



Larrys Corner

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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.

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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

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American Style Rhythm Rumba

Ballroom Rumba is a sensual dance done to romantic music. But it didn't start out that way. The Rumba (Room bah) comes from Cuba, where it is a folklore dance performed to orchestra of percussion. One form of Cuban Rumba is something of a mating dance where the man plays the part of a rooster and the woman, the hen. It's fast and furious, not at all like the Rumba performed in ballrooms.

Ballroom Rumba actually comes from a Cuban form called "son" ("sound"), a slower, less eroticized music and dance form. Though sources are incomplete about the dance's development, we know that one of the first big son hit in the U.S., "The Peanut Vendor," sparked a craze in the 1930's for what Americans called "Rumba" music. We also know that the Rumba first began to be standardized as a ballroom dance in the mid 1940's.

The Rumba's distinguishing features are a romantic feel and a heart beat. Perhaps most important to the character of the dance is its "Cuban Motion"; a rolling action of the hips that gives it its sensual look. The look is achieved by smoothly flexing and straightening the knee. The music is in 4/4 time, with a sensual feel, and the tempo is 28-31 bars per minute.

Advice & important points to remember when dancing the Rumba

Cuban motion.

As with all Latin dances, the key to making the dance look great is in the styling and in the Cuban motion. The professionals can make even the simplest patterns look outstanding due to their styling. Achieving the soft hip action is most important. Here's a way to think about it. First, think of the dance in terms of slows and

1
1
2
3
4
4

quicks. The foot should be placed on beat 4 of the slow, but do not place any weight on beat 4 of the slow. Most beginners move weight too quickly onto the slow step. The second half of the slow step beat 1 assumes the weight as the same knee straightens, and, as the same knee straightens, the same hip will rise, creating the desired hip action. A helpful verbal queue is Quick, Quick, Slow - O; Quick, Quick, Slow - O or 2 3 4-1. By saying "Slow - O," you might be able to remind yourself not to transfer weight until the second half of the slow. Hips move as a result of the bending and straightening of the knees, not by a conscious swinging of the hips. As a knee bends, the same hip drops. As a knee straightens, the same hip rises. This can be practiced by standing in place and alternately bending and straightening the knees.

Never use a heel lead.

As with all Latin dances, the footwork is ball-flat for every step, never using a heel lead. Some teachers say, "place the foot, then move weight to it, place the foot, then move weight to it." Every step should be taken with pressure on the inside edge of the ball of the foot, with the knee flexed. As the weight is taken onto the foot, the heel should lower, the knee straighten, and the heel of the opposite foot should be released, as the hips move softly sideways in the direction of the stepping foot. This hip movement is used in almost every step of Rumba.

Understand connection.

Connection in either leverage or compression (as appropriate for the figure) must be maintained at all times. The lead generally entails the building of compression or leverage. A mistake is for the lady to "fail to connect" or to initiate a figure prior to the development of the compression or leverage lead.

Never let a free hand dangle or fall below your waist.

If you open up and you are moving away from your partner, allow your arm to flow out, away from your body, but keep it above waist level. As you move back toward your partner, bring your arm in, across your body.

Rumba

Sometimes called the grandfather of the Latin dances, the Rumba originates from Cuba and it was first seen in the United States around 1920.

American Rumba

The dance known in the United States as the rumba is a composite of several dances popular in Cuba, including the guaracha, the Cuban bolero, the Cuban son, and the rural rumba. All have similar rhythms that can be traced to religious and ceremonial dances of Africa. These rhythms were remembered by the earliest black people transported unwillingly to Cuba and subjected to forced labour by the Spanish colonists. The same pulsating dance rhythms may still be found in parts of Africa, but the dances have been altered by contact with other cultures and races.

The rural rumba is a pantomimic dance originating in the rural areas. It depicts the move-

ments of various barnyard animals in an amusing manner, and is basically an exhibition, rather than a participation dance. Both the Cuban son and the Cuban bolero are moderate tempo dances in traditional ballroom form.

The guaracha is distinguished by its fast, cheerful tempo. In styling, the American rumba closely resembles the Cuban son and the Cuban bolero.

The American rumba adaptation of the Cuban dances were first introduced in the United States in 1930. Its unique styling and unusual musical rhythms immediately captured the fancy of ballroom dance enthusiasts, and it has retained its popularity to the present time.

Basic Step of Rumba

Rumba music is written in 4/4 time, with four beats to each measure. Two measures of music are required to complete one full basic step. In the music, the heavy beat is the one beat, the first beat of the measure. The music tempo is typically 104 to 108 beats per minute.

In Rumba, three steps are taken during each measure of music. In other words, three steps are taken to four beats of music. The steps are actually taken on beats 2, 3, and 4 of each measure and knee straightening, weight transfer, and turns are performed on the intervening half beats. No step is actually taken on count 1, but hip movement does occur on count 1. In American style Rumba, the step timing is sometimes counted quick, quick, slow; quick, quick, slow.

In International style Rumba, the step timing is counted 2,3,4-1, 2,3,4-1. Recall that stepping action only occurs on counts 2,3, and 4. Hip movement and spiral turning actions occur on count 1. Learning to count the music correctly is the first big hurdle for beginners. Students are seldom able to dance the Rumba correctly until they are able to count it correctly.

All steps should be taken to the inside edge of the ball of the foot. As steps are taken, the pointed toe of the moving foot skims the floor as it moves into place. As with all Latin dances, the footwork is ball-flat, ball-flat for all steps Big toe first. All steps are taken with foot turn out. Cuban motion is an essential element of the dance. Cuban motion, especially the hip action, comes mainly from the alternate bending and straightening of the knees.

Like the basic for mambo, a full basic of the Rumba can be thought of as having a forward basic, which takes 4 beats of music, and a backward basic, which takes four beats of music. So, eight beats of music are required to complete one full basic.

Each forward and backward basic can be considered to contain the following three steps: a break step, a replace step, and a slow step usually taken to second foot position.

International Style Rumba

The rumba has two different origins, Spanish and African. Its basic rhythm is a quick-quick-slow rhythm in 4-4 meter music, and its trademark is a side-to-side hip movement. The rumba developed all over the Caribbean and in Latin America, but Cuba was where the main development took place.

In the 16th century, when black slaves were imported to Latin America, they brought the "rumba influence" with them. The dance in its more primitive form seemed very improper and scandalous to the Anglo-Europeans, so they transformed and adapted it. The dance was a great favorite in Cuban taverns and was often accompanied by homemade instruments such as pots, pans, bottles and spoons.

Between the 1920s and the 1950s, the American jazz influence came into Cuban dance halls, and the American type of syncopation became incorporated into the music, creating new hybrid forms of Cuban jazz. In the mid-1940s, Monsieur Pierre and his dance partner Doris Lavelle--London's leading rumba teachers--introduced the Cuban rumba and it was established as the officially recognized version of the dance in 1955. Up until that point, the most widely known and accepted version of the dance was the faster American style of the dance--also known as the "Square Rumba."

Rumba Music

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American rumba music may be composed in either 2/4 or 4/4 time. In either case, the rhythm may be computed in counts of 4, each of equal duration. The basic footwork of the dance consists of three steps taken on the first three beats of a measure, with a hold (no step) on the fourth beat. Two measures are required for a complete pattern.

Rumba

STRONG

Music has a 3 boom-4 boom-1 BOOM-2 Silence

or boom-boom-BOOM-Tag

3 4 1 2

2 Side Quick

3 Together Quick

4 1 Step Slow