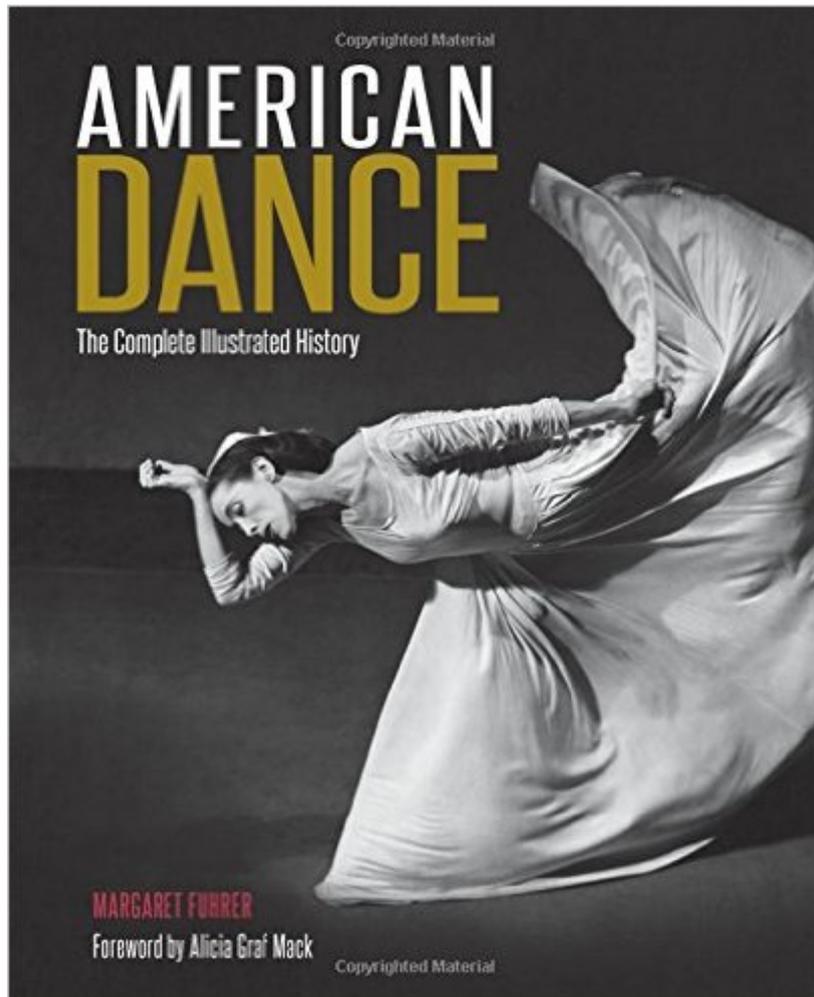


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# American Dance: The Complete Illustrated History



## Synopsis

The most comprehensive, beautiful book ever to be published on dance in America. "We look at the dance to impart the sensation of living in an affirmation of life, to energize the spectator into keener awareness of the vigor, the mystery, the humor, the variety, and the wonder of life. This is the function of the American dance." Groundbreaking choreographer Martha Graham deeply understood the power and complexity of dance--particularly as it evolved in her home country. American Dance, by critic and journalist Margaret Fuhrer, traces that richly complex evolution. From Native American dance rituals to dance in the digital age, American Dance explores centuries of innovation, individual genius and collaborative exploration. Some of its stories - such as Fred Astaire dancing on the ceiling or Alvin Ailey founding the trailblazing company that bears his name - will be familiar to anyone who loves dance. The complex origins of tap, for instance, or the Puritan outrage against "profane and promiscuous dancing" during the early years of the United States, are as full of mystery and humor as Graham describes. These various developments have never before been presented in a single book, making American Dance the most comprehensive work on the subject to date. Breakdancing, musical-theater dance, disco, ballet, jazz, ballroom, modern, hula, the Charleston, the Texas two-step, swing--these are just some of the forms celebrated in this riveting volume. Hundreds of photographs accompany the text, making American Dance as visually captivating as the works it depicts.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I'm not a fan of dancing myself, but I loved this book. I portrays dancing styles as a way of

studying the history of the USA, from the Colonial era to present. If you look at all the different styles, you'll see that they reflect the norms and mores of the time, along with class distinctions and the nation's economy. The book starts with Native American dancing, which probably resembles the Jewish ones than European. The men and women danced separately, and it was usually ceremonial or religious in nature. The idea of men and women dancing together is something that originated in Europe, and came to the continent with European settlers. However the European dances would become a source of trouble, though humorous at the same time. When the Louisiana Purchase was made in 1804, it brought French settlers under Anglo-American control, and the dances became a source of conflict. The French wanted the Quadrille, and the English-speakers wanted English country dances. The communities had to pass ordinances regarding dancing in public places, including one that limited English dances to 12 couples. They didn't want to start a fight with the French by crowding the dance floor! The book progresses with constant-changing styles that became common after the Civil War. New York City was home to the country's best-known dancing school, owned by Edward Ferrero, who created the styles on his own. You could say he set the standards regarding dances, but he also was responsible for thousands of deaths. During the Civil War, Ferrero was put in charge of the New York troops, on the basis of his choreographing parade drills. He was drunk during the battle of Petersburg, and sent his men running into a crater, where they found themselves trapped and massacred by the Confederates.

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