



Dan and Sandi's
"BOOM BOOM" CLINIC: A FEW NOTES
January 15, 2006

"Boom Boom" is a cha cha that was the most taught Phase V dance in Carousel Clubs across the country last year. It is novel in that it incorporates figures from merengue and paso doble with the cha cha.

MUSICAL TIMING

The combination of rhythms works because all are danceable to music with 4/4 timing. This means that there are four beats in each measure of music. At speed, we are playing the music at 29 measures per minute. For clinic work, we have slowed it to 27.5 measures per minute.

RHYTHMIC INTERPRETATION

Each of the rhythms has its own characteristics. How you dance those four beats of music in a measure depends on which rhythm you are doing at the time.

Merengue is a marching rhythm in which you take one step on each beat of music in most figures: *Quick, Quick, Quick, Quick*. No heel leads, steps are "ball flat." Its major characteristic is the hip motion on each step.

Each step of merengue is small, taken under the body. The basic step is a "side close side close" movement. Try to step side on the inside edge of the ball of the moving foot. As you take full weight onto the foot, feel a rolling action across the bottom of your foot, then straighten that leg as the other leg flexes to move. This creates a subtle hip action.

Cha cha figures are usually done in five steps over one measure of music, requiring a syncopation. The basic count is *1 2 3&4 (or Quick Quick Quick & Quick)*.

The characteristic of Cha Cha is fast feet, leaving little time to develop Cuban motion. However, relax and let a natural hip swing occur as the steps are taken. Because the steps are fast, keep them small and under the body to stay on time with the music.

Paso doble, like merengue, is basically about marching, but without Cuban hip motion. March: *1,2,3,4*. It is the dance of the bullfight. Steps reflect the pride, determination and arrogance of the bullfighter. Chin up!

DANCE POSITION

Connection for all three dances is through the arms. In open facing position, both dancers should have a slight pressure through the arm towards the other's hand. This creates a physical feel of being "connected." Hands are joined equidistance between the partners, forearms parallel to the floor, so that energy is directed through the connected hands, toward each other's hips.

In closed position, the arms are more compact and the hold is looser than in the smooth dances, without body contact. Lead is through changes of body weight felt through the arm connection.

Arms are never limp. Use free arms rhythmically. In paso doble, the free arms are usually strong and held forward as though carrying the bullfighter's cape. What you do with the arms otherwise is a matter of personal taste, but best keep it simple.