



# So You Think You Can Dance?

Actors Samantha Tan and Alaric Tay attend dance bootcamp to learn two exotic dances

## Dirty dancing

Samantha is nervous. And she has the giggles. "I've never heard of bachata, and I don't know if I'll be able to keep up with the dance steps," titters the waif-like Building and Estate Management undergraduate, who acted in Eric Khoo's film *Be With Me*.

"Don't worry, it's really simple and fun, and exciting!" Anasri Onn, principal instructor at Groove Dance Studio, assures her, putting bachata music on the sound system for her to get a feel of the genre.

Bachata, bluesy-singing accompanied by a guitar base and generally punctuated on the bongo and maracas, has its roots in the underbelly of the Dominican Republic. Emerging in the 1960s with the lower classes in the shantytowns, bachata's common themes of prostitution, drinking and violence made it a socially unacceptable until recently—it has evolved and is quickly gaining popularity along with other Latin American music and dances like the

salsa, merengue and bolero.

The bachata's dance moves concentrate on hip, shoulder and ribcage movements, Anasri says, demonstrating some jaunty hip-graying and footwork, making it look sensual and so, so simple. "Basically, it's a dance with a lot of freedom in movement and direction, and you move your legs, waist and shoulders one at a time or together, or in different combinations," he says.

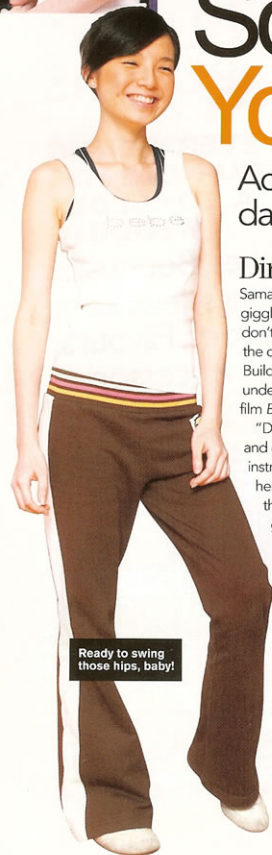
Samantha fumbles on her first few tries, laughing nervously when she misses a step here, or a turn there.

But Anasri helps her relax and patiently guides her along. "Step side, together, side. Shift side, side, side. Tap!" She soon has her moves down pat, and it's time for a partnered routine, as Anasri clasps her hands and leads her in an intimate spiel of steps and swirls. "Very sexy!" was

Samantha's conclusion. "The whole dance, especially the naughty hip movements, makes it very fun and sensual. It's not that tough remembering the steps, as it's mostly a freestyle kind of dance. It's very stress-relieving, and doing the bachata makes me laugh and relax a lot!"

Anasri gives her the thumbs up. "She learned the steps in just 45 minutes, where most people take three hours. Sam's a sweetie and she follows the rhythm and beat really well, and is easy to lead."

Groove Pte Ltd is at 55 Cantonment Road. Tel: 6223 4813, Website: [www.groove.com.sg](http://www.groove.com.sg)



Ready to swing those hips, baby!