



## Mad Hot Ballroom

US 2005, 110 min

Saturday, April 16 « 2:45 « Prince Music Theater

Tickets at  
Venue

Sunday, April 17 « 7:30 « Ritz East Theater 1

Tickets at  
Venue

Festival Favorites:

Tickets at  
Venue

Tuesday, April 19 « 7:15 « International House

### The Documentary Tradition

**Director:** Marilyn Agrelo

**Screenwriter(s):** Amy Sewell

**Producer(s):** Marilyn Agrelo, Amy Sewell

**Cinematographer:** Claudia Raschke

**Editor(s):** Sabine Krayenbühl

**Mad Hot Ballroom** is Marilyn Agrelo's debut.

This warm-hearted, crowd-pleasing documentary follows New York City fifth and sixth graders as they prepare to compete in the citywide ballroom dancing championships.

They come from the Washington Heights barrio, the Jewish and Italian neighborhoods of Bensonhurst, upscale Tribeca, and the Queens district of Forest Hills. They are good students and underachievers, nerds and bullies, graceful and charmingly awkward. For many of them, this is the first opportunity they have to politely interact with the opposite sex. With the help of their very dedicated and enthusiastic teachers, these fifth and sixth graders learn to swing, fox trot and tango with poise and confidence across the dance floor. All ethnic groups are represented. Even the Muslim kids, who are forbidden to dance, relish their DJ assignment and are not opposed to critiquing their classmates' skills. Many of these kids come from troubled homes, and the structure and discipline provided by these classes often help them turn their lives around at a time when they still have a chance. The film is filled with adorable conversations between the children as they dish about everything from dance costumes to the opposite sex, and as they try to cope with the euphoric highs and crushing lows inherent in competition. This wonderful film was a favorite at this year's Slamdance festival, and is sure to be appreciated by toe-tappin' romantics around the world. -- Jennifer Steinberg