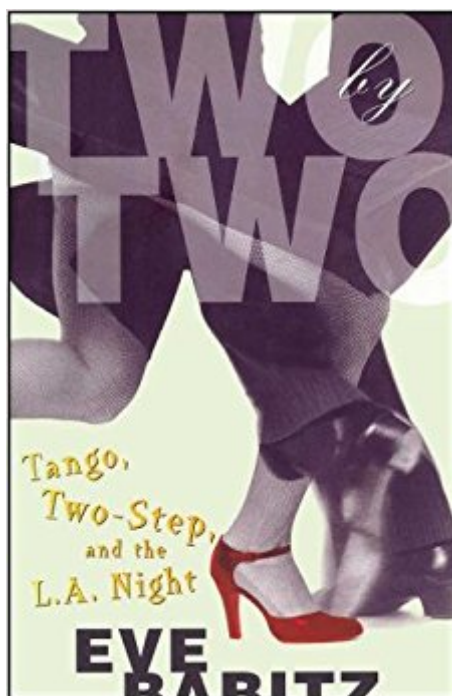


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# Two By Two: Tango, Two-Step, And The L.A. Night



## Synopsis

With the popularity of swing and social dancing at an all-time high, the author provides a provocative look at the hottest trend to sweep the nation. 10 line drawings.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Two by Two is a whirlwind tour of the Los Angeles dancing scene by Eve Babitz, who has made a career of delineating the social comedies of L.A. Here, in a series of loosely connected chapters, she talks with instructors of various forms of social dance--including tango, salsa, country two-step, and both East and West Coast swing--about why dancing has become so popular again, even with all the difficulties of learning the steps. The story does not so much progress in a linear direction as it orbits around a shifting core, propelled by the occasionally sparkling dialogue. Apart from a sharply unexpected dose of reality in the book's epilogue, Two by Two occupies a pleasantly hazy daydream that, while it may or may not inspire you to hit the dance floor, reveals the charms that Babitz and her friends have found there. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In each chapter of this erratic look at the Los Angeles dance scene, Babitz (Black Swans) focuses on a different style of dance, with most of the text consisting of interviews with dance teachers. Predictably, the atmosphere of each dance space varies greatly. Paul McClure teaches two-step and insists that his studio, In Cahoots, is "just like the Cheers bar, everybody knows your name

The book is about the dance scene in Los Angeles in the 90s. Babitz took dance lessons, went dancing, interviewed dancers and instructors, and made friends among them. There is commentary interspersed with dialog. The book reads easily and in the Epilogue, written some time after the main text because she was seriously burned and spent time recovering, contains a brief update on the dance scene (which rapidly changes, with clubs coming and going, fads coming and going, dancers coming and going, including some dying). The chapters are based on specific dances: fox-trot, two-step, tango, cajun and fais-dodo, ballroom, salsa, and both east coast and west coast swing. At first blush the book seems a break from her previous works. They were fiction (although pretty autobiographical) and based primarily in the 60s, with some tales from her parents generation back into the 30s, when Hollywood was Hollywood. There was a grace and an ambiance which she presents. And there were certain people who were graced and who helped make that ambiance. In many ways that period passed in the 70s, when she wrote to fiction pieces. There is a nostalgia about them. TWO BY TWO also harkens back to that time, to Fred and Ginger, to when there still were social graces, where flirting was an art form. The dance scene has elements of this and TWO BY TWO traces this out, but in a New Journalism fashion. And the book is a paen to dancing, because it is fun and good for you. I recommend this book

I became interested in Eve Babitz after reading the March 2014 Vanity Fair article about her youth. She sounded fascinating and I vaguely remember her as writing articles for the L.A. Times magazine or similar publications in the 80s. This was one of the only two books by her I could find. It was highly disappointing. Reads as if she transcribed her phone conversations with a friend. The overall effect is like listening to your aunt talk to a friend of hers about a bunch of their other friends doing something that you have no interest in. I can't imagine this being of interest to anyone who does not take dance lessons. The blurb tried to promote it as having "celebrity gossip," but aside from one line about Madonna taking tango lessons from Joe Shmoe or whatever, I didn't see any. Gave up after skimming 1/4 of the book. Big yawn!

I have purchased this book and thoroughly enjoyed it. I and my friend's have also been able to put it to good use. However, I saw this woman on Book TV C-SPAN2 recently and she is a babbling fool. I say keep writing and less talking.

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