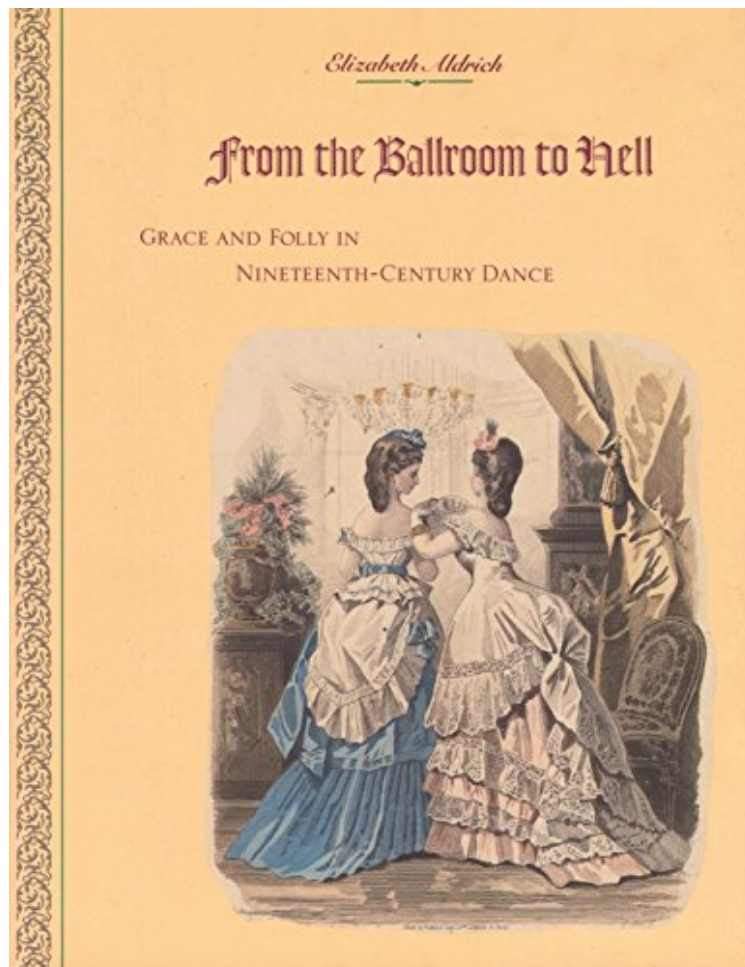


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From the Ballroom to Hell: Grace and Folly in Nineteenth-Century Dance

Elizabeth Aldrich

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Elizabeth Aldrich : From the Ballroom to Hell: Grace and Folly in Nineteenth-Century Dance before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised From the Ballroom to Hell: Grace and Folly in Nineteenth-Century Dance:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Jane VolchanskyA fun to read book but glad I didn't live in that period of history!
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Elizabeth WFast shipment, interesting read
21 of 22 people found the following review helpful. A Superb ettiquitte manualBy author of The Devil's BonfireThis book does indeed give the reeder a close look at the society and ettiquitte of this period. Since I was researching the Regency when I purchased it I was a little disapointed to find that it's focus is primarily the latter part of the nineteenth century (1830-1890), and is based primarily on American publications of ettiquitte manuals. I was delighted to discover a wealth of information about everything from dance steps to party preperation to elaborate

flirting rituals that can be carried out with parasols and gloves. It certainly says everything Emily Post might have at that time as well as providing a vivid picture of society in a bygone era. A must have for anyone enamored of the Victorian era and useful still though slightly less relevant for Regency fanatics.

During the 1800s, dance and etiquette manuals provided ordinary men and women with the keys to becoming gentlemen and ladies--and thus advancing in society. Why dance? To the insecure and status-oriented upper middle class, the ballroom embodied the perfect setting in which to demonstrate one's fitness for membership in genteel society. *From the Ballroom to Hell* collects over 100 little-known excerpts from dance, etiquette, beauty, and fashion manuals from the nineteenth century. Included are instructions for performing various dances, as well as musical scores, costume patterns, and the proper way to hold one's posture, fork, gloves, and fan. While of particular interest to dancers, dance historians, and choreographers, anyone fascinated by the ways and mores of the period will find *From the Ballroom to Hell* an endearing and informative glimpse of America's past.

From *Publishers Weekly* "Dancing and etiquette are inseparable," wrote one 19th-century dancing master quoted in this scholarly glimpse into ballrooms past. Newly moneyed Americans of that era craved guidance on how to comport themselves, and publishers responded with scores of manuals on etiquette, fashion and dance instruction. As dance historian Aldrich demonstrates through more than 100 excerpts from these guides, balls and dance offer a key to understanding the social aspirations of the period. These volumes gave unflinching advice, from injunctions against nose-picking to the proper way to lead a partner through the quadrilles. In a brief historical essay, Aldrich dissolves the veneer of naivete from these admonitions, placing them in the context of a society in which woman's role had become centered on domestic affairs and in which the ballroom was the showcase for one's social accomplishments. But while Aldrich supplies quotations at length, her attenuated analysis of these mores and of the dances themselves--from the initially notorious waltz to the "German," whose figures offered a strange representation of relations between the sexes--fails to illuminate their underlying ethos. Illustrated. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. From the Back Cover 'From The Ballroom To Hell' collects over one hundred little-known excerpts from dance, etiquette, beauty, and fashion manuals from roughly 1800-1890. It will be of great interest to dancers and dance historians, choreographers, and dramatists interested in accurately reproducing nineteenth-century dance scenes and the surrounding social mechanisms. About the Author Elizabeth Aldrich is director of the International Early Dance Institute and is president of the Society of Dance History Scholars. Co-founder of the Historical Dance Foundation, she is a consultant to the Smithsonian Institute and has choreographed for the American Ballroom Theatre, the New York Baroque dance Company, and the Court Dance Company of New York. Ms. Aldrich has provided reconstructions and choreography for several major feature films, including *Mr. and Mrs. Bridge* starring Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward. Mina Mulvey, who wrote the forward to this volume is Executive Editor of *Good Housekeeping*.