improve on technique without a partner. You



can also register your details with the studio and they'll try to pair you up with someone.

www.hurstdance.co.uk

Alison King School of Dance, North Yorkshire

Fun Latin line dancing class that covers all the Latin dances in simple routines – ideal for solo dancers and a good way to meet people. www.alisonkingschoolofdance.com

Pink Jukebox, London and UK-wide

These same-sex ballroom classes are incredibly friendly and inclusive, and because both sexes can take on either role, there's never an imbalance of leaders and followers. Outside London, the UK Same Sex Dance Council (www.ukssdc.co.uk) can help you find classes in your local area. www.pinkjukebox.co.uk

HOLIDAYS

Club Dance Holidays, UK and international

A variety of exciting locations and styles on offer, from tango and salsa to Zumba and Bollywood, and some great bonuses for solo dancers; for example, the March salsa trip to Havana includes local dancers to partner you in class and

accompany you to clubs.

www.clubdanceholidays.com

Holiday and Dance, UK-wide

You can enquire which of these great holidays are likely to have fellow solo dancers booking, but your best bet is the Solos Special House Dance Parties, designed specifically for dance travellers without regular partners. www.holidayanddance.co.uk

HOLIDAYS CONTINUED...

Solos, UK-wide

This solo traveller holiday operator offers a good range of ballroom and Ceroc breaks, with lessons, festive celebrations, dinner dances and masked balls. You can just attend special events or include them in a weekend away.

www.solosholidays.co.uk

Zig Zag Dance Factory, international cruises

Holiday organisers/dance teachers Warren Bullock and Jane Phillips can put you in touch with other single dancers who might want to share a cabin, and they ensure everyone has someone to dance with at the classes and socials on board the luxury liner.

www.zigzagdance.co.uk

COMPETITIONS

Pro-Am, global

Hugely popular in the US, Pro-Am competitions pair students with their teachers, so you can train and compete without needing a partner – although it can be pricey. Karen Hardy facilitates it at her studio (www.karenhardystudios.com), taking students to glamorous competitions like Paul Killick's in Miami.

Medallist, UK-wide

Similar to Pro-Am, in that you can also compete with your teacher, but more closely aligned with the ballroom syllabus. It's a great way to test your technical progress, with the added excitement of competing. The ISTD website (www.istd.org) has information on competitions, which take place across the country.

Jack and Jill, UK-wide

The perfect competition for solo lindy hop and/or swing dancers, as it's a test of social dancing skills – you sign up as either a leader or a follower and compete with a randomly assigned partner. Check out contests at annual festivals like Goodnight Sweetheart (www.gnsh.co.uk), DJam (www.dance-at-djam.co.uk) and the London Swing Festival (www.londonswingfestival.co.uk).

SOCIAL EVENTS

Swingsters, Bedford

Solo dancers are welcome at Swingsters' monthly tea dances and band nights, featuring swing styles like the Charleston, Balboa and lindy hop. The tea dance has an ice-breaker opening class

to encourage you to dance with everyone.

www.swingsters.co.uk

Ceroc, UK-wide

This fusion style, which contains elements of ballroom, salsa, hip hop and modern jive, is all about getting to know people, with classes leading straight into socials. You can also do dance weekends, in which organisers balance genders for each event to ensure no one is left out.

www.ceroc.com

CamTango, Cambridge

These Argentine tango tea dances and milongas attract tangueros and tanguistas from far afield, so it's a great way to expand your horizons. Regular social dancing, plus lessons,

performances and great DJ-ing from special guests.

www.camtango.com

Jacky's Jukebox, London

Joyous dance night at the historic Rivoli Ballroom on the first Saturday of every month. Open to same-sex and mainstream dancers, so the standard dances are called in three groups (men, women and mixed), giving you plenty of options, plus there are fun sequence and line dances to get everyone on the floor.

www.jackysjukebox.co.uk

PARTNER SEARCH

Dance Today

If you're searching for a partner, your first stop is the back of the magazine! Check out our classified section or get in touch with us to place an ad at ann@dancing-times.co.uk or 020 7250 3006; ask for our advertising manager, Ann Mottram.

Dancesport UK

Submit either a free or a paid ad to Dancesport UK and browse the site for available partners. Great for searching by experience level.

www.dancesport.uk.com/partners

EADA

Visit the English Amateur Dancesport Association's community forum to hear news of partnership splits and search for compatible partners.

www.eada.org.uk/community

Dancesport Info

Global search tool for partners of all ages. Excellent resource for more serious and/or competitive dancers.

www.dancesportinfo.net

Senior Dance Partners

Over-35s can take advantage of this brilliant resource – a tailored partner search, plus information on classes and events.

www.seniordancepartners.co.uk

UKSSDC

If you're looking for a same-sex partner, register with the UK Same Sex Dance Council and they'll post your request on their website.

www.ukssdc.co.uk

