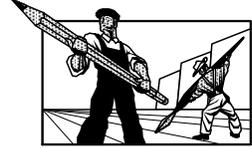


Julie King



(address)

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Enc.: Book proposal
Writing sample

21 August 2007

Maksim Chmerkovskiy
Dance With Me Studio
(address)

Greetings,

Have you ever heard the expression, "if we could bottle your passion, we'd make a mint selling it?" Well, a book would be the next best thing. Enclosed is a proposal to write a Maksim Chmerkovskiy biographical instruction book for your consideration.

I started watching DWTS for the first time this last season and was intrigued by this creative, stubborn, stylish Russian with a sizzling smile. Research on the net revealed a glimpse behind this pro with an attitude tempered by a lot of charm and talent. However, it is only a glimpse.

Maks has a flair for infusing his artistic direction into a teaching method for anyone at any level, but I discovered he has an engaging personal story as well. Moreover, he seems to have an energizing effect for drawing people to anything connected with a dance floor. Finally, his superb sense of choreography has gained some worldwide success as well as production projects. All these attributes add up to a distinctive passion for dance and the makings of a fabulous book.

Maks' instruction embodies an innovative stylistic knowledge that surpasses standard "how to dance" formats and should be divided into three sections unique to him: one for beginners (which is one of his endearing qualities), a special section for getting youth started (with a slant towards Dance Team USA) and then something for advanced dancers they would not find anywhere else.

I did a brief marketing analysis as part of this proposal and discovered Jamie King, a pop rock director-choreographer, recently released a "dance as sport" guide book along with a DVD sold separately. Maks can do for ballroom dancing what Jamie is doing for pop rock; however, I think it should include a DVD in the book of Maks' own production. It can feature all the instruction material and possibly some personal biographical media such as "home movie" clips.

My passion is writing. I enjoy writing biographical material and have experience writing instruction manuals as well. I also have a BA in communications & anthropology with a public relations minor. I understand and respect the cultural & communication intricacies involved in Maks' life as well as appreciate the value extending his marketing potential to a new audience of readers.

I've also enclosed a sample of my writing. It's an interview I have submitted to *AARP* magazine. Harry Frankel loves to travel by train and stays with the people he meets along the way. In sharing his lively life story, I want readers to feel like they have met Harry and would like take the same kind of approach with Maks.

Maks has already done TV and DVD. A book would create exposure in another media to reach more potential dancers & contributors. Maks' can make a hot new impression on the bookshelves and further in roads into the American dance scene.

Thank you for your time and attention and I look forward to discussing this proposal when you've had a chance to review it.

Julie King

Maksim Chmerkovskiy Biography & Instruction Book Proposal By Julie King

Maksim Chmerkovskiy has a passion for dance that is much more than inventive instruction & choreography. It's a life story of turning some major obstacles into a successful career world wide. It's inspired other people to get involved in dancing one way or the other and leaves a lasting impression of a unique artistic style where ever he goes. People with that kind of drive and ambition—not to mention an attitude offset by a lot of talent and charm—stand out on TV, in DVDs and on the bookshelves. However, Maks doesn't have anything out on the bookshelves yet and I think it's time he did. My passion is writing, the market looks good to pursue such a project, and it's something I want to make happen.

The following is a proposal to write a book about Maks' passion for dance with instruction, biographical, and anecdotal material. What I am presenting here is a starting point to discuss a project which is open to changes, other directions, possible collaborations, etc. The concept and outline for the book can also be rearranged by putting the biography first, or the book could end up just being a biography only.

There is an expression that says, "If we could bottle your energy & passion, we'd make a mint selling it." A book would be the next best thing. And who knows? It may not make a mint, but it could be bestseller...

This proposal is available in hard copy and as an electronic version.

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Objective

Showcase Maks' choreography & artistic knowledge in an exclusive instructional format as well as feature his life story & the people who share his passion for dance to reach a new audience of readers and broaden his potential for more success.

Overview

Dance instruction & choreography is a large part of Maks' passion for dance, but it also includes his life story and the people who share his passion. These three different aspects form an ideal structure to follow for an outline. The details are then filled in by answering several questions in each part to create a complete, captivating picture of Maks.



How does he take all that artistic creativity and knowledge and turn it into a teaching technique for a wide range of students? What are some of the insights and inspirations behind the amazing choreography that has won championships as well as the dynamics for directing productions? The standard “how to dance” format would never answer such questions, nor would it reflect Maks’ innovative individuality as an instructor. Besides, the market is already full of such books. I want take a more original approach that best represents Maks.

I think the instruction should be divided up into three individual parts that are more personal for him. The first section would be for beginners regardless of age. This is important because that seems to be an endearing quality of Maks’: his willingness to still teach beginners when most instructors of his caliber will not. It would also be good to some how encourage beginners to keep going to more advanced levels.

The next part would be a special section for getting youth started in dancing with Dance Team USA as a possible goal to reach. Finally, the last part of the instruction would be for more advanced dancers with information I’m hoping they would not get any where else. Perhaps Maks can share some tips on how to pursue a dance career or some of the theory behind his creativity.

So how did Maks’ get to this point in his life? How and why did dance become the ultimate passion for him? And what keeps him going? A biography of his life story would mostly like be the next part of the book or—as I said earlier—it could come first.

And finally, how and why did dance become the passion for the other people to help establish several studios, a non-profit organization as well as create a presence on the internet? They probably have some interesting stories to tell regarding Maks, which would be highlighted in the anecdotal part of the book. I want to get their own perspective on his effectiveness as an instructor and his inspiration as a person—regardless of how serious or humorous their stories are. I believe it gives the subject of the book more depth, as opposed to being one-sided and somewhat biased with only the person’s point of view.

Once the book hits the market, it will most likely be bundled with the Cardio DVD, but I think it would be fabulous to include a DVD from Maks’ own production. It can feature all the instruction material and perhaps some personal biographical media such as “home movie” clips.

Speaking of books and DVDs, in doing some market research for this project, I discovered Jamie King just released a book last May called Rock Your Body: The Ultimate Hip Hop Inspired "Dance as Sport" Guide for Slimming, Shaping, and Strengthening Your Body along with the DVD “Jamie King- Rock Your Body.” An excerpt from Amazon.com says he is one of the most innovative director-choreographers in the entertainment industry with an impressive array of clients including Jennifer Lopez, Shakira, and Madonna.

The release of Jamie’s book & DVD confirmed for me the feasibility of a book project for Maks. They appear to be about the same age and publishers, critics & all the various marketing people will most likely make a comparison between the two, which is perfect. Maks can do for ballroom/Latin dancing what Jamie is doing for pop rock, even though the content of the two products will be different.

Maks is a fresh new face on the American dance scene, but he will always leave a lasting impression in whatever he does in the years to come. He has already done TV, a DVD and is building a presence on the internet. A book generates exposure in another media to reach an additional audience. It’s something more lasting for people to purchase at the studios, events and on the net. Maks can make a hot new impression on the bookshelves and get more people dancing.

Concept & Outline

Maks’ approach to instruction is an individualistic blend of stylistic knowledge & choreography that surpasses standard formats and should have an original outline tailored to his passion. In fact, the whole book will totally capture what dance means to him by including his life story along with the anecdotes of the



people who have made it a part of their lives as well. Keep in mind the order of these three different parts can be rearranged.

The Instruction Part

Key point: Showcase instruction for beginners, youth, and advanced dancing along with a DVD as an added bonus.

As I said earlier, the instruction is not going to follow the standard “how to” formula, but will give some insights behind the championship choreography and his teaching techniques by focusing on three different sections more specific to Maks.

Ballroom 101—Maks Style

This is becoming one of Maks’ most endearing qualities—that an instructor of his caliber is still willing to teach beginners of any age—along with his ability to people at ease regardless of how clumsy they feel. There are a lot of beginner’s books out on the market already, but this one will have his personal touch.

Getting Youth Started

This would be a fantastic way to help kids get started at home with dance steps & exercises to build confidence, poise, and fitness. Dance Team USA can be presented as a possible goal to reach along with the requirements necessary to become a world class athlete.

Advanced Dancing

Perhaps Maks can share some personal tips and techniques for the more advanced amateur & professional dancers they would not learn anywhere else. It could also include some theory behind his artistic knowledge & directions or advice on balancing career with business.

The Biographical Part

Key point: Reveal the details on how & why dance became the center of Maks’ life story.

There are several different approaches to use for a life story: chronology, concept, or theme. It will be easier to decide which approach works best while developing a first draft. Perhaps a blend of two approaches would be more appealing to narrate what it took for Maks to get to this point in his life and what keeps him going.

A chronology of life events is the traditional timeline presented in the order they happened.

Chronology

- Life in Russia
- Accident & recovery
- Coming to the USA
- First competition
- First studio
- ??? (I know there is much more here than I am currently aware of and it’s all open for discussion)

A conceptual or theme approach starts in the present or is arranged around certain life themes and then flashes back to the life events that shaped them.

Concepts

- Why dance?
- What did it take for Maks to get to this point?
- What keeps him going?
- ???



Themes

- The path taken in life
- People involved
- Choreography
- Instruction & teaching technique
- Success & championships
- ???

The Anecdotal Part

Key point: Highlight some of the people involved in this passion for dance and get their stories & perspectives on Maks.

Several different formats can be used to feature some significant people and find out how & why dance became their passion as well. It depends on what Maks, and everyone else, is comfortable with as well as what works best for the material.

Formats

- Inner circle to outer circle
- By chronology of involvement
- By categories of involvement

I created the last grouping of categories to highlight people as participants, spectators, and contributors for something a little different.

Participants

People who actually dance or are actively involved in some aspect of dance:

- Students
- Colleagues & co-workers
- Partners
- Studio & production collaborators
- ???

Spectators

These people don't dance but support Maks and enjoy watching shows & competitions:

- Fans in general
- Various web forums & My Space "friends"
- Regular audience members who always attend events and competitions
- ???

Contributors

The ones who are involved in the non-profit organization:

- Collaborators
- Board members
- Sponsors
- ???

Sources of information

Obviously Maks himself would be the ultimate source as well family and friends. Other sources would include any notes, journals and correspondence he—or anyone else—may have and is comfortable sharing. Please understand I intend to treat everything with great care and the utmost respect.



References from the media and other public resources are last as far as accuracy & reliability goes.

Primary

- Maks
- Family
- Friends & inner circle
- Anecdotal people
- ???

Secondary

- Journals
- Correspondence
- Personal notes
- Daily planners & calendars
- Photo albums & memorabilia
- Home movies & video of events
- ???

References

- Media resources
- Internet
- Print media such as flyers & brochures
- Public records
- ???

Tentative Titles

Last minute brain storming for some possible book titles...

- “Just Bring on the Dance” or “Bring on the Dance”
- “Bring It to the Dance Floor”
- “Total Maks”
- “It’s Maks-ly”, “It’s Totally Maks-ly”, or “Maks-ly Dancing”
- “Maks-ed Out”
- ???

Whether he realizes it or not, Maks does say a lot of catchy things, some of which would also make a good title:

- “Don’t Forget to Breathe, I Forget Sometimes...” (taken from the Cardio DVD)
- “You Still Have Your Heart—You’ll Be Alright, I Promise” (same)
- “I Am A Class...” (DWTS, season 3)
- “My Style of Teaching is Very Simple—Just Do Exactly What I Say” (source unknown)
- ???

Marketing Analysis

What “sealed the deal” for me in considering this book project is the release of Jamie King’s book & DVD. Everyone in the book industry will mostly likely compare it to Maks’ book when it’s released—which is just perfect. Maks can do for ballroom dancing what Jamie is doing for pop rock. Plus, any searches for Jamie’s book will direct them to Maks’ as well.



Other marketing factors include:

- Any search for these books will most likely be directed to Maks' book as well
- Amazon & other bookstores will most likely bundle the book with the Cardio DVD—so it has a “perfect fit” marketing platform—one will sell the other
- The majority of the “how to” & dance exercise books & DVDs kind of all look the same—Maks' artistic approach & style reflected in the book would stand out as unique

The marketing analysis includes briefly looking at the current market, the intended audience, trends, possible venues, and promotions.

What is the Current Market?

Judging from the variety of books associated with the topic of dance, I believe there would be considerable interest in a Maksim Chmerkovskiy book. There are long periods between some of the release dates for the books and a lot of the material is not contemporary.

Please note these books do not necessarily imply any of the content intended for Maks' book. It just shows what is already on the shelves for comparison and contrast. However, if someone is looking at a particular topic or issue, they may want to know if Maks covers it as well and buy both books.

Books on Sale

I did not bother to list all of the instruction books and dance exercise DVDs available because there are so many of them. Plus, none of them really stood out as significant other than Jamie's.

The books are listed in the order of release date:

- Rock Your Body: The Ultimate Hip Hop Inspired "Dance as Sport" Guide for Slimming, Shaping, and Strengthening Your Body by Jamie King (Rodale Books, 05/15/2007) paperback, along with “Jamie King- Rock Your Body” DVD sold separately.

Excerpt: Jamie King is one of the most innovative director-choreographers in the entertainment industry, Jamie and his team at King Productions have choreographed and directed for an impressive array of clients including Jennifer Lopez, Prince, Shakira, and the queen of pop, Madonna. He lives in Beverly Hills, California. Valerie Gladstone's work has been published in the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, and numerous other publications. The author of a book on choreographer George Balanchine, she lives in New York City.

- Dancing with the Stars: Jive, Samba, and Tango Your Way into the Best Shape of Your Life by Dancing with the Stars (Collins, 10/2007) paperback.

- From Ballroom To Dancesport: Aesthetics, Athletics, And Body Culture by Caroline Joan Picart (State University of New York Press, 01/2006) hardcover.

Excerpt: “An insider explores the transformation of ballroom dance into an Olympic sport. Drawing on recent media portrayals and her own experience, author and dancer Caroline Joan S. Picart explores ballroom dancing and its more “sporty” equivalent, DanceSport, **suggesting that they are reflective of larger social, political, and cultural tensions. The past several years have seen a resurgence in the popularity of ballroom dance as well as an increasing international anxiety over how and whether to transform ballroom into an Olympic sport.**”

People might want to know how Maks feels about the “larger social, political, and cultural tensions.”

- Glamour Addiction: Inside the American Ballroom Dance Industry by Juliet McMains (Ferguson Publishing Company, 04/2005) hardcover.

Excerpt: “In the wake of the blockbuster television success of “Dancing with the Stars,” competitive ballroom dance has **become a subject of new fascination--and renewed scrutiny.** Known by its practitioners as DanceSport, ballroom is a significant dance form and a fascinating cultural phenomenon.



In this first in-depth study of the sport, dancer and dance historian Juliet McMains **explores the "Glamour Machine" that drives the thriving industry, delving into both the pleasures and perils of its seductions.**

Putting ballroom dance in the larger contexts of culture and history, Glamour Addiction makes an important contribution to dance studies, **while giving new and veteran enthusiasts a unique and unprecedented glimpse behind the scenes."**

Maks' story will show some of his own "behind the scenes look". Perhaps he can share what he thinks of this "glamour machine" idea.

•Dance Composition: A Practical Guide to Creative Success in Dance Making by Jane Smith-Autard (Theatre Arts Book; 5 edition, 12/2004) paperback.

Excerpt: "Dance composition - the discipline that translates ideas into dances - is an important part of dance education."

•With Malice Towards Some: Tales From a Life Dancing With Stars by Robert Sidney (1st Books Library, 07/03)

Excerpt: "Bob Sidney simply but eloquently refers to himself as a dancer and choreographer... nothing more. In reality, Bob is not only a master choreographer, BUT has been a director, producer, writer, teacher, consultant, and even make-shift set designer!

Here is a man that was chosen by Irving Berlin himself to choreograph 1941's epic motion picture "This is the Army", and from that moment on, Bob Sidney was the busiest and most wanted director/choreographer in show business."

•Dance Masters: Interviews with Legends of Dance by Janet L Roseman (Routledge; 1st edition, 03/2001) paperback.

•Social Dance: Steps to Success by Judy Patterson, Ph.D. Wright (Human Kinetics Publishers, 11/2002) paperback

Excerpt: "...USABDA supports both recreational ballroom dancing and DanceSport, the competitive form of ballroom dancing expected soon to become an Olympic sport..."

•From Ballroom to Bottom Line... in Business and in Life by Cher Holton & Bil Holton (Liberty Publishing Group, 08/2001) paperback.

•Much Ado About Ballroom Dancing by Ronnen Levinson (Ronnen Levinson Publishing 2/2000)

Excerpt: "Offers pointers on learning to dance, choosing shoes, finding dance music, an etiquette guide, lists of songs for each dance, links to dance and music resources on the internet, and more."

•Dance Lessons: Six Steps to Great Partnerships in Business & Life by Chip R Bell & Heather Shea (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 11/1998) hardcover.

Excerpt: "Building on the metaphor identified in their title, prolific author Bell and former dancer-actor Shea convincingly point out the unexpected similarities that exist between partnerships in the boardroom and partnerships on the dance floor--and persuasively outline the benefits that can be derived from proficiency at each."

I thought this was an interesting topic Maks could touch on as well with his experience in both areas.

•Ballroom Dancing: The Romance, Rhythm and Style by John Lawrence Reynolds (Amazon Press, 09/1998) hardcover.

Who Will Read This Book?

This is a run down of the various audiences I could think of and I am sure there are more. A fairly long list is a good sign of a wide market. It means more books will be sold, as opposed to a limited niche that would not sell as well.



Intended Audience

- Fans of Maks
- Fans of “Dancing With The Stars”
- Fans of dance in general wanting to get the inside story on the world of competition, what it takes to start a studio, etc.
- Fans of celebrity bios—Maks has had some publicity to attract attention, but is still “new” & “unknown” enough for people to want more information
- Armchair people who would never buy the Cardio DVD but see the book & be interested in Maks or want to read some of the instruction
- People who buy the Cardio DVD and want to learn more about Maks
- Other dancers & people in the industry
- Curious people wondering what the big deal is with ballroom dancing
- Cultural people interested in the “American dream & immigration” success stories
- People who like “following your dream & making it happen” success stories (and probably watch Oprah)
- People interested in the personal triumphant stories—doctors said Maks would probably limp the rest of his life & not be able to dance
- Anyone interested in contemporary Russian heritage
- Fine arts students looking for a contemporary dancer to do a report on and need a book for reference
- ???

Are There Trends To Affect Sales?

There are two possible trends that may affect sales.

Trends

- The current popularity of dance based reality shows may fade, but ballroom dance & competitions have a staying power that transcends time
- If dance sport becomes an Olympic sport, it will generate a new interest in the industry

Where Else Can It Be Sold Or Promoted?

Besides retail & internet book stores, here are several other possible venues and events to sell or promote the book.

Venues

- Dance studios associated with Maks
- Workshop locations
- Locations where the Cardio DVD is being promoted again
- Anywhere Maks goes to promote any of his projects/productions

Special Events

- The launching of a new project/production
- The opening of a new studio
- The premier of another DVD

Other considerations for why this project is worth pursuing:

- It creates exposure in another media—Maks has already done TV and a DVD—to reach a new audience of potential dancers, contributors, and production opportunities
- Maks has marketing appeal and knows how to handle the publicity the book will generate
- Part of the proceeds can go towards funding Dance Team USA or any other cause Maks supports—this could be noted on the back cover—drawing attention to that organization
- A revised & updated edition could be written 20 or 30 years from now as a new book to sell



Plan of Action

The first was to create this proposal. After everyone is agreeable on the concept and direction for the book, the next step would be to develop an outline and write a couple of chapters. This would involve more research on my part, including talking to some sources to verify facts as well as getting a sense of the personality and voice for the book. If everyone likes what we've got, I would then present the outline and chapters to publishers in the hopes of securing an advance to continue the project.

Please keep in mind that biographies typically take several years to write based on everyone's availability. I love what I do in writing, but because this kind of project involves other people, I want the process to be enjoyed by everyone and not a chore or a hassle to get done.

About the Author

I've been a writer-editor all my life with a background in many different areas of writing including poetry, scripts, technical writing, business analysis and fiction. In a way, my career has been built on one project opening a door for a new opportunity I didn't know existed or would have considered otherwise. All in all, it all comes down to this: I enjoy making characters & people come alive on paper or taking knowledge & instruction and putting it in to a format for others to understand & follow.

I graduated from Hamline University here in St. Paul, Minnesota with a BA in Communications & Anthropology. I also had the chance to live and work in Mexico for six months, reinforcing my education with a once in a life time experience in a foreign country. I very much understand and respect the cultural & communication intricacies involved in Maks' life. Plus, a public relations minor with an internship in marketing gives me an appreciation for the value of extending his marketing potential with a book.

I share a town house with my younger sister (no other siblings) in New Brighton, a suburb of St. Paul. I work part time as a health data specialist and also enjoy acting, archeology, history and cruise traveling (mostly in the Caribbean). We both started watching DWTS this last season and loved it. We're looking forward to seeing more dancing and some day attend a competition or a workshop.

Basically, as long as I have my computer with smooth jazz on in the background and can write, I am happy; in other words, if my computer crashes and the satellite link to the smooth jazz goes down, run for the hills...

All of my other completed material can be seen on my website as well: www.writersblend.com.

About the Writing Sample

I am currently submitting to *AARP* magazine an interview I wrote, "Hello, This is Harry and Shalom," which I have enclosed as a writing sample. Harry Frankel, 81, loves to travel the world by train, but he doesn't go to resorts and he doesn't need reservations. He simply stays with the people he has met along the way. He bundles up his big backpack, gets a rail pass (EuroRail or an Amtrak) and wherever he goes, someone is looking forward to his visit.

Picture Victor Borge in jeans and a denim jacket with a long white ponytail poking out of a baseball cap. His life is full of travel and adventures which he narrates in lively detail with a twinkle in his eyes and the same sharp, sly wit of the famous comedic Maestro. I believe I've captured the essence of this captivating character of the railways and readers will enjoy meeting him. I also hope readers will enjoy meeting Maks through my writing as well.

(No bottles, Amazon book lists, or marketing people were harmed during the production of this proposal.)