



Larrys Corner

Volume 8, Issue 5

May 2008

This is called Larrys Corner because when I teach I stand in the corner so I can see everyone.

If you want to read dance stories they are under Headlines or Larrys Corner.

[Http://www.comedancewithus.com](http://www.comedancewithus.com) Or <http://www.dancempls.com>

Larry L Ablin : 612-599-7856
lablin@charter.net

Barb Johnson : 612-599-9915
westcoast1@charter.net

Do you have any likes or dislikes, stories, or helpful hints for dancing? If so, write it down and give to Larry Ablin or Barb Johnson. We will add it to one of the future News letters.

If you would like to tell us how you became interested in dancing, write it down and give to Larry or Barb, we will add your picture with it and put it in one of the future Newsletters. If you have anything you would like to write about, just write it up and give to Barb or Larry. I enjoy writing something for you.

Come Dance With Us

Ways of remembering Patterns

1. Write down all the pattern sequences that you know; create a series of "notes"
2. When you go out to "practice" your dancing ... go with specific patterns you plan to work on.
3. After the evening is over "debrief" yourself on what worked and what didn't, get clarifications & corrections from your instructor
4. Learn the beat of the music, by "tapping" out S-S-Q-Q- with your thumbs on your steering wheel of your car when you are driving. See if you can "internalize" the beat of the music, so that your thumbs can continue the S-S-Q-Q- taps as you drive.
5. Practice your dance patterns "solo" at home, in a empty room or garage, to help "internalize" your steps and moves.
6. When starting to learn, don't be "afraid" to count out slow-slow-quick-quick" until your can "link" the beat of the music you hear to the movement of your feet. Eventually the beat of music will become the "engine" that drives your legs
7. Remember on what "step" your patterns start, ie. "quicks" or "slows", this will make it easier to "start/remember" your patterns.

Example Position 2 Arm Open

Man's Position : Facing Line-Of-Dance OR Rear-Line-of-Dance, Face-to-Face

Man's Arms : R-Arm & L-Arm extended straight ahead

1 Man's Hand : R-Hand holds Lady's L-Hand. L-Hand holds Lady's R-Hand.

2

2

4

Lady's Position : Facing Line-Of-Dance OR Rear-Line-of-Dance Face-to-Face

4

Lady's Arms : R-Arm & L-Arm extended straight

Inside this issue:

Ways of remembering Patterns

Position Abbreviations Country 2

Balboa (dance)

Balboa Today

Basic Balboa

ahead L-Arm bent behind her back

Lady's Hands : R-Hand is held by Man's L-Hand. L-Hand is held by Man's R-Hand.

8. Visualize your patterns, close your eyes, and run through them "mentally" in your head.

Position Abbreviations Country 2

> = Line Of Dance

< = Rear Line Of Dance

>< = Face-to-Face (Line Of dance between couple)

CLSD = Closed Position

SWHRT = Sweetheart Position

SKTRS = Skater's Position

X-SKTRS = Crossed Skater's Position

WRAP = Wrap Position

HMLCK = Hammerlock Position

1AOPF = 1 Arm Open Position- Man Facing Forward Line Of Dance

1AOPR (Open Promenade) = 1 Arm Open Position - Man Facing "Rear" Line Of Dance

2AOPF = 2 Arm Open Position - Man Facing "Forward" Line Of Dance

2AOPR = 2 Arm Open Position - Man Facing "Rear" Line Of Dance

2AXPF = 2 Arm Crossed Hands Position - Man Facing "Rear" Line Of Dance

CPRM = Couples Promenade

HMLCK = Hammerlock (M - MAN) (L - LADY)

U-Turn = U-turn using Q-Q

C-Turn = U-turn using Q-Q-S-S

LOT = Lady's Outside Turn

LIT = Lady's Inside Turn

MOT = Man's Outside Turn

MIT = Man's Inside Turn

MUT = Man's underarm turn

{MOS} = Man on Outside Circle

{LOS} = Lady on Inside Circle

Balboa (dance)

Balboa is a form of a swing dance that emerged in the 1930s and 1940s. It is danced with the lead and follows dancing where their chests touch for a body lead connection. The art of Balboa is the subtle communication between the lead and follow, like weight shifts, that most viewers cannot see. So, Balboa is a dancer's dance, more than a viewer's dance.

Balboa is danced to a wide variety of tempos. Because the basic is so simple, Balboa is danced to fast music (over 300 beats per minute). Balboa is also danced to slow music (under 100 beats per minute), which allows more time for intricate footwork and variations.

Balboa is a form of the Swing dance family. The original Balboa is a hybrid of the Charleston, Jig Trot, Swing and appropriated steps from the 1920's Collegiate Shag which later Arthur Murray would try to refine in the mid 1930's thru his studio chain (I know swingers don't like to hear Arthur Murray, but that's the way it goes) but his version called the 'Arthur Murray Shag' became stale and way to boring.

Later, many dancers started experimenting and started to add steps and twist and kicks back into the dances using the Shag as a model in and near Balboa Island in Newport Beach, California (Balboa Pier), namely the Balboa Pavilion with a new Balboa dance being born out of this former Shag, Jig Trot/Walks, Charleston and Swing mixture, which originally was called the Bal-Hop and Balboa Shuffle. It was used as well for very tight dance spaces and a chance to catch your breath (Jockeying) while dancing to fast Jitterbug music. It had finally come full circle and was getting very popular with the swing dancers in Southern California.

The Newport Beach "island clubs" in Southern California, such as the Rendezvous Ballroom (1928-1966) which was directly across from Balboa Island (island established in 1905,) and the older Balboa Pavilion started having 'swing dance night's' (meaning music style rather than dance) in the early 1930's that continued well into the mid 1980's, however originally, the older

Pavilion did not allow Jitterbug dancing due to structural problems which indirectly lead to a popularity of the Balboa. Over the years the dancers who did Collegiate or the Murray shag, Charleston, Jig Walks, Foxtrot, and Lindy merged the dance into a more energetic style. Most of the Balboa dancers were of today's older West Coast Swing crowd, with a few newer Lindy dancers finding the beauty of this dance as well today.

After a while the newer swing dancers coming on to the scene, not aware of the Balboa, would refer to the Balboa as "The Shag" since most of the swing dancers that knew how to do the Shag also went to "Balboa Island - Swing Nights," and these swing dancers would be called uniformly "Balboa dancers." The Balboa became a dance of the Swing dance family and was reported many times as a new dance. Basically the dance evolved thru crowded dance floors and high tempos. A dancer getting tired would pull his partner close and do Balboa to catch their breath, then swing out again or it was just plain to crowded to dance and they did or had to do the Balboa all night.

Balboa is mainly a closed position swing form, that uses very little break-a way's, only a few turns, and usually fast footwork. Most written articles of the time report that the Balboa was replacing the Fox-Trot in swing circles. Most of the larger Ballrooms were so crowded that they had signs posted "No Breakaways" which meant No Jitterbug dancing (such as the Paramount in L.A.) and the Balboa worked real well for overly crowded dance floors such as the paramount.

There were a few different styles of Balboa such as the:

- 1) "Swing-Bal." (Has some swing steps / Breakaways thrown in, uses swing timing, to be clear not shag timing, but does have some converted shag patterns).
- 2) Slow Balboa (similar to Rumba), that is very, very smooth!
- 3) And "Fast Balboa" that is any style you happen to know, done real fast.
- 4) Bal-Hop or the Balboa Hop was the original name, which originally was more similar to Collegiate Shag.
- 5) Plus there is Single Bal, Double Bal and Triple Bal (Swing Rhythm) to mix.

The origin of the Balboa (not the Shag) can be said to be The "Rendezvous Ballroom" across from Balboa Island in Newport Beach, CA. around 1934/5 to about 1941. The basic rhythm for the dance is a Double Shuffle Swing Rhythm. Some original music was Dorsey's "Melancholy Baby" or Artie Shaw's "Begin The Beguine" (as reported by an early Photo Play magazine article.)

There is an Interesting article in the Oakland Tribune (Women in the News Section) that says of a new dance introduced by the "International Association of the Masters of Dancing" called ... you guessed it "The Balboa", which is suggested to replace the Bunny Hug, Grizzly Bear and Turkey Trot dances. It says it is a mixture of the One Step, Two-Step and Waltz and was done to the song "Too Much Mustard"... Interesting to say the least as the year was June 6th, 1915 (yes, I'm sure it was not the same dance ... couldn't be ... maybe ... don't know?)

Was created in Balboa Island, California during the 1930s. Balboa is built on smooth, tight footwork and is ideal for fast tempos. It is also very adaptable and can be performed to slow music as well. Balboa is danced almost exclusively in closed dance position and most closely resembles a dance the natives of 1930s Chicago called the Shag. Influence of The Charleston can also be seen in this dance. The Balboa originated in a large ballroom on Balboa Island in southern California. It's common belief that when the ballrooms began getting so overcrowded, this dance naturally evolved since there was literally no place to swing out your partner. It takes on a cartoon like quality, close together, with lots of footwork, although the feet hardly leave the floor. The upper body remains still and the dance doesn't travel much around the room. At one time it was popular up and down the west coast, from Seattle to southern California. Incidentally, the Balboa is the dance done by the popular cartoon character Pop-eye.

Balboa Today

For a long time the world of dance was largely oblivious of Balboa and very little was documented anywhere. Fortunately, the dance never actually died out with an isolated pocket refusing to let it die. Many of the original dancers continued with their passion and were subsequently discovered by Sylvia Sykes and Jonathan Bixby in the early 1980's. They persuaded some of the old timers to teach them the dance to preserve it into the future. They worked very closely with Maxie Dorf who was widely acclaimed as the 'King of Balboa' amongst those who knew him or saw him dance. Maxie continued to dance and teach to the newer brigade of Balboa fans that blossomed in the late 90's before finally passing away in 2000.

Sylvia and Jonathan have subsequently passed on their knowledge to the rest of the dance community by teaching Balboa workshops all over the world. The current Balboa scene owes them an enormous debt of gratitude for preserving the dance and bringing it to the attention of the masses. Sylvia rightly deserves her nickname as the 'Queen of Balboa'.

Despite Maxie's death and the recent loss of Willie Desatoff, there are still many of the original great dancers alive today. Hal Takier, Ann & John Mills, Dean Raftery, Bart Bartolo and many other are all still around and very much kicking! It's fitting that they can take pleasure in seeing and helping the new generation of fanatics on today's Balboa scene. Most of the Balboa done on today's scene is actually 'Bal Swing' although more and more dancers are becoming interested in the subtleties of pure Balboa.

The Balboa was named after the location of its inception, the Balboa Peninsula, southern California. It evolved in the 1920's from a number of popular dances of the day (Charleston, Collegiate Shag, Swing etc.). It is an 8-count dance done in closed ("Pure Bal) or open ("Bal-Swing) position. Characterized by an upright position, a body "pulse, and elaborate footwork, its most often danced at high speeds although it can be enjoyed at all tempos.

Balboa is becoming quite popular in Minnesota also.

Basic Balboa

KEEP IT SMALL

All steps should be not more than about one foot-length long. Keep knees relaxed, don't wiggle or tilt your hips or torso, pitch your weight slightly forward but don't do a pronounced lean.

It is NOT impolite to get CLOSE to your partner

The figure is done in the "mush" position: Follower's right leg in line with Lead's sternum, torsos touching, Lead's right arm wrapped well around Follower's back, Follower angled slightly to Lead's right side. There is also contact between the outer forward quarter of the Lead's right thigh and the inner fwd quarter of the Follower's left thigh. Lead's Left hand holds the Follower's Right hand; a height of hands is unimportant, but keeps the hands close to the body line. Most leads are body/frame leads.

The mush position is relaxed, but as little as possible, for most Bal-Swing figures.

Perspective of Lead

Beat 1: Step (L) BACK Q

Beat 2: Step (R) IN PLACE q

Beat 3: Slide (L) FWD (perhaps half a foot length) S

Beat 4: Step (L) IN PLACE

Beat 5: Step (R) FWD q

Beat 6: Step (L) IN PLACE Q

Beat 7: slide (R) back and slightly behind s

Beat 8: Step (R) IN PLACE

Perspective of Follow:

Beat 1: Step (R) FWD q

Beat 2: Step (L) IN PLACE Q

Beat 3: slide (R) back and slightly behind s

Beat 4: Step (R) IN PLACE

Beat 5: Step (L) BACK Q

Beat 6: Step (R) IN PLACE q

Beat 7: Slide (L) FWD (perhaps half a foot length) S

Beat 8: Step (L) IN PLACE