

WORLD YOUTH ALLIANCE FILM LIST

Mad Hot Ballroom

Directed by Marilyn Argelo (2005)

When New York City public school kids embark on a new kind of study, ballroom dance lessons, they do not just learn how to foxtrot and rhumba. They discover new strengths about their characters along the way. This documentary reveals a true-life glimpse into an urban education system, one of the world's most diverse cities, and the competitive world of dance. Filled with humor as well as authentic perspectives of inner city life, "Mad Hot Ballroom" addresses the universal dance of coming of age, growing up, and learning to hold oneself with poise on the constantly moving stage of life.

Guide questions for discussion groups

- What was it about learning to dance that made the children interested in taking part in these classes?
- Great dancing requires great discipline.
 - Examine how the teachers and the team members encouraged everyone's responsibility and discipline in learning this new skill.
 - How did the children react to these demands and in what ways did it change their understanding of commitment?
- How valuable is this understanding of commitment to the development of a young person's future growth, vision of a career and commitment to relationships?
- Does the film help us look beyond the competitive side of the event? Are we more concerned with the children's commitment to learning something culturally enriching or are we just concerned with them winning the competition?
- The children were determined to give the competition the best at all times. How does the determination of the children encourage us to change by learning new experiences in our own lives?