

VIDEO & CD REVIEW



Tai Chi Chuan Interactive CD for Windows Boz Odusanya Acu Media Books £20.00

It has occurred to me over the years that for some inexplicable reason there seems to be an inordinately high proportion of tai chi players working in the IT business, in some manner or other. Perhaps the activity provides an ideal contrast to the sedentary necessity of working at keyboard and screen or maybe, if we're being fanciful, there is some cosmic connection in the fact that they have similar concepts at their roots (yin & yang = binary, 8 bits in one byte = I Ching?). Despite this situation there has been very few serious attempts to merge both arts for the benefit of either. Now with the collective experience of both Tai Chi Chuan and computer/software programming reaching a level where practitioners understanding and development is constantly improving, we are able to enjoy the results of this strange marriage through this new CD Rom by TCUGB instructor Boz Odusanya.

Boz Odusanya has practised Wu Style Tai Chi Chuan for over 15 years and is also an accomplished practitioner of Traditional Chinese Medicine. He is based in Matlock, Derbyshire and is a regular participant at internal arts events across the country where he is constantly improving his skill range.

In creating this TCC Interactive CD Rom Boz has applied much care and attention to presentation, ease of use and practicality. In addition to this we see a competent depiction of Wu Style Tai Chi Chuan. The opening screen guides through a series of options covering principles, postures, stance and even a brief bibliography for further study of the Wu system. We then see short video sequences depicting a variety of loosening up exercises that are applicable to any stylist with recommendations on how many repetitions for each. On working with the Hand Form you have the option of picking any of the postures and examining the video of each transition or you can simply sit back and watch a 13-minute performance of the entire short form sequence. Whatever method you can, of course make much use of the pause and replay button to catch that little extra nuance you would perhaps miss on video. The video clips are clear and in pleasant surroundings plus there is the added bonus of narrative for the transitions. Also included are clear charts with recommended postures, carefully highlighting the hand, foot and body positions from many angles.

For any practitioners of the Wu style this would serve as a nice pointer and for those who can't make regular classes but have the patience and will-power to apply themselves, they could do a lot worse than make use of this well set out CD Rom.

George Wilkinson

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The Chi Kung Way to Health & Vitality Ronnie Robinson

BMA Video BMA031 £15.00

Ronnie Robinson (just call him Mr. Motivator) is one of the better known of British (in his case Scottish) Tai Chi Chuan and Chi Kung/Qi Gong teachers. In recent years he has also done a sterling job as Secretary of the Tai Chi Union for Great Britain as well as editor of Tai Chi Chuan magazine and member of the Technical Panel. He has recently also taken on the job as Secretary for the Tai Chi Chuan & Qi Gong Federation for Europe. In addition in partnership with Bob Lowey he organises Tai Chi Caledonia every year with internal arts instructors from all over the world coming to Scotland to teach.

After more than twenty years practice, Ronnie has just released this video, produced by VMA International and demonstrating in detail 18 exercises of Tai Chi Chi Kung. People say that it is impossible to learn Tai Chi Chuan from a book or video, and I believe this is certainly true of forms. However, the exercises on this video are simple to learn, Ronnie explains and teaches them in a clear and precise manner, correcting the technique of errant students where necessary.

One of the great problems with Tai Chi Chuan is that it is difficult to learn and even more difficult to do well. Many people come to Tai Chi Chuan classes and expect to be able to pick it up straight away, they can quickly become discouraged; these exercises, which are suitable for any age group, address that problem. Also because there are 18 individual exercises, the whole body gets a stress free workout.

The video is well-presented, having been mainly shot outdoors, although there is also footage of Ronnie teaching the exercises in an office which emphasises how user-friendly they are. There is plenty of repetition of each exercise which makes it easier for the viewer to exercise along with Ronnie and his class. It is available at a reasonable price and should prove popular. I would recommend it even (perhaps especially) to novices who should find it of value as an introduction to the Chinese internal arts.

Dan Docherty

