

ANTON NOVAK

**WHAT I STILL
WANT TO SAY!**

A NEW TWIST TO BALLROOM
(COMPETITIVE) DANCING

Verlag Buchschmiede

BALLROOM DANCING PRESENTED FOR ONCE WITHOUT STEP INSTRUCTIONS AND FIGURES.

There are excellent books on dance technique: I wish not to compete with these although I could.

For a change, what follows are intriguing insights, explanations and principles drawn from 40 years of experience in dancing, practice sessions, coaching as well as in research stemming from my Technical University of Vienna background: all of which have never been presented in this innovative way before. Therefore, this book.



ANTON NOVAK

I have always wanted to incorporate my personal insights into ballroom dancing, applying my scientific background in mechanical engineering. I finally found time to accomplish this formidable task in the Corona year. Yet, there's no reason to be grateful to the virus.



PETER PFLUGER

is an ingenious partner in analysis and implementation and the most dedicated instructor we ever had. As for motivating and coaching, he remains unsurpassed! I would like to thank him for his expert advice and meticulous working through of the texts and concepts.



VASILY KIRIN & EKATERINA PROZOROVA

have graciously agreed on the use of their exquisite dance photos, which serve as a basis for the explanations provided.



WOLFGANG KALNY

compiled photos from Vasily and Ekaterina's sublime dancing moves and placed them at our disposal.



SUSANNA NOVAK

shared and carried along all these findings in ballroom dancing for more than four decades and has edited content and proofread texts and been a true enrichment and perfect complement to me.

IMPRESSUM

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WHAT I STILL WANT TO SAY!

Dance sport explanations and several terms commonly used in this genre possess a precise and accurate interpretation in technical mechanics.

Who says that you can not use these terms in dance sport and thus clear the way to applicable guidelines?

To prevent dryness and pseudo-scientific reading, the ingredients of a long and joyful career in competitive dancing will be sprinkled in. It can't help everyone but it certainly can't hurt.

As my dancing career was mainly dedicated to standard dances, I can only guarantee that my most salient insights will predominantly be found in this category. I would be pleased if an expert could show me a "Latin version" of this book.

Anton Novak

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Dance book photos are typically taken in a studio to clearly show what has been described in detail. We have done it differently on purpose: all photos you see here come straight from a competition event (ONE only). The clarity of some of these may come into question but it should be shown visibly that everything in this book was (and can be) applied in a competition!

JUST CALL US VASILY AND KATI

Competitive dancing results p. 64/65

PREFACE

A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF MORE THAN 40 YEARS OF COMPETITIVE DANCING

With this sentence, “What I still want to say”, a discussion is generally rounded off (what is meant: there is ONE more sentence, one more thing to be added).

The best dance partner of my career has formulated it differently, namely: “I still have one last sentence....” and this was usually the start of a ruined evening. We succeeded in abusing, altering or simply ignoring the quite good and initially successful training intention: “Everyone says just one sentence” and one sentence quite often ended in being a paragraph.

As I obviously couldn't say ALL my “ONE” sentences (or had just said it but hadn't been heard or wasn't understood), I have decided to write them down. What is there that's better to do in a Corona time? Fear and distance replace physical training so as to at least “exercise” the competition dancing virtually or reflect in peace and quiet on all the experiences, adventures and conclusions in a long dance sport career. This serves as a way to prevent Alzheimer as well!

Maybe I have to suffer from the long-term effects of my engineering studies (in particular, my task/job as an Assistant Professor at the Vienna University of Technology) with my long-term career in competitive dancing. Several expressions, which an impartial amateur might apply in colloquial way, acquire a precise meaning and interpretation in mechanics.

The students grew accustomed to it fast, in the interest of their degree pursuit or their examination on mechanics - when I used these words in dance sport, my listeners were disinterested or bewildered. Moreover, with my best dance partner of my career, I often observed this reaction and it was confirmed with the sentence: “One sentence I still have to say (meaning: don't know what you're talking about but I see it this way!)”.

Who told us what and when in form of tips, pointers or other useful information in dance sport (to recall them at the tournament) we haven't made a note of. However, for all these helpful and successful lessons taught by instructors, my dance partner Susanna and I want to extend our thanks in particular to:

- Gerti and Franz Stollhof
- Angelo Volpe
- Monica Needham
- Keith Burton
- Tony and Amanda Dokman
- Wolfgang Steffel
- Manfred and Anastasia Stiglitz
- Peter Pfluger
- Vasily Kirin and Ekaterina Prozorova
- and the many national and international instructors involved in short-term work with us.



SOLES OF FEET

LET THE BODY DO THE RIGHT THING!

PROGRAM IN THE SOLES OF YOUR FEET
FAREWELL TO TENDON AND JOINT INJURIES!

It looks easy when we illustrate the proper position of the soles of shoes of both partners.

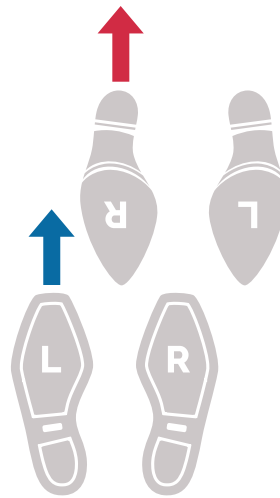
Each shoe has its own “track” and it should stay there if it doesn't want to provoke familiar disagreements with one of the adverse shoes.

That we strain these shoe soles while alternating is clear to us, without thinking a second. That's actually a pity, as herein lies a neglected opportunity. We care about all other body parts, even the feet with their directions, but who thinks about the soles of the feet?

Each trainer has his/her own method. For a related approach, I refer to Wolfgang Steffel, who, for instance, has attempted to present us with the presentation of word creations uncommon in colloquial usage. We then had to associate these special words with the movement experience and movement instructions from his lessons. This way, the special words are assigned to a “SINGLE” meaning and not to those many meanings language usage otherwise assigns and are also used in dance sport.

Imagine what we picture when it comes to the word “shoulder lead” (e.g.)?

He gave us the sentence: program the soles of your feet!



How right he is indeed – nothing else keeps us more firmly attached to the universe at the moment of a step (or shortly before one) than our soles of the feet.

When they don't know what we want, they can't execute either one and just get "carried along" through a movement originated by the upper body. When things get bad, it can end up in a tendon or muscle injury. You should not underestimate your own body weight and your own will power either.

You can try it out yourself and you will realize that many movements are much easier and can be carried out more consistently when programming of the desired motion into the soles of your feet.

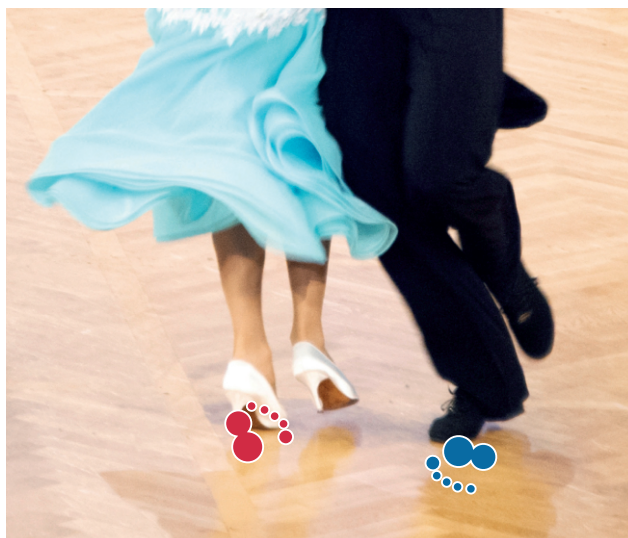
Automatically, these muscles tense, these tendons work, the focus of gravity shifts in accordance with the "programming"! It means that we don't need to worry and the body knows itself, what is necessary.

As the joints higher up the body (the ankle, the knee and sometimes the hip as well) have limits in their direction of movement; the conscious programming of the sole of the feet leads to the result (most of the time) that these joints get set in motion correctly. A twisted knee or a sprained ankle will occur less frequently, as the body programs its movement apparatus by starting with the only body area which connects us to the universe (the soles of the feet) and automatically through the contact zone with the partner according to the movement target that was "placed" in the soles of the feet.

Nearly automatically, the foot with its sole will not hit the floor in a help-seeking manner but carries out the minimal necessary adjustments in direction, touchdown point, pivot and flexibility before there is the next "program run".

Don't worry, there is no need to learn a programming language. It is enough to remember that the soles of the feet know what you want from them!

Per se, the sole of the foot is no even surface and has inherited its heels and balls of the foot from



the history of mankind, imparting a specific sense for the floor. This could be useful for the hunting of smaller and the escape of bigger creatures.

Dancing, however, is done with shoes, even if they are of maximum flexibility and the soles of the shoes finely roughened so that the coefficient of friction towards the floor is optimized.

When the balls of the foot (and the heel) lose part of their elastic possibilities through soles of the shoes, it is still possible to exert a suitable load distribution on the floor within the shoe with pressure, support or mobility, something a dancer should consciously take advantage of.

When you place your foot on the ground, you have to consider that the foot and the shoe are not immovable; however, the touchdown may well be done with the balls of the foot and toes, broadly supported, which opens new balancing dimensions.

A simple experiment: you dance the usual (own) routine (so that one does not have to think too much about the routine) and feel how many toes, respectively, balls of the feet come into play with every step (or are used in particular or not at all!).

Likewise, the shoe sole can be bent and while the ball of the foot (at forward-step) is no longer in contact with the ground, the toes are still firmly anchored to the ground. This is often not used! The step only ends when the last contact and the last pressure from the toes (the big toe) leave the floor.

This can also be experienced with a little experiment: when walking normally you can try to complete each step with a pushing off of the toes from the ground. You will be amazed to find out that the normal step becomes up to 10 cm longer.

SHORT GUIDE

WHAT I STILL WANT TO SAY!

The sole of the foot should be regarded as the primary tool that makes dancing possible.

When you treat tools with care, they last longer and work better. Therefore, you should treat the soles of the feet with kindness and attention and not thoughtlessly hit the floor with them.

Joints in our body – feet as well – have principal directions of movement, in which they work best and hardly break (at least in dance sport). We should use them sensitively because this is the way they are built. Almost automatically, you will succeed when the sole of the foot is programmed for the movement.

FRICITION

STATIC AND DYNAMIC FRICTION

FREEING THE BODY ONCE DIFFERENTLY VERTICAL FORCE IS NO REVOLUTIONARY THING CENTRE OF GRAVITY OF THE BROOM

“Slippery out there today?” was one of my key questions in my early dance sport life and it referred to the contact zone between the soles of my shoes and the provided dance floor.

Who knew in the past (and still today) that there is dynamic and static friction?

Who knows that dynamic friction is smaller than the static friction (between the same involved surfaces)?

Is anybody aware of the fact that with the two common surfaces (rough leather sole, wooden parquet) the dimension/size of friction (static as well as dynamic friction) depend on the force and its direction with which the two surfaces press against each other? Usually the dance sport shoe presses with the inclinations (support, brake, push off) of the underlying body weight on the motionlessly underneath resting, indifferent floor.

This kind of encounter is called – in technology – a frictional connection, because the connection depends on the applied force (and its direction) and the coefficient of friction for the contact surfaces at the “point of contact”.

The opposite would be a form connection, where a shape simply prevents the two contact points from moving (away from each other). This connection there is between the dancer's foot and the shoe. The foot sits firmly in its mold and should not be able to come out of the shoe even

Friction is a force resisting relative motion and may occur at the interface between the bodies, but may also occur within the bodies. The term belongs to the field of tribology. (Wikipedia)

with great force. The fact that this does not quite work with some women's shoes is known to us from experience! The solution to this in the past was called: Scotch-tape!

Science has investigated the relationship between the vertical force and the maximum friction force that can be generated in the case of static friction or the actually occurring frictional force in the case of dynamic friction. Fortunately, this is a proportional! Paradoxically, however, the maximum frictional force when sticking/during adhesion is higher than during gliding. A dancer is aware of this when the foot breaks away (“slips”), although it should be required for a forceful move off to the next step. Therefore, it would be good to remain in the adhesive range of the force on the shoe (foot) – with gliding/sliding everything becomes more difficult and more complicated!

Let's first deal with the area of friction, which a dancer mainly wants to maintain at all times.

Both partners are “frictionally” connected to the floor and this is to be maintained. We know how unpleasant it is when one of the dance partners comes out of the hold and “slips”! If this even happens to both of them, let's hope that both of