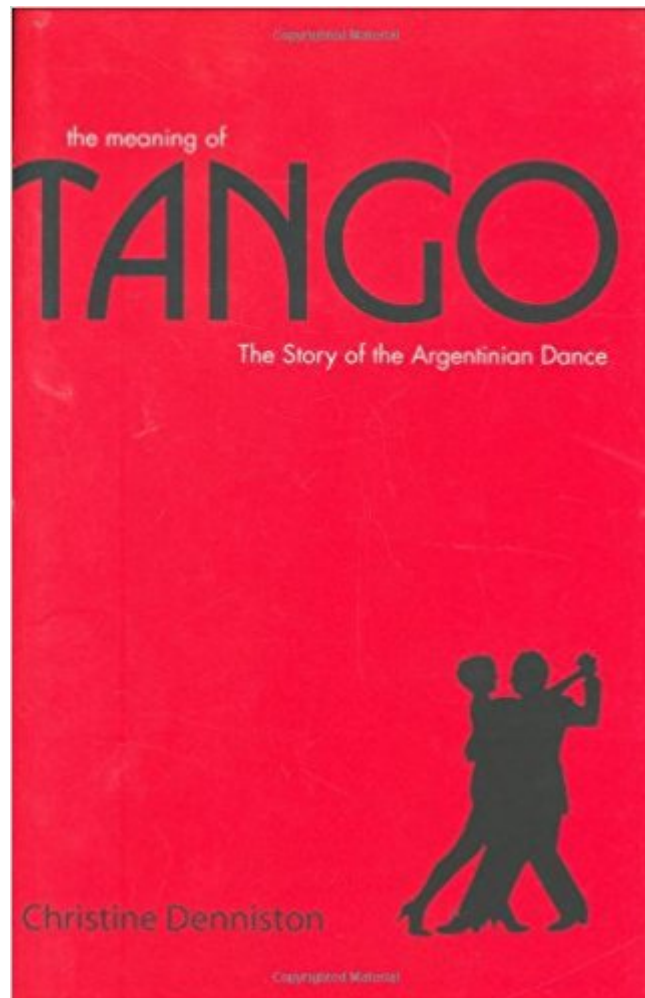




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# The Meaning Of Tango: The Story Of The Argentinian Dance



## Synopsis

From the backstreets of Buenos Aires to Parisian high society, this is the riveting story of the dance that captivated the world—a tale of politics and passion, immigration, and romance. *The Meaning of Tango* traces the development of the dance, from its birth in poverty-stricken Buenos Aires, through the craze of the early 20th century, right up to its recent revival today thanks to Broadway shows such as *Tango Argentino*. It also explains the techniques behind the dance and shows why mastering the tango is more like learning a language than a routine. For beginners or experts, dancers or armchair fans, this wonderful book is the perfect partner for enjoying the world's favorite dance.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Britain's leading authority on the Tango."—BBC Radio 2

Christine Denniston is a former theater director who has been teaching the tango for more than 20 years and was the first non-Argentinian to teach the dance in Buenos Aires.

It is rare for me to find a book on any dance that really excites and interests me. This was one of those rare books. Denniston explores the history of the tango without resorting to a list of dates and figures. Instead she focuses on the grand themes of the dance's unique history and how that shaped the way the dance developed and is viewed by its devotees. She also covers the

fundamental techniques of the dance without becoming dry and boring. Instead she shows how the meaning and purpose of the dance influence the technique. Overall, this is a very enjoyable book on the tango. Not an academic book, but more a devotional book with very accessible writing on the history, culture, meaning, and technique of Argentine tango. If I have any criticism of the book, it is that the author could have offered some direct quotes or experiences from the dancers she consulted for the book. She places much emphasis on the Golden Age of the tango, how the dance developed, and the meaning those dancers derived from the dance. I enjoyed the focus she placed on these Golden Age dancers throughout the book; however, I felt she could have explored it even further and made it come alive even more if she had offered some direct quotes and experiences from the dancers she talked to. Despite this, the book is an excellent overview of the history, culture, meaning, and technique of the dance, and I greatly enjoyed it!

I just received and started reading *THE MEANING OF TANGO* by Christine Denniston and got as far as page 53 at which point I loved the book for its cultural details (I would never have guessed that it was not unusual for women of this period to know how to lead: there were no classes for women and, if they did not learn from fathers, brothers, etc, they learned from mothers, sisters, etc. and some women were excellent leads.) but, it turns out, I was sent a defective 2007 edition which is missing the correct text for 6 pages which have, instead, been printed with duplicates of other pages that are in their correct sequence. I did not immediately realize that this was not the edition I ordered. The 2008 edition is the only edition actually on the .com website but, perhaps, .com is treating them as interchangeable. In any case, .com has agreed to send a replacement. I am not sure what to say about the different editions. When I get further into the book, I will add more detail to this review.

Bought this for my wife when we first started taking tango lessons. Several years later, it's been passed around through nearly the entire club and quite a few other dancers have picked up copies of their own. Worth your time if you're interested in the history of tango.

I dance Tango and the history portion of the book is incredibly insightful. The lessons in the back help reenforce and explain moves that I learned in class. A must read for anyone into dance and a fascinating story of the golden age of Argentine Tango culture.

Being a Tango aficionado, I consider this book to be priceless. It's not a one-time read though; it's a

Reference Book which I thoroughly studied and have underlines almost every other sentence throughout. It covers the History of Tango, the various styles of dancing and of music, and the technical details of the most useful "steps". However, it's definitely NOT about steps because Tango is all about Technique, not about steps; the basic steps are only used as a vehicle for conveying the many technical issues that comprise this magical dance. The author has done a fabulous research work that I haven't seen anywhere else. She explains the sources and reasons for the development of the dance and substantiates the technical skills and nuances that are very difficult to describe in words. Thus, she uses photos, diagrams and tables to dissect every position, movement, and pose. If I had to summarize the contents of the book in a single sentence/instruction, it would be: "Keep your hearts connected throughout the dance". I do have one reservation, though. In the Music section of the book, the author has "skipped" the most-important---at least, to me---music and innovation of Astor Piazzolla; maybe she is contemplating writing a separate book about Piazzolla and his music, and I do think that this missing material would require a whole book all by itself. I AM fully aware of it that Piazzolla did not intend for his music to be danceable. Still, I consider about 10% of his ~3,000 compositions to be danceable---mostly by advanced Tangueros. I highly recommend studying this book to anyone---at any level---who aspires to become a Tango dancer. Moreover, the more advanced you already are, the more you would learn and benefit from studying this book. Thank you, Christine, for your fabulous book!

The best part of this book is Part 1 in which the author covers the history of Argentine tango, its step child ballroom tango and the early preparation of dancers in the Golden Age. Inexperienced leaders danced in practicas for years before an experienced leader as a kind of sponsor would invite them to a milonga. The leader's responsibility was to be so well prepared that the follower did no wrong on the dance floor. She describes the culture of courtesy to the follower in the tanda and at the milonga and the codes. This is really the heart of the book. I also liked her review of the orchestras and their musical styles which comes in the latter part of the book. In between those two sections, the book is devoted to dance technique. As a tango dancer since 1997, I do not believe tango technique can be learned from a book-the subtleties and the connection are far and away too important. If you dance Argentine tango, I recommend it for your bookshelf. Wonderfully, tango is now a UNESCO World Heritage dance. If you have read this review and do not dance tango...introduce yourself to the reality of a dance like no other.

this book is excellent. took forever to arrive but its a great book. goes through so many aspects of

tango. I am reading it for the 2nd time!

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