

CLINIC CORNER

This is a compilation of information from various personal contacts and dance history sources. - Chris & Terri Cantrell

WORLD-WIDE DANCE RHYTHMS

Did you ever wonder where dance rhythms originated?

ARGENTINE TANGO: Originally an erotic dance from the Caribbean and Argentina. The dance was tamed in France in the early 20th century, and became a craze in England and the US, where "tango teas" took place, offering a small space for fashionable dancers to show off their skill. It was further refined in England and a new dance was created, the "**INTERNATIONAL TANGO**". There were innumerable different tango steps in 2/4 time, although the dance was standardized, at least for ballroom performers, in the 1920s.

BOLERO: Spanish dance in 3/4 time that came from Provence in the Middle Ages, but which by the 19th century had developed into an folk dance to a throbbing rhythm from vocal or guitar and castanet accompaniment.

CHA CHA: A Cuban dance derived from the mambo, possibly named after the noise made by the slippers of Caribbean women (2 slow and 3 quick steps), to the Latin American sound in 2/4 or 4/4 time. First popular in the middle 1950's.

CONGA: A Cuban dance in which performers formed a long chain by holding onto the waist of the person in front, and snaked their way around the floor, house, or even town, performing a 1-2-3-kick to Latin American music. First popular in England and the US in the 1930's.

MAMBO: Cuban dance popular in the US and Europe in the mid-1950's. The Mambo is a combination of Latin American and Jazz. There is one beat in each bar on which the dancer does not take a step.

MERENGUE: The Merengue has a "limp" step in which the right foot is brought up to the left to Latin American music. Legend claims that a Dominican Republic Ruler/General who had a severe limp but loved to dance originated this dance. It was first popular in the US in the 1950's.

PASO DOBLE: Spanish one-step (a dance that requires a single step per beat of music) originally popular in the 1930's.

POLKA: The Polka came from Czechoslovakia and Bohemia. The name is connected to the Czech word *pulka*, meaning "half" (half steps are used in the dance). The catchy rhythm in 2/4 time made the dance widely popular in Europe and the US after its performance on the Paris stage in 1844.

QUICKSTEP: English dance that gave birth to the quick fox trot (American Foxtrot/Arthur Murray Foxtrot). It was given the name "Quickstep" in 1929, and is performed smoothly with gliding steps and turns.

RUMBA: Is from Cuba, originally an erotic dance combining African and Caribbean rhythms. It reached the US in the late 1920's in a tamed version in 2/4 or 4/4 time.

SAMBA: Brazilian dance in 2/4 or 4/4 time whose name came from the dances performed by African slaves. A modified version was introduced at the 1939 New York World's Fair, and became popular in Europe after World War II.

WALTZ: Waltz was originally a German turning dance. This dance in 3/4 time conquered the rest of Europe in the early 19th century, though it had to contend with fierce criticism because of the close hold required and the speed with which the dancers revolved around the floor.