

DANCE STYLES DESCRIPTIONS

Bolero

Best described, Bolero uses:

Slow, Rumba-like Music

Mambo and West Coast Swing Type Patterns

Waltz Styling

The dance is characterized by slow drawn out movements, accentuation of steps that create body lines, and a gentle use of rise and fall. The dancers must exhibit strong balance and muscle control to produce this styling.

Like the Rumba, Bolero music contains a constant tapping or clave rhythm. However, the music is much slower.

Bossa Nova

Bossa Nova is said to have originated in 1961 at Carnegie Hall. The music is a combination of American and Brazilian Jazz and is based on a subtle slower Samba beat. The dance is commonly referred to as a lazy man's Samba.

Bossa Nova music has a constant tapping like Rumba and a "heartbeat" double bass rhythm like Mambo.

Cha Cha

The Cha Cha is an offshoot of the Mambo. In the slow Mambo tempo, there was a distinct sound in the music that people began dancing to, calling the step the "Triple Mambo." Eventually, it evolved into a separate dance, known today as the Cha Cha.

Cha Cha is defined by its sharp angles and precise foot placements. The dance moves through two tracks on the floor. One track moves in a precise sideward direction. The other track moves in a precise forward and back direction. One of the most common mistakes that dancers tend to make in the Cha Cha is to move diagonally. This makes the dance hard for the lady to follow.

Cha Cha dancers remain "grounded" at all times through the dance. This prevents the Cha Cha from looking bouncy like a Polka.

Cha Cha music is defined by a rhythm of 1, 2 and 3, 4 and 1. Most Cha Chas have a very sharp crisp sound. However, there are some Cha Chas that have a smoother, almost Rumba feeling.

Country Two Step

Two Step is a forward progressive dance that is less formal than traditional ballroom dances.

Like other ballroom dances, it uses the popular slow and quick counts. But, unlike traditional ballroom dances, it is danced to country music and utilizes many wraps, turns and duck-out patterns. Two Step music has a country Foxtrot feeling. Listen for the accent on 1 & 3 and the tap on 2 & 4.

East Coast Swing

The history of Swing dates back to the 1920's when the black community, while dancing to contemporary Jazz music, discovered the Charleston. This evolved into several other styles of dance including the Lindy Hop and the Jitterbug. In the 1930's, during World War II, Swing music came into being with the music of Benny Goodman leading the way. Today, Swing is danced to songs like "Mony Mony," "Twist and Shout," and "Old Time Rock and Roll" just to

name a few. Swing styles include: Savoy Swing, Lindy, West Coast Swing, Carolina Shag, East Coast Swing, Jitterbug and Jive.

Swing music is defined by the use of “Back Beat” or the accenting of beats 2 & 4. East Coast Swing music should feel energetic, upbeat and fun.

Foxtrot

The Foxtrot originated in the summer of 1914 by Vaudeville actor Harry Fox. In early 1914, the New York Theater, one of the largest in the world, was converted into a movie house. As an extra attraction, the theater’s management decided to try Vaudeville acts between the shows. As a part of his act, Harry Fox was doing trotting steps to ragtime music. People started referring to his dancing as Fox’s Trot. The name was later shortened to Foxtrot.

The Foxtrot is characterized by a fluid gliding or strolling action. If done properly, Foxtrot should feel like taking a walk in the park on a spring day.

Foxtrot music is accented on the 1st and 3rd beats and should inspire a walking sensation.

Hustle

Most Hustle dances have strong roots in Swing, Samba, Cha Cha, Mambo, and Tango. The Hustle is believed to have originated in New York in 1970. It went through many variations in the seventies, with line dances for groups of people, solo movements that came and went, and partnership dances. These partnership dances include the Basic Hustle, Latin Hustle, Spanish Hustle, and Tango Hustle. The most popular is the Three Beat Hustle that originated in California.

Hustle was originally danced to the Disco music of the seventies. However, it can be danced to any music heavily accented on all 4 beats.

Jitterbug

The history of the Swing / Jitterbug dates back to the 1920’s when the black community, while dancing to contemporary Jazz music, discovered the Charleston. In the mid 1930’s, a bouncy six beat variant was named the Jitterbug when band leader Cab Calloway introduced a tune in 1934 called “Jitterbug.” Soon after, Swing / Jitterbug music evolved with the help of Benny Goodman’s music. Dancers soon incorporated jazz steps into their dancing.

Jitterbug music is essentially very fast Swing music. As such it is accented on beats 2 & 4 and should feel very energetic.

Mambo

The fusion of Swing and Cuban music produced this fascinating rhythm and in turn created a new sensational dance. The Mambo could not have been conceived earlier since, up to that time, Cuban and American Jazz styles were still not joined. The “Mambo,” a dance attributed to Perez Prado was originally introduced at La Tropicana nightclub in Havana in 1943. Later on, other styles of dance, including the Cha Cha and Salsa were spun off of the Mambo. The Mambo is danced on the 2 beat of music and has a distinctly staccato feeling to it.

Mambo uses the rhythm 1 ah 3 4 – 1 2 ah 3 4. Listen for the distinct sound of conga drums playing a “heartbeat” rhythm on 4 and 1.

Merengue

Two theories surround the creation of the national dance of the Dominican Republic, the Merengue. The first theory states that when an injured war hero returned home to the Dominican Republic, the island natives threw him a huge party. While dancing, the natives felt obligated to imitate the way the war hero dragged his injured leg so as to not embarrass him. The second theory in the dance's creation involved the slaves. The slaves who were, at that time, shackled to a ball and chain would be forced to cut sugar cane to the beat of a drum. Merengue music has a constant "scratching" sound in the background and should inspire a marching feeling.

Night Club Two Step

Don't let the name fool you. Night Club Two Step is in no way connected to Country Two Step. It was created by ballroom dancers as a formalized style of slow dancing. As such is danced to modern love songs.

Night Club Two Step is based on Samba style movements. As such it is danced to the rhythm of 1 and 2, 3 and 4. However, it does not use the characteristic Samba bounce. Instead, it is danced much more smoothly and romantically.

While a lot of dance schools teach only this rhythm for slow dancing, we at Sherry Lynn's teach Night Club Two Step in conjunction with other timings and movements to create what we call Informal Slow Dance.

Night Club Two Step music should feel like a slow Foxtrot. As such, it will be accented on beats 1 and 3, but it will feel more romantic.

Peabody

The Peabody resembles a fast Foxtrot. Legend has it that the Peabody was created by a portly police or fire chief from New York City – Captain Peabody – who was so overweight that he had to dance to the side of his partner, creating the style which is so characteristic of the Peabody. It's primarily a dance with long, "jogging" steps. Dancers use many intricate, quick, twisting and turning steps set against a figure called the "Open Box." It is popular in the larger ballrooms where dance space is not a serious problem.

Peabody is danced primarily to ragtime or Dixieland jazz music. In a lot of ways, Peabody music resembles a very fast Foxtrot. So, listen for the accented 1 and 3 beats.

Polka

Polka is a social dance commonly used at parties and weddings. It draws its background from German and Polish music. Although there are many ethnic variations, most involve triple steps in a continuous forward movement combined with side by side patterns.

Polka music is evenly accented on all 4 beats. Listen for the "Oom-pah" rhythm usually played by a tuba player.

Rumba

The word Rumba is a generic term for a type of West Indian music or dancing. There are two sources of the dance: one Spanish and the African. Although the main growth was in Cuba, there were similar dance developments which took place in other Caribbean islands and Latin America generally. The "Rumba influence" came in the 16th century with the black slaves imported from Africa. The native Rumba folk dance is essentially a sex pantomime danced fast with

exaggerated hip movements and with sensually aggressive attitude on the part of the man and a defensive attitude on the part of the woman.

Typical Rumba music sounds very sensual and contains a constant tapping or a clave rhythm. Listen for the rhythm of & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 being tapped out lightly in the background of the music.

Salsa

The origins of Salsa are not easily defined. Who invented Salsa? The Cubans, the Puerto Ricans? Salsa is a combination of many Latin and Afro-Cuban dances. Salsa is similar to Mambo in that both have a pattern of six steps danced over eight beats of music. The dances share many of the same moves. In the Salsa, turns and wraps have become an important feature, so the overall look and feel are quite different from those of Mambo. Salsa is often danced smoother than traditional Mambo.

Salsa has a similar rhythm to Mambo but does not contain the prominent conga drums.

Samba

The Samba is a lively Brazilian dance which was first introduced in 1917 and became a popular ballroom dance in Brazil in 1930. The style of Samba is to bounce steadily and smoothly in 2/4 Meter. It is said that Samba was introduced to the U.S. in 1939 by the late Carmen Miranda. Samba music should have a rolling or bouncing feeling. The rhythm will be 1 & uh 2 &.

Slow Dance

One of the most useful and versatile social dances, the Slow Dance can be danced over a large area or over a small area. It is most often used with contemporary love songs and fits better than any other ballroom dance.

Slow Dance is a combination of Foxtrot, Tango, Bossa Nova, and Samba movements. This gives the dance three distinct rhythms, but transitioning from one rhythm to the next takes a little practice.

Slow Dance music should feel like very slow, romantic Foxtrot music. Like Foxtrot, the music will be accented on the 1st and 3rd beats.

Tango

Tango is one of the most fascinating of all the dances. Originally created in Spain or Morocco, the Tango was introduced to the New World by Spanish settlers, eventually coming back to Spain with Black Creole influences. The dance was soon considered to be immoral because of its flirty music and movements!

Ballroom Tango originated in the lower class of Buenos Aires. Clothing was dictated by full skirts for the women and gauchos of Argentina. Men would wear chaps that were hardened by the foam and sweat from a horse's body. Hence, the gauchos would walk with their knees flexed. They would walk into local night clubs and ask the local girls to dance. Because the gaucho hadn't showered, the lady would dance in the crook of the man's arm, holding her head back. The man danced in a curving fashion because the floor was small with round tables, so he danced around and between them.

Tango music is very dramatic, with a drum roll between beats 4 & 1.

Viennese Waltz

The Viennese Waltz was born in the suburbs of Vienna and in the alpine region of Austria. As early as the 17th century, Viennese Waltzes were played in the ballrooms of Hapsburg Court. Many of the familiar Viennese Waltz can be traced back to simple peasant yodeling melodies. Viennese Waltz is characterized by constantly flowing & turning movements.

Like the Waltz, Viennese Waltz is written in 3 beats per measure. However, the tempo is nearly twice as fast. Viennese Waltz is often counted as 1, 2, 3 – 2, 3 – 3, 2, 3 – 4, 2, 3.

Waltz

Colorful, flowing ballgowns! Tails! Weddings! Beautiful music! Strong Melodies! The Waltz was the first music to be written in 3/4 timing. Most Waltzes were originally written for the church. The three beats in a measure were to represent the Holy Trinity. Examples include such popular hymns as Away in the Manger and Amazing Grace. Waltz comes from the old German word waltzen, meaning to roll or turn.

Waltz is written in 3 beats per measure. Listen for Heavy 2, 3 – Brush 2, 3.

West Coast Swing

After World War II, many returning soldiers went to clubs to dance, resulting in crowded dance floors. Club owners soon realized that those who were dancing weren't buying many drinks. So, they started to make dance floors smaller and rented slots on the dance floor. This fact, combined with Hollywood's desire to film swing dancing, helped to define the slotted nature of the West Coast Swing.

West Coast Swing is currently danced with a very sultry, sensual feeling with flirtatious wraps and turns.

West Coast Swing music, like East Coast Swing, is accented on beats 2 & 4. However, the music is typically more gritty and "bluesy."