

# *The Silver Slipper*

*A Publication of the Nanaimo Ballroom Dance Society*



## **Slipping into a New Year....**

It has been quite awhile since our last publication, we know! Time seemed to march forward through 2013 and somewhere the focus for us strayed away from dancing. However, with taking on board positions for 2014, we decided to get back on track. Along with some other NBDS duties, we are excited about providing some color and insight about NBDS activities through the Silver Slipper. And, I am especially looking forward to bringing thoughtful articles and input about our shared passion with one of our favorite pastimes.

In this issue, we'll take a look at lead and follow roles in dance and how better understanding these roles can bring about better partnering. We will give space to local instructors for input and ask that all teachers from the area send us your tips or suggestions for future issues. Andy Mundy and Ken Yung start us off here. We'll also ask you to look at the new NBDS website and to prepare yourself for another great IFB in May. Plus, there are a few other goodies for you to read over coffee in the morning.

Myself, I am interested in learning more about the all important skill of 'floor craft' and that will be a future focus in the Silver Slipper. We'd also like to hear also from all our experienced dancers with their tips on lead/follow roles and Floor craft. Send us your stories and ideas. Clearly there are skills to develop for both roles and we are thinking that we should spend more time looking at how to develop those skills.

Mark Pearce

**December 2013**

**Editor: Mark Pearce**

## **Coming NBDS Events**

<b><u>Christmas Gala</u></b>	<b>Dec</b>
<b>Beban Park Social Ctr</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>DJ John Maher</b>	
<b>4 pm—Midnight</b>	
<b><u>New Year's Eve</u></b>	<b>Dec</b>
<b><u>Ballroom/Latin Party</u></b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Nanoose Place</b>	
<b>DJ Andy Mundy</b>	
<b><u>Bowen Dance</u></b>	<b>Jan</b>
<b>Surprise Workshop</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>7:00 to 8:00</b>	
<b>Surprise DJ</b>	
<b>Dancing 8:00 to 10:00</b>	

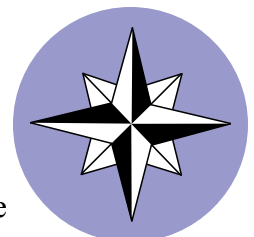
*You don't stop dancing from  
growing old, you grow old from  
stopping to dance.*

## **The New NBDS Website..... have a look, make use**

Our online presence is evolving and the executive have been working on our website lately to give members more content and also to provide prospective members with information on our group, showing a bit of what we do and who we are. We are working to improve our on-line presence both through our website and through other social media outlets such as Facebook. Check out our website at: [www.ballroomnanaimo.ca](http://www.ballroomnanaimo.ca).

As a paid-up member, you can now access minutes from both past board meetings and past annual general meetings, You can also view the NBDS constitution and bylaws. The general public can see what we do and check out galleries of pictures or video along with past issues of the Silver Slipper. The calendar section is helpful also as all dances, special events and practice nights are noted.

Note: if you'd like to view the members only section, please email me or any other executive for the login information. Thanks. You can reach me at [markpearce@shaw.ca](mailto:markpearce@shaw.ca).





## **IFB Report— Vicki Linfitt**

Island Fantasy Ball 2014 plans are well under way.  
Feel the Excitement, Share the Joy—Two Days of Spectacular Dancing!

We are back to our traditional date of the first weekend in May. This year we look forward to welcoming back familiar faces as well as introducing some new (to Nanaimo), exciting talent.....you will have to attend to see who that might be. Brochures will be available at all of the upcoming dances.

Sponsorship opportunities are available now and are a wonderful way to be involved at an essential level. As a sponsor, you can be part of a legacy and make a difference. You get to be an integral part of the success of the IFB and have the opportunity to present medals and trophies to our dancers; all without missing out on any of the action. Please contact Vicki or any IFB committee person for more details; and we do need your support! Vicki's email is [linfitt@shaw.ca](mailto:linfitt@shaw.ca)

As always, Sponsors of IFB, NBDS members and those who are buying tables (through group sales), will be able to access the best seats in the house. Silver Sponsors will have their pick of Sunday seating. Gold, Platinum and Diamond Sponsors will be able to have first pick of their seats for the entire weekend. And, NBDS members and those who are buying tables (group sales) will be able to buy seats ahead of the general public. To reserve your seats please contact Marion Headrick at [rjheadrick@shaw.ca](mailto:rjheadrick@shaw.ca). Group sales are available from now till the end of January. Tickets go on sale to the general public on February 4th.

If you have time to donate, consider being a volunteer. Volunteering is rewarding in itself, but we always thank our volunteers with a fun summer party that you would love to attend! Please contact Vicki if you would like to volunteer this year. It's never too early!

Your IFB organizing committee are: Nelson & Pinky Wong, Keith & Deborah Wilson, Mike & Vicki Linfitt, Sara Treutler, Lesley Tombs, Stephen Gower and Marion Headrick. Please contact any one of us if you would like to be involved at any level of producing this fine cultural event for our fair city of Nanaimo BC.

Yours in dancing,  
Vicki Linfitt

## **Dance Floor News— Get Connected.**

Are you subscribed? If not, you should be! Just send an email to: [Andy.Mundy@ballroomnanaimo.ca](mailto:Andy.Mundy@ballroomnanaimo.ca)

The Dance Floor News is a free subscription E-Mail service that is provided monthly by the NBDS. It is a handy listing of many upcoming dance events (not just NBDS events!) on Vancouver Island. With it you can mark your calendars and not miss a chance to throw on the old dancing shoes.

Advertisers and promoters of dance events in our region are able list their events but are asked to reciprocate ads for NBDS events in their publications. There is a section (free) for dance related buy, sell or trade where you can advertise dance clothing, shoes, music, DVDs, videos, or the need for a dance partner, for instance. NBDS does not endorse or recommend any particular dance event, instructor or promoter, and the Society publishes information provided by others solely for the convenience of dancers. The deadline for inclusion in the following month's issue is the last day of the month. Get signed up!

## The Health Benefits of Dancing:

Dancing is a physical activity that has all of the same physical health benefits as walking, bicycling, or swimming. Dancing is a great way to strengthen bones and muscles, maintain a healthy weight, improve balance and stay healthy in general. But that is not where the health benefits of dancing end. Studies have shown that dancing has been shown to reduce the risk of Dementia and Alzheimer's in adults.

A 21 year study was done by the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City to see if any physical or cognitive activities had an influence on mental acuity. They had a group of people, 75 and older, perform a variety of activities such as reading books, writing for pleasure, doing crossword puzzles, playing tennis or golf, swimming, biking, and dancing. It came as no surprise that reading and doing crossword puzzles reduced the risk of dementia by 35-47%, but what did come as a surprise was that almost none of the physical activities appeared to offer any protection at all. There was only one exception: the only physical activity to offer a defense against Dementia and Alzheimer's was DANCING!!!! The study showed that dancing frequently reduced the risk by 76%! Far more than any other activity tested. Plus the more you dance, the better it works!

This study found that the complexity of dancing can actually increase neural pathways. These neural pathways increase as we learn. The brain rewires these pathways as needed throughout life. When it comes to the human mind, the phrase "use it or lose it" really does apply.

Dr. Joseph Coyle, a psychiatrist with Harvard Medical School, wrote in commentary on the study: "The cerebral cortex and hippocampus, which are critical to these activities, are remarkably plastic, and they rewire themselves based upon their use." Dr. Katzman, one of the study's authors hypothesized that people are able to resist the effects of dementia because they have an increased cognitive reserve and a greater complexity of neuronal synapses.

### Why Ballroom & Latin Dance?

You may be asking, why is dancing better than other activities for keeping your brain sharp? And is all dancing created equal or are some styles better than others? Researches found that it is Lead & Follow dancing that works so well because it requires split-second rapid-fire decision making. Dancing integrates multiple brain functions at once: kinesthetic, rational, musical, and emotional. So, you are using several parts of your brain at the same time. As a leader you constantly have to stay focused, thinking about what move you're going to dazzle your lady with next. As a follower you have to stay sensitive and alert, always ready to react to whatever step your partner takes next, or you run the risk of getting your cute new open-toed shoes trampled on. This benefit is greatly enhanced by dancing with different partners, and not always with the same fellow. With different dance partners, you have to adjust much more and be aware of more variables.

### In Summary

The health benefits of Ballroom and Latin dancing are staggering, so dust off those dancing shoes and get going! You have nothing to lose and everything to gain!

# Great Partnering

by Richard Powers

Knowing many dance steps and figures is fun, but the true art of social dancing, and its greatest pleasures, lie in great partnering. The nonverbal lead-follow connection between partners is the essence of social dancing. And the best dance partnering is not only a matter of skill, but also of attitude.

In writing about "leading" and "following," I first want to clarify that I'm not especially fond of the term "following." Yes, I often use the term, but it's a bit problematic for two reasons.

## Reason #1: The Dark Ages of Ballroom Dance

The less important reason is that for many people, the term "following" still carries a negative connotation left over from the early 20th century. The original ballroom emphasis toward partnering was best, as reflected in these quotes from the 19th century:

‘Recollect that the desire of imparting pleasure, especially to the ladies, is one of the essential qualifications of a gentleman. The truly polite man is always mindful of the comfort of those around him.’ — Prof. D. L. Carpenter, Philadelphia, 1854

‘True, genuine politeness has its foundation deeper than in the mere conformation to certain rules, for it is the spontaneous and natural effect of an intelligent mind and kindly heart which overlooks annoyances in consideration for the happiness of others.’ — Edward Ferrero, NY, 1859

Unfortunately, the 1920s through 1950s saw the emergence of a particularly disagreeable phase of ballroom dance, when the term lead meant "command" and follow meant "obey". Soon after American women won the right to vote, many dance manuals changed their tone, proposing that the man was still the "boss" on the dance floor, while the "weaker sex" had to "submit entirely" to the man. Advice for women was that, "she must not have a mind of her own," and that "you don't have much to say in the matter at all."

You might be amused to read these quotations, which are here: [Partnering Before and After the Vote](#).

But that was a long time ago — the "dark ages" of ballroom dance. Fortunately we've become much more enlightened since then, as friendliness and respect have returned to the dance floor.

## Reason #2: It Isn't Accurate

The main reason I don't care for the term "following" is that it doesn't accurately describe the role. Women do not "follow." They interpret signals they're given, with a keen responsiveness that is not at all passive.

As with a language interpreter at the United Nations, a dancer's ability to interpret signals benefits from intelligence and experience. Leads, if you want to make a good impression on your partner, show her that you respect this intelligence and experience. How? If she does something that you didn't intend, recognize that she still made a valid alternate interpretation of the signals you gave her. She didn't make a "mistake".

No, don't just recognize it. Show her that you know she didn't make a mistake, by flowing along with her during her valid alternate interpretation. She's dancing — try to keep up with her. Unlike language translating, interpreting a dance lead can also include the woman leaving her own stamp of individuality, adding flourishes and flair which her partner admires. Sometimes, she can even invent her own footwork variations that harmonize with her partner's footwork.

Leads, I probably don't need to state the obvious, but you must give her a clear lead to interpret. Just as a language interpreter can't translate mumbling, she can't interpret a mumbled lead. And forceful leading is no more helpful than is the





shouting of unintelligible mumbling. Israel Heaton of Brigham Young University wrote, "When a girl does not react readily to her partner's lead, he should hold her firmer and give a stronger lead." But I disagree.

Clear leading is the physical equivalent of quiet perfect diction, not shouting.

Better yet, great Leads have learned to "speak" in a friendly warm tone with their partnering. Guys, be clear and precise, but also warm and friendly with your leads. And instantly flexible when she comes up with an alternate interpretation of your signals.

The Follow role is mentally and physically active, like the flow state in sports.

In sports, we admire the players who zigzag brilliantly across the field, completely aware of their surroundings and responding instantly to each moment, rather than those who slavishly follow a game plan that is no longer working. The nimble, intelligent player is in the flow state of relaxed responsiveness, paying highly active attention to possibilities. The Follow role in social dancing does the same — paying highly active attention to possibilities.

But don't you still use the term follow?

Yes, I don't wish to change the dance world's use of the terms Lead and Follow, and some dancers take the opposite role, so saying men and women doesn't always apply. So I use the terms, but I want to clarify what I mean by following.

And leading? That has also changed since the dark ages of ballroom dance. The best dancers now know that a part of great leading is following. I prefer the term tracking — he leads a move, then tracks her movement and stays with her. He is perceptive and responsive to her situation, as he watches where his partner is going, where her feet are, where her momentum is heading, which steps flow smoothly from her current step. He knows and he cares what is comfortable for her, what is pleasurable or fun. He dances for his partner's ability and comfort.



A good lead clearly suggests an option, which is different from controlling her. He proposes, not prescribes, a certain way of moving. If his partner does not go with his proposal (does not 'follow'), he refrains from exerting more power to press her to accept the proposal.

And as with the Follow role, the aware Lead also enjoys the flow state of relaxed responsiveness. Both roles benefit by paying highly active attention to possibilities. Both remain flexible, constantly adapting to their partner.

The flow state in sports has often been described as ecstatic. Social dancers often describe their flow state the same way. As we dance, we constantly discover new opportunities, which open doors to possibilities, as opposed to rules and restrictions that close doors. We generously adjust our own dancing to be compatible with our various dance partners, rather than insisting that they conform to us. We enjoy the individuality of our dance partners, and we continually modify our dancing to maximize their comfort and pleasure. Doing so then doubles our own enjoyment of social dancing.

Then once we discover the benefits of this awareness on the dance floor, we find that it applies to our other activities and relationships as well.

*Richard has been teaching contemporary and historic social dance for over 35 years. He leads workshops around the world and is currently a full-time instructor at Stanford University's Dance Division.*  
<http://richardpowers.com/>

## Whether You Lead or Follow: Ballroom Dancing is a Partnership

Leading and following on the dance floor can be analyzed down to the tiniest detail and is probably the most complex form of communication that takes place between two human beings. Leading and following are skills that require true intelligence and cognitive abilities such as learning, pattern recognition, and non-verbal communication. Watching a champion couple is like watching an improvised composition of a piece of art.

A good lead/follow is like a good conversation - you don't have to yell, you only need to talk. As you get better, all you really need to do is whisper. Leading and following is a dynamic process that requires a great deal of effort on the part of both members of a partnership. Partnering skills are vital to good ballroom dancing. It is very difficult to cover the technique in classes since this is probably the most complex element to couple dancing and takes many years of coaching to perfect. It is not a matter of simple 'cueing', but an understanding of the entire body and how to make 2 people move as one around a common center. Competitive dancers must work extremely hard with this and it is actually tougher with couples who are 'used to each other' than with perfect strangers. A longtime partner can get very used to the feel of their partner, and it is tougher to practice any improvement or change.

Even competitive routines are led/followed. Any competitor taught "dance your own part and let your partner dance theirs, you don't have to lead/follow" has been taught wrong. The judges can tell the difference between a couple with a real lead/follow "connection" and a couple that is just going through their routine. One competitor states "Ballroom is social dancing - it is dependent on lead and follow, even in competition. My competition (Standard - "smooth") partner and I have a few pre-choreographed "amalgamations" we use in competition, but I still always have to rely on his lead to know what we're doing, where we're going, what timing he's going to use this time, how he feels like expressing it this time..." Another competitor says "there is most definitely lead and follow, even in competitive Latin where one's routines are choreographed to the hilt. My partner and I have spent countless hours, with coaches and without them, working on \*nothing\* but this one aspect of the dance. Good lead and follow is critical in Latin dancing, both for the sake of speed, control and balance, but also simply because a step well-led and followed is a thousand times more pleasurable to dance for both partners."



Without even dancing with them you can tell the competitive dancers who can't lead and follow; just look for the couples who keep running into others on the floor. Because they dance their own parts, they have not developed and practiced the dynamic process of leading and following (floor craft) required to negotiate around obstacles and unexpected incursions into their line of dance. Even with a routine, there is still a need to change directions unexpectedly, or completely alter a routine to deal with the fact that other couples are also dancing.

In competition, there is never a place in the routine where lead-and-follow are not taking place. Most of the steps you perform in competition dancing require a special attention to lead and follow; you see this aspect where good competitive couples can make the dancing appear to take no effort, and therefore appears that no lead-and-follow is happening.

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**Men** - To truly lead well you must know the lady's part to every figure you do. The leader truly has to do everything at once; he's got to listen to the music, decide what to do and how to do it, think not only about his own movements but about his partner's and those of all the other couples, etc., etc. And to make matters worse, when beginning his dancing career the man has to learn how to do everything at once, at once. Yes, the follower has to be able to perform a lot of actions, but the leader has to be able to perform and initiate them. In addition, there are many variations that differ only in detail matters of raising an arm or not, or something subtle like that, and the leader has to be aware of the differences, and has to indicate clearly where the movement is going.

**Women** - Following skills are as equally important as leading skills. A dance is much more enjoyable when the leader need only give firm, not forceful, leads to his partner to indicate what is wanted, and when a partner senses body movements that serve as leads. For this to work, the lady must become sensitive and responsive to the feel (and sometimes sight) of leads, and not expect that her partner will (literally) carry her through the dance. The skill of following is greatly underestimated. Ballroom Dancing is a partner sport - each person has to carry his/her load, or the whole thing fails.

### **A Word From the Master**

Keep in mind these words from the ultimate male lead, Fred Astaire:

"Above all, be yourself! Dancing should be a form of self-expression. Whatever else you may do, don't make the mistake of being an unimaginative copyist. Don't be a slave to steps or routines.



After you have been dancing for a time, you will find that you do the Foxtrot, the Waltz or the Tango just a little bit differently from anyone else. You have developed your own individual style. That is nothing to worry over. On the contrary, there would be more cause for worry if you did not develop a style of your own. Styles in dancing are developed just as inevitably as styles in writing or painting. The dancer without individual style is no more than a mechanical robot

For ballroom dancing, remember that your partners have their own distinctive styles also. Cultivate flexibility. Be able to adapt your style to that of your partner. In doing so, you are not surrendering your individuality, but blending it with that of your partner."

***I borrowed this article from a blog site.***

***<http://reflectionsinverse.blogspot.ca/2013/11/whether-you-lead-or-follow-ballroom.html>***

***Hope she doesn't mind!***



**Here's a pic from our recent Halloween dance held at Bowen on May 2nd. It was smaller but inspired bunch of cleverly costumed dancers that graced the floor that night. From the amount of pirates that attended, you'd think we might try a theme dance in the future where we could all be pirates...shiver me timbers!**

## The Importance of Footwork — Andy Mundy

Footwork can mean a lot of different things to dancers, with examples ranging from “it’s vital for my performance” to “it’s not important, why should I bother?” So, why is it vital? ... and why should you bother? Dancing is much like walking, except that you are making patterns of steps, in time to music, with a partner. When you walk, you don’t normally think too much about your footwork, but maybe you should.

Take a couple of steps forward and, as you do so, think about which part of your foot lands on the floor first, which part of your foot makes contact next, and which part is still in contact with the floor as you end the step. Try it backwards too. Think about the amount of pressure each part of your foot makes on the floor and when.

Try varying the part of the foot in contact with the floor when you take a step – try landing on the toe first, instead of the heel. Try using the outside edge of the foot, or the inside. Vary the amount of pressure at different times during the step. When you do this, it affects the way in which you move and how you walk; sometimes for the better, and sometimes not. It affects your poise and your balance.

Similarly, in dancing, the part or parts of the foot you use when you take a step will affect how you move; and movement (with music and a partner) is what dancing is all about.

Here are some examples in different dances.

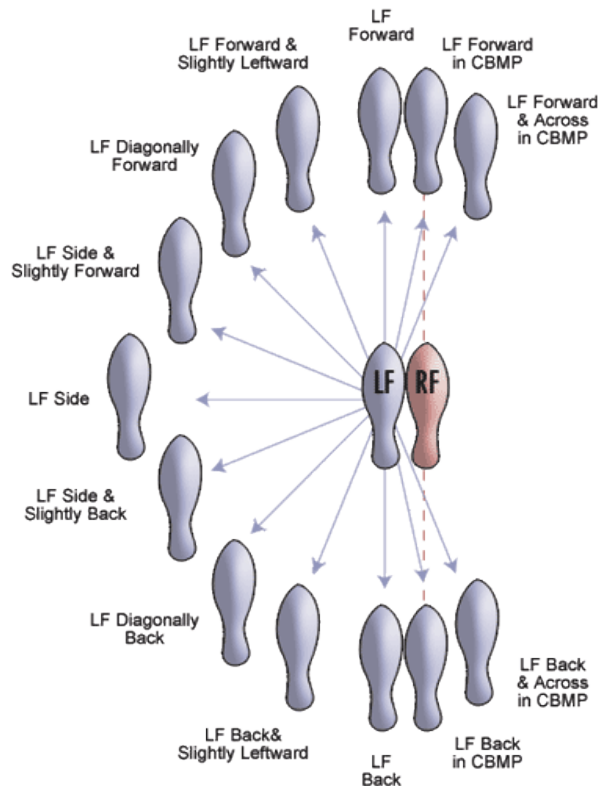
Step #3 of a forwards closed change in waltz will finish up on the toe of the supporting foot, and the next step is usually placed forwards onto the heel first. However, try standing up on the toes then take the next step forwards onto the heel and you will find it quite difficult to do – the natural tendency is to step forwards onto the toe. The “footwork” for this step #3 is “toe, heel” indicating the foot should lower to the heel before the next step is taken. Not bothering with the correct footwork often results in the dancer pitching forwards onto the toe of the next step, off balance and without control.

In tango, “inside edge” and “outside edge” of foot or toe is frequently used. This is usually to control poise, posture and balance while showing the unique character of the dance.

When stepping back in rumba, it is the front heel which is released from the floor, not the toe. This gives an attractive leg line instead of an ugly “foot stuck up in the air” effect.

There are many other examples and many different reasons for particular footwork. Indeed, sometimes it is impossible to execute a particular figure or even take a step unless the footwork is correct.

So, whether you are a novice or an expert, a social dancer or a competitor, footwork is important. Take the time and trouble to perfect it since it enables you to move in the correct manner and makes it easier for you to perform the steps and figures.





## *Ballroom History Lives On!*

*If you are visiting England, this looks like a great side trip.*

**You've probably heard about Blackpool England and the town's association with ballroom dancing. Here is some information on the dance floor to end all dance floors! Check it out on the internet as there is lots more to know about this magical place. I pilfered some ad copy (below) to get you started:**

**Blackpool Tower Ballroom is a sight to behold. Breath taking in its splendour, daily tea dances, fabulous events and wonderful music keep this world class venue an amazing experience for old and young visitors alike. The Blackpool Tower Ballroom is one of the world's most magnificent ballrooms, designed by renowned Victorian architect Frank Matcham.**



**It's a sight to behold, breath taking in its splendour, where you can enjoy daily tea dances, fabulous events and wonderful music, which keep this world class venue an amazing experience for both old and young visitors alike.**

**Step into the sensationally stylish Blackpool Tower Ballroom and prepare to be lost in a world of elegant charm and refined beauty.**

**Dating back to 1894, The Blackpool Tower Ballroom is world famous for its unique dance floor and spectacular architecture and remains to this day a destination for dance fans from across the globe.**

**You can dance the day away to the sounds of the famous Wurlitzer organ amidst this stunning setting, or watch from the side lines as you enjoy a delicious afternoon tea.**

**Whether you want to glide around the dance floor, relax at your table or spectate from up on the balconies, The Blackpool Tower Ballroom is an experience you will never forget. You'll be entranced by magic of The Ballroom and want to return time and time again, as so many of our regular guests already do.**

**Tickets to enter The Ballroom cost £9.95 but if you just wish to spectate from the upper balconies then you can do so for free. Enjoy Afternoon or High Tea from just £6.50 (plus entry fee)**



**Find out more about the [Blackpool Tower Ballroom](http://www.blackpooltowerballroom.co.uk), including opening times, which organist is playing, and more.**

Also check out: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2087414/Blackpool-Tower-Ballroom-Spring-clean-begins.html>

## *Cha Cha – Some history.... (this is just my little synopsis. There is more!)*

The energetic and passionate Cha Cha (or 'Cha-Cha-Cha' as originally named) is one of the most popular social Latin-American dances. Lively and flirtatious, Cha Cha is danced to authentic Cuban music, Latin Pop or Latin Rock but also can be found in many other music genres, including country, funk and hip hop. Vibrant, flamboyant and playful, it has a light and bubbly feel that provides great fun for dancers throughout the world. The Cha Cha is the Latin dance rhythm most integrated into American pop music.



The modern ballroom version of Cha Cha draws its essence firmly from Cuba in the 1950s (see Origins below). Today, Cha Cha remains one of the five top Latin American dances in professional ballroom competitions. The music for the international ballroom Cha Cha is energetic with a steady beat. The Cuban Cha-Cha-Chá, in contrast, is more sensual and may involve complex polyrhythms.

### *By Name*

The origin of the phrase 'Cha Cha' has been traced to the West Indies. In Haiti and surrounding islands, an indigenous plant produces seed pods which are called 'Cha Cha'. These seed pods have a distinctive rattle and for a long time were used in the construction of a local West Indies' instrument, similar to the maracas. It later became the 'guiro', a musical instrument consisting of a dried gourd rubbed by a serrated stick.

The predecessor to the 'guiro' was used by religious leaders to help keep time in ritual music or singing groups. The 'guiro' is still used in all Latin percussion ensembles today, playing a key role in the typical rhythm section of important genres like cumbia and salsa. In Spanish, the word 'chacha' means "nursemaid".



### *Origins*

After the Second World War, North Americans flocked to Cuba to enjoy its warm climate, relaxing seaside resorts, vibrant nightclubs and casinos. Visiting American dance bands playing there naturally began intermixing with talented Cuban musicians.

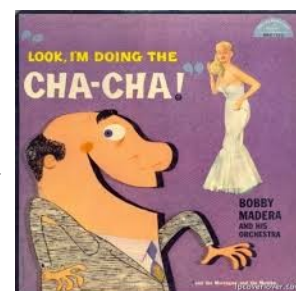
In the early 1950's, the Cuban group "Orquesta America Charanga" started combining time-honored Cuban Danzon and Montuno musical styles with new syncopated beats influenced by the American jazz scene. What arose were exciting new mambo rhythms (single, double and triple).

At the forefront of this emerging music scene was Cuban composer and violinist Enrique Jorrin. He noticed a particular swishing in the triple mambo sound which he later dubbed "cha cha cha". Cuban dancers were using a slight triple hip undulation which was gradually changed to a triple step on the slow count of the triple mambo and soon the Cha Cha Cha started to develop.

The basis of the international ballroom cha cha, however, was introduced by Monsieur Pierre Zurcher-Margolle and his partner Doris Lavelle in the late 1950's. In a visit to Cuba in 1952, they observed a lot about the rhythm of the dance and brought that back to their countries to create the more westernized basic Cha Cha steps that we learn today. By 1959, people all over America and Britain had embraced the lively and fun 'Cha-Cha' and it was said to be the most popular Latin dances in America.

### *Musicality and Timing*

Tempos for Cha Cha dances are fast, sassy and staccato, ranging between 110 to 130 beats per minute and played in 4/4 timing. The music has 4 even beats with the accent on the first beat of the bar. Musically it can be counted:



*Cha Cha history continued....*

'1, 2, 3, 4, &' adding an extra half beat between the fourth and first beats.

The fourth beat is split into two so that five steps are danced to four beats (as in "One, two, cha cha cha").

Rhythmically, it is often easier to hear it as '2,3,4 & 1'. The original Cuban and the ballroom cha-cha-cha count is "two, three, chachacha" or "four-and-one, two, three". The dance does not start on the first beat of a bar, though it can start with a transfer of weight to the lead's right. Many social dancers count "one, two, cha-cha-cha" and may find it difficult to make the adjustment to the "correct" timing of the dance.

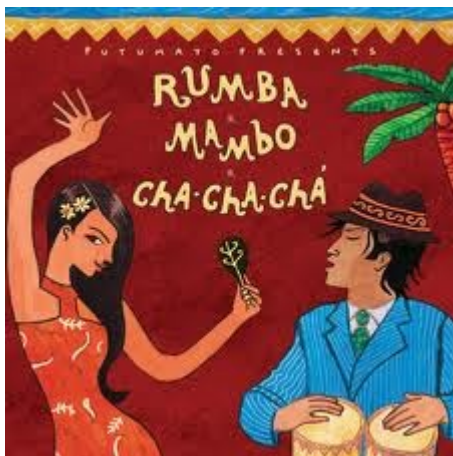
### *Footwork and Hip Movement*

In the Cha Cha, dancers must synchronize each movement as they dance parallel to one another. This dance has closed position as well as single handhold, double handhold, and solo movements.

The footwork consists of three quick, small steps (triple step or cha cha cha) and two slower steps. Steps are kept compact and the dance is danced generally without any rise and fall. There is, however, lots of hip motion (Cuban motion) which is very distinctive and gives the Cha Cha it's very Latin, sexy and sensual feel. The legs and hips are used to produce a strong rhythmical movement that compliments the music.

The Cha Cha uses a "ball flat" foot action and keeps the body over the feet at all times. The feet remain close to the floor (toe steps) like in most Latin dances. Every step taken starts with a slightly flexed knee.

Dancers work to master "Cuban motion," the characteristic Latin body/hip action. Cuban motion is simply a distinctive way in which the hips move up and down. The hip movements come mainly from alternately bending and straightening the knees...as one knee bends (or straightens), the same hip drops (raises).



The dancers hips are relaxed to allow free movement in the pelvic area as a result of the bending and straightening of the knees. The upper body shifts over the supporting foot as the steps are taken (foot moves, body follows). On steps taking a full beat of music the knee straightens just before it reaches its position. As weight is taken fully on the step the hips move naturally in the direction of the leg receiving the weight.

### *Some Cha Cha Steps for review*

- Cha Cha Chasse      •The Fan      •The Hockey Stick      •Manita a Mano
- The New York      •The New York Bus Stop      •El Mojito
- Underarm Spot Turns      •The Liquidizer      •The Alemana Turn
- El Paseo      •The Peek-a-Boo      •The Zig-Zag

## *Venus and Mars.....perspectives from another age.....*

'Part of the joy of dancing is conversation. Trouble is, some men can't talk and dance at the same time.'

*Ginger Rogers*

'I think dancing is a man's game and if he does it well he does it better than a woman.'

*Gene Kelly*



## **Other holiday dancing events to keep you active.....**

### **FOREVER YUNG CHRISTMAS PARTY**

Saturday, December 14. 7:00 - 10:30pm.

At the Studio. \$12 per person.

This one is 'Pot Luck' so please bring a dish to share! We would prefer to have a selection of sweet and savory, so please communicate with others so we don't end up with a table full of sweet items! Refreshments included.

Games. Door prizes.

Admission by ticket only. If you wish to attend, please email or phone us.

Tel: 250 240-0533 Email: [yungdance@shaw.ca](mailto:yungdance@shaw.ca)  
281 East Island Highway. Parksville.

Earlier that same day, join us from 1:30 to 3 for a Kid's Christmas Party for ages 3-12. Bring your kids or grandkids and introduce them to the world of ballroom dance. No experience required. Party games mostly with some dancing. Parents can bring something for a potluck contribution. \$5 donation to the Forever Yung Dance Studio DanceSport Scholarship fun.

Prizes, refreshments, Dance Demo's. Pre-registration is required by Dec 5, as we need to ensure we have enough prizes and goodies for everyone.

### **2nd Friday Social Dance Party**

December 13th at Legion 256, 1630 Wellington Road East, Nanaimo

7.00pm-7.30pm free beginner's Cha Cha dance lesson with Elizabeth Stetar

7.30pm-11.00pm Social dance with DJ John Maher

### **Social Dance**

December 29th at The Bradley Centre, 975 Shearme Road, Coombs

7.30pm-10.30pm Christmas Social Dance with live music by The Dan Hughes Band

For more details contact Ray Chesin email [rchesin@highconceptonly.com](mailto:rchesin@highconceptonly.com) or call 250-228-8755

### **Nanaimo Harbour City Seniors Ballroom Dance**

Every Tuesday morning at Bowen Park, Nanaimo

10.00am-12.00 noon Ballroom dance

Note: last dance in 2013 is December 17th & first dance in 2014 is January 7th

For more details contact Ron Levesque email [ron-pin@telus.net](mailto:ron-pin@telus.net) or web site

[www.nanaimoharbourcityseniors.com](http://www.nanaimoharbourcityseniors.com)

### **Nanaimo Harbour City Seniors New Year's Dance**

December 17th at Bowen Park, Nanaimo

2.00pm-4.30pm Social Ballroom dance

For more details contact Ron Levesque [ron-pin@telus.net](mailto:ron-pin@telus.net) or web site at

[www.nanaimoharbourcityseniors.com](http://www.nanaimoharbourcityseniors.com)

### **In Victoria:**

#### ***Lee and Liz Christmas Dance***

December 14th at Saanich Commonwealth Place, 4636 Elk Lake Rd, Victoria 7.00pm-10.30pm Social dance

#### ***John and Carla Christmas Dance***

December 20th at Cadboro Bay United Church, 2625 Arbutus Road, Victoria

7.30pm Rumba Workshop

8.30-11.00pm Social dance

#### ***VBDS New Year's Dance***

December 31st at Saanich Commonwealth Place, 4636 Elk Lake Rd, Victoria

7.00pm-12.30am Social dance

For more details on any of these events, please contact John de Pfyffer email [dancevictoria@telus.net](mailto:dancevictoria@telus.net)

**Happy Holidays everyone. Until next issue, keep on dancing! Mark and Marilyn**