

**Composition for Two Left Feet (Winner, Write Stars ‘Manchester Madness’,
September 2014)**

My 'Baby Diary' records me jiggling around to Tchaikovsky at the age of five months. At four, I attended my first dance at my aunt's wedding. When the band played, I bounced at the edge of the dance floor, until my father lifted me onto his feet and walked me through the waltz.

When my sisters took Irish Dancing lessons, I helped my mother embroider Celtic symbols on skirts and shawls; Saturdays were spent watching young hopefuls vie for medals. In the school's short-lived contemporary dance club (five members; lasted only one term) I made long sweeping movements with my limbs to Holst's *Planet Suite* — Mars was always my favourite.

At Youth Club, I bopped around my handbag with the best of them — during the fast numbers anyway. One of my fellow University students was great at the Jive. He tried to teach me, but gave up despairingly.

Finally, aged 27, I accepted what my friends and family had always known. Despite my love of music, my classical training, my success as a composer; despite all this, I was born with two left feet and the sense of rhythm of a ruptured duck.

I moved on; concentrated on making music for other dancers. Tonight sees the premiere of my ballet *Uncoordinated Melody* at the Manchester Opera House, starring two of the biggest names in the business. Everyone in the dance world is here; I'm confidently expecting my usual critical acclaim.

But part of me would give it all up for the opportunity to float elegantly across the dance floor just once. During my interview on *Breakfast* this morning, that nice Mr Stayt asked if I'd ever consider becoming a judge on *Strictly*.

“A judge?” I said, ‘Charlie, I don’t want to be a judge; I want to be a contender!’