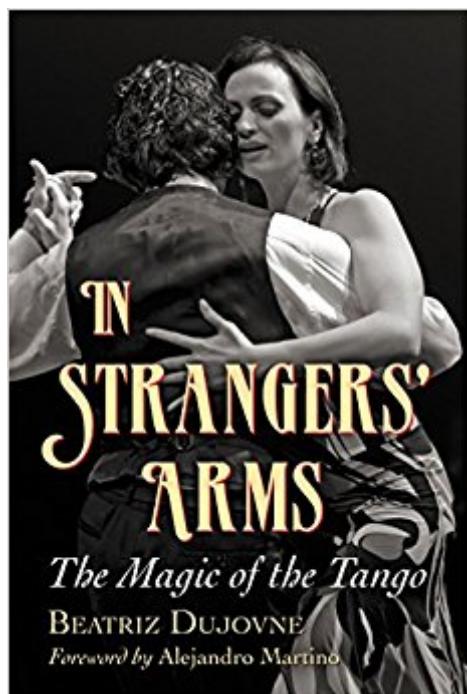


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# In Strangers' Arms: The Magic Of The Tango



## Synopsis

The tango is easily the most iconic dance of the last century, its images as familiar as an old friend. But are they the whole story? Peeling back the poster propaganda that has always characterized the tango publicly, this intimate study shows the invisible heart of the dance and the culture that raised it. Drawing on direct experience and conversations with dancers, it reveals much about the role of the tango in Argentinean culture. Instructors considering this book for use in a course may request an examination copy here.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The past year has been a year of evolution and change for me and along the way I found tango but I don't think I truly found Tango until I found this book. As a Tango neophyte, Beatriz's book has quickly become my touchstone, a constant companion to read and re-read, and reference in moments of struggle. She conveys the beauty and soul of Tango through her conversational style, openness tempered with honor and respect for the true history and all aspects of Tango. Via approachable language and gentleness of the storytelling, it feels like coming home. Warm, intimate, protective, caring, deep,

elegant, diverse, and strong. Through this book she captures and conveys Tango as the experience that captured my heart. There are plenty of books that discuss components of tango, however for my experience and understanding this book is the only one that provided the holistic perspective of Tango. Through her discussion of the history, music, relationship between people and the music and shared movement, and stories from a range of dancers, musicians, and tanguero/as - Beatriz captures and delves deeply into what it is that drew me to Tango, why it is worth spending the years to truly grow into and experience the extreme beauty, warmth, connection and comfort that can come from Tango. It is my touchstone to remind me to enjoy the journey, to take it slow and let my experience and personal Tango grow, and to revel in the home that can be created in a moment wrapped up in the history, emotion, music, and connection. If you are going to read any Tango book - make it this one....

Currently, on my third reading many terms can be used to describe Tango; and, this book provides the quintessential description of each of them. In fact, "In Strangers Arms" connects all the Tango books I have read to the human reality of its formation, existence, and evolution. Beatriz, takes each essential element of Tango and creates the type of understanding that gives depth and breadth to each Tango experience. This book delves deeply into the "The Invisible Heart of the Dance." But, it also unearths from the shallow descriptions many hold, the depth of the roots of Tango; the characteristics of its formative geography; how its poetry and musicality give expression to the various experiences within the human condition; its expanding global reach; and, a deeper understanding and interpretation of what we should actually be learning in our Tango classes. Since "In Strangers Arms" is written in a conversational 1st hand prose, it is not a book about Tango. This book, is in fact, Tango.

"This dance begins, as our lives begin: by embracing and trusting a stranger." Tango is not an easy subject to write about. Beatriz Dujovne is one of (in my opinion) just a handful of authors who have done so brilliantly. She writes from the perspective of being an Argentine-born scholar who has spent much of her life in the United States. This gives her, I think, both the insider's and outsider's perspectives that together are so necessary to appreciate the global phenomenon that tango has become. She accomplishes what I think is a true tour-de-force with this book: it is at once a meticulously researched example of academic integrity, and at the same time she conveys the unmistakeable sensibility of a deeply felt personal memoir, and her own connection to the dance is

quite evident, while never taking center stage. If you love tango, read this book.

In Strangers' Arms offered more than I had anticipated. While I imagined it would focus solely on the dance (I perhaps should have read the description more closely!) the book considers tango using a much more multi-faceted approach. The dance is in there, and there are some interesting comments from dancers about what is going on when people dance tango which is not evident to those only observing. But there is also great material about the history, culture, geography and poetry of tango, all presented in a very personal way through the author's own experiences. This approach fits the subject matter perfectly - for someone happily lost in tango, it was a little like hearing someone you don't know describe their close relationship with a friend: you can both enjoy hearing about your friend and, through another's stories and experiences, come to understand them a little more.

I approached this book with the skepticism that it was just another Western oriented milonguera explaining their version of tango to the world. Instead, I found an insightful and informative account of the significance of tango. Of special interest were the neighborhood origins of so many of the poets, singers and musicians, and in particular a first class in-depth 'literary criticism' of a strong through line in the lyrics. . Dujovne is well prepared to place them in their socio-economic and cultural contexts thorough research, her psychological understanding and a personal passion for their meaning. There is also a good short history of the beginnings of tango which clears away a few of the myths.

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