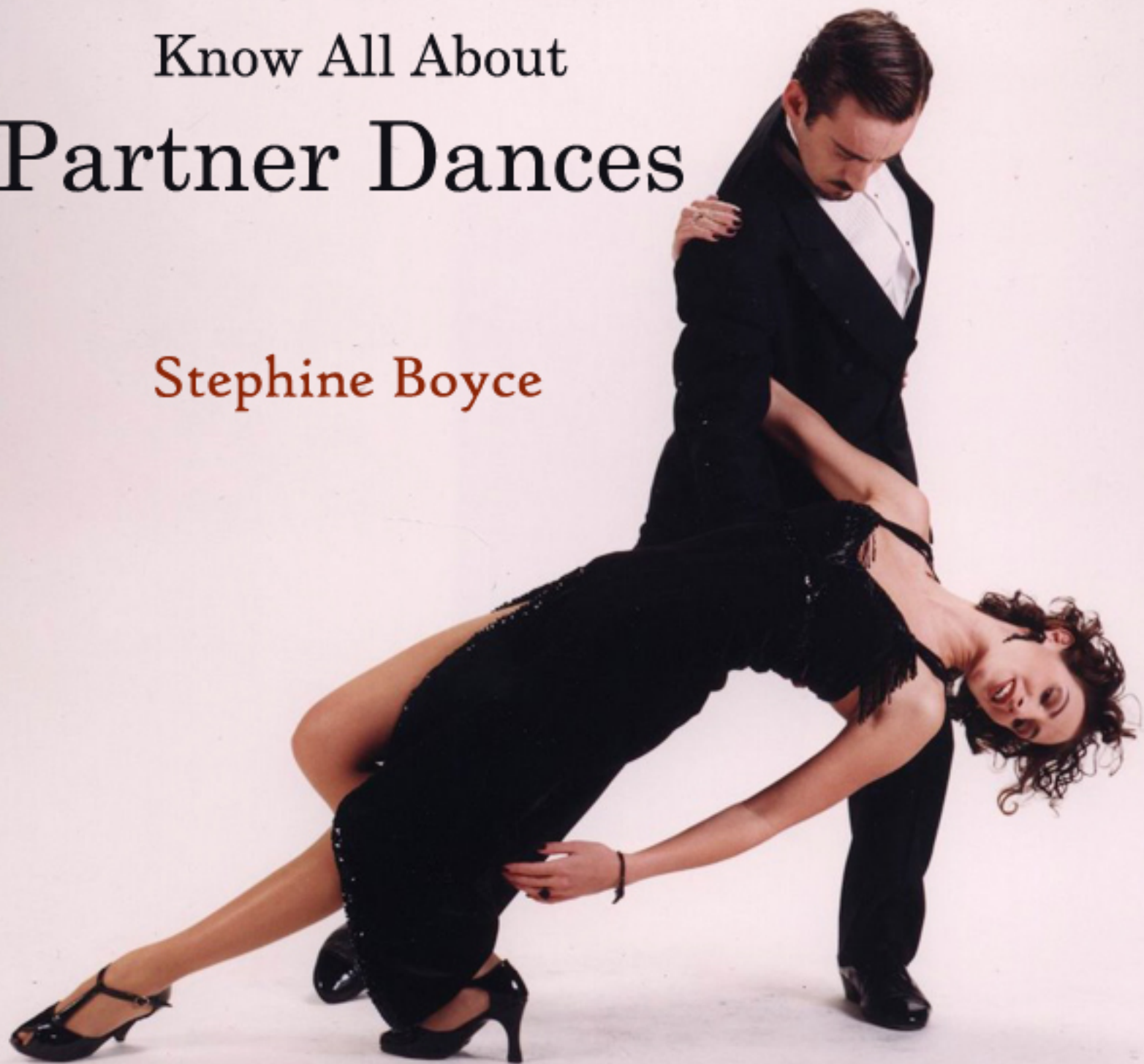


Know All About  
**Partner Dances**

Stephine Boyce



Revised Edition: 2014

ISBN 978-81-323-1013-6

© All rights reserved.

*Published by:*  
**College Publishing House**  
4735/22 Prakashdeep Bldg,  
Ansari Road, Darya Ganj,  
Delhi - 110002  
Email: [info@wtbooks.com](mailto:info@wtbooks.com)

# Table of Contents

Introduction

Chapter 1 - Ballroom Dance

Chapter 2 - Dancesport

Chapter 3 - Types of Partner Dance

Chapter 4 - Salsa

Chapter 5 - Tango

Glossary

# Introduction

**Partner dances** are dances whose basic choreography involves coordinated dancing of two partners, as opposed to individuals dancing alone or individually in a non-coordinated manner, and as opposed to groups of people dancing simultaneously in a coordinated manner.

In the year 1023 the German poet Ruodlieb referred to a couple dance with a basic motif of a boy wooing a girl, and the girl repulsing his advances. Men and women dancing as couples, both holding one hand of their partner, and "embracing" each other, can be seen in illustrations from 15th century Germany.

At the end of the 13th century, and during the 14th century, nobles and wealthy patricians danced as couple in procession in a slow dignified manner in a circle. Farmers and lower classes of society danced turning in a lively, springing fashion. The relatively new burgher middle class combined the dances with the processional as a "fore dance", and the turning as an "after dance".

Danse de Paysans' (Peasant's Dance) by Théodore de Bry (1528-1598) shows a couple with a man lifting his partner off the ground, and the man pulling the woman towards him while holding her closely with both arms. His Danse de Seigneurs et Dames (Dance of the Lords and Ladies) features one Lord with his arms around the waist of his Lady.

Syncopated and "dotted" rhythms gained widespread popularity for dancing in the last two centuries, although usually less complex and more regular than previous music.

An old couple dance which can be found all over Northern Europe is known as "Manchester" or "Lott is Dead". In Bavaria words to the music include "One, two, three and one is four, Dianderl lifts up her skirt And shows me her knees", and in Bavaria one verse invites the girl to leave her bedroom window open to allow a visit from her partner.

Dance partners stay together for the duration of the dance and, most often, dance independently of other couples dancing at the same time, if any.

Although this kind of dancing can be seen, for instance, in ballet, this term is usually applied to various forms of social dance, ballroom dance, folk dance, and similar forms.

Partner dance may be a basis of a formation dance, a round dance, a square dance or a sequence dance. These are kinds of group dance where the dancers form couples and

dance either the same pre-choreographed or called routines or routines within a common choreography— routines that control both how each couple dances together and how each couple moves in accord with other couples. In square dance one will often change partners during the course of a dance, in which case one distinguishes between the "original partner" and a "situational partner".

In many partner dances, one, typically a man, is the **leader**; the other, typically a woman, is the **follower**. As a rule, they maintain connection with each other. In some dances the connection is loose and called dance handhold. In other dances the connection involves body contact. In the latter case the connection imposes significant restrictions on relative body positions during the dance and hence it is often called dance frame. It is also said that each partner has his own *dance frame*. Although the handhold connection poses almost no restriction on body positions, it is quite helpful that the partners are aware of their dance frames, since this is instrumental in leading and following.

In promenade-style partner dancing there is no leader or follower, and the couple dance side-by-side maintaining a connection with each other through a promenade handhold. The man dances traditionally to the left of the woman.

Some peoples have folk partner dances, where partners do not have any body contact at all, but there is still a kind of "call-response" interaction.

A popular form of partner dancing is slow dance.



Gaskell Ball

## **Partner dances with partners of the same sex**

In most western society, same-sex social partner dancing is generally uncommon in most social dance circumstances. It is more commonly acceptable for two women to dance together than it is for two men to do so (although not in a romantic or overly friendly manner).

However dances between two men are not uncommon on some wilder parties, whereby the dance is often used for measuring physical abilities especially the resistance of feeling of giddiness in a funny way.

There are some partner dances where same sex dancing couples are generally accepted, especially when there are not sufficient partners of the opposite sex available. Many dancers may still be uncomfortable dancing with a partner of the same sex. The sexual orientation of the partners is irrelevant. For example at Modern Jive and West Coast Swing events, ladies will regularly partner each other. Men dancing with each other is also common, though less frequent, but is not just done for the "comedy value" as men may equally enjoy the role of follower.

Typically, in ballroom competitions, same-sex partnerships are allowed up to the silver level (the third level in competition, after newcomer and bronze). However, these are comparatively rare.

## **Double partner dance**

This kind of dance involves dancing of three persons together: one man with two women or one woman with two men. In social dancing, double partnering is of choice when a significant demographic disproportion happens between the two sexes. For example, this happens during wars: in the army there is lack of women, while among civilians able dancers are mostly women, especially during enormous wars such as WWII.

Since 1980s, double partner dance is often performed in Ceroc, Hustle, Salsa and Swing dance communities, experienced leaders leading two followers.

There are a number of folk dances that feature this setup. Among these are the Russian Troika and the Polish Trojak folk dances, where a man dances with two or more women. A Cajun dance with the name *Troika* is also known.

## Chapter 1

# Ballroom Dance



Ballroom dance

**Ballroom dance** refers to a set of partner dances, which are enjoyed both socially and competitively around the world. Because of its performance and entertainment aspects, ballroom dance is also widely enjoyed on stage, film, and television.

*Ballroom dance* may refer, at its widest, to almost any type of social dancing as recreation. However, with the emergence of dancesport in modern times, the term has become narrower in scope. It usually refers to the International Standard and International Latin style dances. These styles were developed in England, and are now regulated by the World Dance Council (WDC). In the United States, two additional variations are popular: *American Smooth* and *American Rhythm*.

There are also a number of historical dances, and local or national dances, which may be danced in ballrooms or salons. Sequence dancing, in pairs or other formations, is still a popular style of ballroom dance.

## Definitions and history

The term "ballroom dancing" is derived from the word *ball*, which in turn originates from the Latin word *ballare* which means "to dance". In times past, ballroom dancing was social dancing for the privileged, leaving folk dancing for the lower classes. These boundaries have since become blurred, and it should be noted even in times long gone, many ballroom dances were really elevated folk dances. The definition of ballroom dance also depends on the era: Balls have featured Minuet, Quadrille, Polonaise, Pas de Gras, Mazurka, and other popular dances of the day, which are now considered to be historical dances.

### Victorian Era



An RKO publicity still of Astaire and Rogers dancing to "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" in *Roberta* (1935)

The waltz with its modern hold took root in England in about 1812; in 1819 Carl Maria von Weber wrote *Invitation to the Dance*, which marked the adoption of the waltz form into the sphere of absolute music. The dance was initially met with tremendous opposition due to the semblance of impropriety associated with the closed hold, though the stance gradually softened. In the 1840s several new dances made their appearance in the ballroom, including the Polka, Mazurka, and the Schottische. In the meantime a strong tendency emerged to drop all 'decorative' steps such as *entrechats* and *ronds de jambes* that had found a place in the Quadrilles and other dances.

## Early 20th century

Modern ballroom dances has its roots early in the 20th century, when several different things happened more or less at the same time. The first was a movement away from the sequence dances towards dances where the couples moved independently. This had been pre-figured by the waltz, which had already made this transition. The second was a wave of popular music, such as jazz, much of which was based on the ideas of black musicians in the USA. Since dance is to a large extent tied to music, this led to a burst of newly invented dances. There were many dances crazes in the period 1910–1930.



Vernon and Irene Castle, early ballroom dance pioneers, c. 1910-1918.

The third event was a concerted effort to transform some of the dance crazes into dances which could be taught to a wider dance public in the USA and Europe. Here Vernon and Irene Castle were important, and so was a generation of English dancers in the 1920s, including Josephine Bradley and Victor Silvester. These professionals analysed, codified, published and taught a number of standard dances. It was essential, if popular dance was

to flourish, for dancers to have some basic movements they could confidently perform with any partner they might meet. Here the huge Arthur Murray organisation in America, and the dance societies in England, such as the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing, were highly influential. Finally, much of this happened during and after a period of World War, and the effect of such a conflict in dissolving older social customs was considerable.

Later, in the 1930s, the on-screen dance pairing of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers influenced all forms of dance in the USA and elsewhere. Although both actors had separate careers, their filmed dance sequences together, which included portrayals of the Castles, have reached iconic status. Much of Astaire and Rogers' work portrayed social dancing, although the performances were highly choreographed (often by Astaire or Hermes Pan), and meticulously staged and rehearsed.

### **Elements of competition**



Intermediate level international style Latin dancing at the 2006 MIT ballroom dance competition. A judge stands in the foreground.

In competition ballroom, dancers are judged by diverse criteria such as poise, the hold or frame, posture, musicality and expression, timing, body alignment and shape, floor craft, foot and leg action, and presentation. Judging in a performance-oriented sport is inevitably subjective in nature, and controversy and complaints by competitors over judging placements are not uncommon. The scorekeepers—called scrutineers—will tally the total number recalls accumulated by each couple through each round until the finals, when the Skating system is used to place each couple by ordinals, typically 1-6, though the number of couples in the final may vary.

## Medal tests

Medal examinations for amateurs enable dancers' individual abilities to be recognized according to conventional standards. In medal exams, which are run by bodies such as the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing (ISTD), each dancer performs two or more dances in a certain genre in front of a judge. Genres such as Modern Ballroom or Latin are the most popular. Societies such as the ISTD also offer medal tests on other dance styles (such as Country & Western, Rock 'n Roll or Tap). In some North American examinations, levels include Newcomer, Bronze, Silver, Gold and Championship; each level may be further subdivided into either two or four separate sections.

## Dances



Victor Fung and Anna Mikhed dancing a tango in 2006. The couple, dancing for the USA, came third in the Professional World Championship 2009.

"Ballroom dance" refers most often to the ten dances of **International Standard** and **International Latin**, though the term is also often used interchangeably with the five International Standard dances. Sequence dancing, which is danced predominantly in the United Kingdom, is also sometimes included as a type of Ballroom dancing.