



MAD HOT BALLROOM

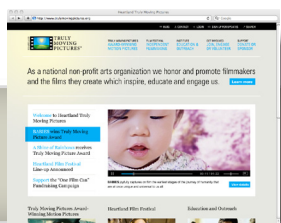


Synopsis

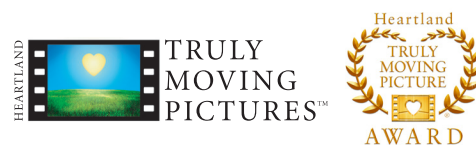
Ballroom dancing goes from lame to cool for a group of New York City students in this insightful documentary, which follows a group of 11-year-olds as they learn to dance old-school styles including the merengue, rumba, tango, foxtrot and swing. Candid interviews capture the kids' initial reluctance at learning ballroom dance and their transformation into serious competitors determined to win a citywide competition.

Discussion Questions

- Ballroom dancing wasn't considered "cool" for a long time. Emmitt Smith, a famous football player, won the first season of *Dancing With the Stars*. Do you think a program like this, and its involvement of high-profile celebrities, have changed views on ballroom dancing?
- The teachers who were interviewed in the film mentioned how they had seen positive things in the students since implementing the ballroom dance program. How do you think ballroom dancing helps these students? Why do you think it helps them?
- Which was your favorite dance that the students were taught. What did you like about that particular dance?
- The dance program was fairly competitive. What do you feel about this level of competition? Do you think it's good for students or do you think it hurts their self-esteem? Why?
- In the quarterfinals of the competition, two of the schools the film followed were knocked out of competition. How did they react to their loss? Would you have felt or reacted similarly?
- The students in this movie live in New York City. How does their life compare to your own? Is their school similar? What do you notice that is similar or different about their lives?



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Activities

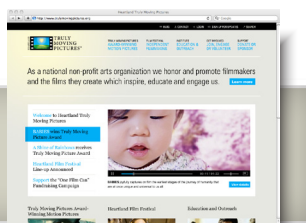
- Look into dance lessons in your community. Often Parks Departments will have classes that are less expensive than private companies. If you don't want to pay for lessons, check out YouTube for a dance tutorial online, and practice in the privacy of your own home!
- Attend a performance of a style of dance that you are not familiar with. Beyond ballroom dancing you can watch ballet, tap and modern.
- Participate in a community dance event, such as Contra dancing or Square dancing.
- Educate yourself on other forms of art that derive inspiration from or are used in dancing. Discover the paintings of Degas. Check out a compilation of swing music from the library.

Get Involved

- Help to plan a dance-a-thon to raise money for a charity you support.
- In the film the teachers see positive changes in many of the students, partly in response to the mentorship of the instructors. Mentor or tutor students in the community where you live. There is always something you can teach someone else.
- Plan a fundraiser to make money for students who want to compete in dance or sports who cannot afford the equipment or supplies.



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