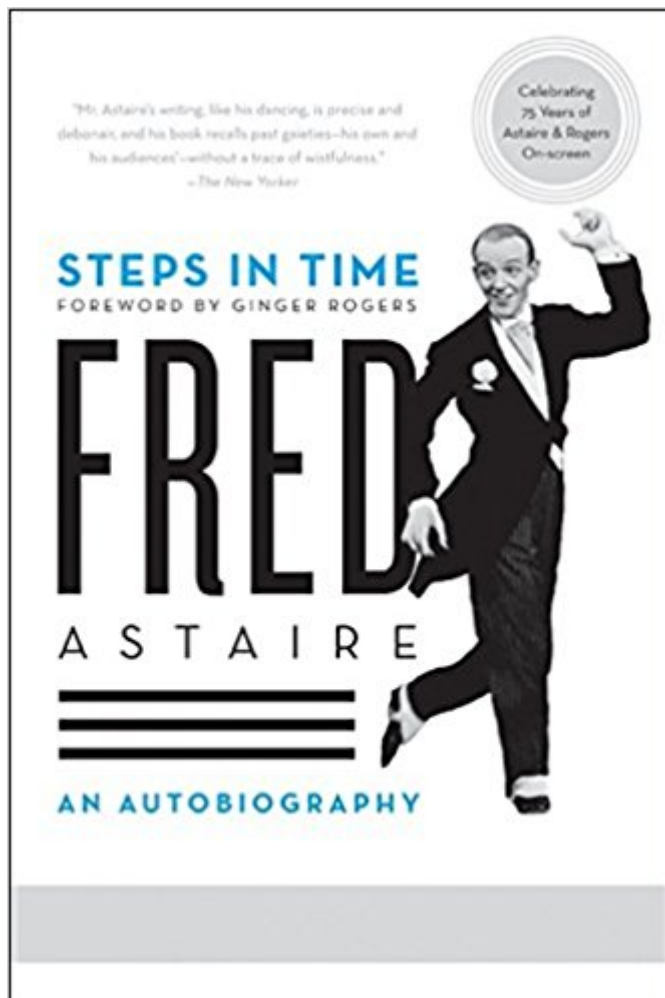


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Steps In Time: An Autobiography



Synopsis

One of the foremost entertainers of the twentieth century—singer, actor, choreographer, and, of course, the most dazzling "hooper" in the history of motion pictures—Fred Astaire was the epitome of charm, grace, and suave sophistication, with a style all his own and a complete disregard for the laws of gravity. *Steps in Time* is Astaire's story in his own words, a memoir as beguiling, exuberant, and enthralling as the great artist himself, the man ballet legends George Balanchine and Rudolf Nureyev cited as, hands down, the century's greatest dancer. From his debut in vaudeville at age six through his remarkable career as the star of many of the most popular Hollywood musicals ever captured on celluloid, *Steps in Time* celebrates the golden age of entertainment and its royalty, as seen through the eyes of the era's affable and adored prince. Illustrated with more than forty rare photographs from the author's personal collection, here is Astaire in all his debonair glory—his life, his times, his movies, and, above all, his magical screen appearances and enduring friendship with the most beloved of all his dancing partners, Ginger Rogers.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Mr. Astaire's writing, like his dancing, is precise and debonair... (The New Yorker)
"...brimming over with fresh and amusing anecdotes... (New York Times)
"...as easy and as effervescent as his own personable way of dancing. (New York Herald Tribune)

I'm not a super fan of autobiographies. Most seem to me to be a list of "I did this and then I did this" rather than a story of someone's life. I kind of thought that Fred Astaire would have a more entertaining and warm way with telling his story. And he does. Reading this book, "Steps in Time", is like sitting with a friend and recalling all the interesting happenings in his life. Very real and unpretentious, but also a wonderful picture of the life of this very talented man. I've always been a Fred Astaire fan so for me this book was pure enjoyment from beginning to end.

I have always loved Fred Astaire movies. It was great fun to read his perspective on his life. I have read quite a few autobiographies of famous actors and actresses. He alone had something kind to say about everyone. His gracious demeanor comes through in his story.

Fred's way with words, his breezy light soaring style, reminds one of his dancing. This book is Fred-direct: the importance of his personal life, even over career, is paramount. As a read, it's a must for all interested a private man's life in filmed dance. It's completely enjoyable...if not particularly revealing about his art. At the end of the book, Fred mildly mocks the idea of over intellectualizing dance. Other than "maintaining the basic principles of balance and grace", he even questions a commitment to a particular style. He ends his story simply: "I just dance." That's Fred...but all the intensity, work, and preparation, and in his case, worry, that went into the creation of some of the greatest dance of the century...is sublimated in this wonderful book. Fred hardly even notes all the sweat that went into his art. That's Fred too. In the revealing introduction by the lovable, ever feisty, Ginger Rogers, he acknowledges her special, and highly reciprocal role in his career...and he in hers. And, in fact, as in her autobiography, neither of them were ever highly articulate about their art. Who cares? Today we know them from their films...and their artistry will be available to all the generations ahead. In this, their eternal realm, they were, and are, highly articulate...to say the least. "Steps in Time" and "Ginger: My Story", just whet the appetite to see the films...and in their chosen milieu...which for both of them...and especially for the solo-Fred...in spite of their considerable acting talents, meant one word...PERFORMANCE.

My daughter, a 1940's movie buff, said that this was the best Fred Astaire book that she's ever read! She was sad when she had turned the last page.

Now this has details. Most of the industry names Astaire mentions I do not know but I just read past

them. Enjoyed the information he gives on the people I do recognize. His humor keeps the book interesting. His love and faithfulness to his wife, Phyllis, is heartwarming and the reader feels his grief when he loses her. Astaire clearly works hard to achieve his lighter than air dancing style but watching him perform never looks labored. Glad I watched many of his movies before reading the book. That made it easier to follow the details he describes.

In excerpt cut from final text Fred wrote, that he:"... know more about a lot of things than people might think. I know a hell of a lot more about show business than I'll admit and that goes for many other things such as sports, politics, women, children, critic."Discrete gentleman as usually at the end, but we know that you knew, Freddie, after all we know and love your films and all of you in them :)).

What a lively and lovely book. That wonderful dancer who had an amazing career. Had a fancy and talented sister. What a couple!

It is a biography of the artistic life of Fred. Describe his involvement in theater and then in his films. Only write what is necessary and from the professional point of view and nothing or very little about his personal life or his companions. Suggests things like that was really fun to work with Rita or Cyd was an excellent dancer, but not much more. But it is a journey for all that participated at least until the date of its publication in the 50s of last century.

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