SOCIAL DANCE STUDY GUIDE

ELEMENTS OF DANCE

1. Walking- heel first
2. Chasse- step-together-step (ball of foot hits first, then close)
3. Box- combines walking and chasse
4. Rock- transfer weight to one foot, then replace weight to other foot
5. 5th Position Rock Step- As you step back for the rock step, turn the back toe out.
   This gives you more hip action (rumba, swing)
6. Triple Step- 3 steps to the side (step-together-step)

Key:
M = man
W = woman
R = right
L = left
CCW = counter clock wise
FWD = forward
BWK = backward
Q = quick
S = slow

DANCE POSITIONS

1. Closed- (foxtrot, waltz, tango) Partners are very close, with the women’s L arm resting on the men’s R, the lead hand is held chin height.
2. Closed- (rumba, cha cha) less arm bend than #1, partners are about 1 foot apart. (swing) lower the lead hand to side
3. One Hand Hold- This is the open position. Hold on same side, M L in W R.
4. R Open- M R side is open and partners are side by side (his L beside her R)
5. L Open- opposite of #4.
6. Promenade- 45-degree angle, both are facing the same direction and are in side-by-side position.
7. Practice- 2-hand hold which allows you to be farther apart.
CHA CHA CHA

Style- International Latin
Meter- 4/4
Tempo- 128 bpm
Rhythm- S,S,Q,Q,Q
Style- Medium tempo Latin

Description- A fun, sexy, flirtatious dance. This is a spot dance using the Cuban motion, which is characteristic of bending and straightening the knees. It is a ball heel movement.

History- Originally known as the cha cha cha, it has its origins in the Cuban mambo. It gets its name from the distinctive syncopated triple step (cha cha cha). While it originated in the 1940’s, it came to this country in the middle 1950’s. It shares many of the same steps as the mambo and salsa.

Arm Styling- Hold the lead hand the height of the W eye level, and the R hand on the W shoulder blade.

Footwork- When doing the triple step (cha cha cha) keep the same foot in the lead. Always turn with the shoulders, not the feet.

FOXTROT

Style – American smooth (ballroom)
Meter – 4/4
Tempo – 120-136
Rhythm – S-S-Q-Q walk, walk, side, close
Music – Medium tempo jazz or swing. If music doesn’t have the foxtrot rhythm, count 1-2-3-4. Then you can do it to just about anything.

Description – The foxtrot is a smooth progressive dance characterized by long, continuous flowing movements. It is most versatile of all ballroom dances. It is a traveling step done in a ccw circle. Reach with the toe pointing downward on the forward and backward steps. Brush floor with foot.

History – Introduced in 1913 by Harry Fox. The foxtrot started out as a much faster dance. Today’s version of the foxtrot has many style changes from when it was first introduced.

Arm Styling – Done in closed dance position. The W is slightly to the R of the M. She should line up her R side with his midline. She should look off to the L. Her L hand should be on M bicep.
Footwork: Rock turns can be used to change directions when someone gets in your way.

**MAMBO**

Style – American Rhythm or Social
Meter – 4/4
Tempo – 188-204
Rhythm – Hold, 2,3,4
Style – Up-tempo Latin

Description – Cuban motion. Move rib cage, hips automatically move. Make sure feet never come together. Use shoulders to turn, not legs. Arms up in front as though you are stepping with them (same hand and foot) Keep feet in contact with the ground when replacing weight. When in closed dance position keep lead hand the height of the W chin.

History – First became popular in Cuba in 1940’s. It got its name from a song called Mambo, which was heavily influenced by the African rhythms of the Haitian culture. Mambo is actually the name of a Haitian voodoo priestess.

**MERINGUE**

Style – Latin
Meter – 4/4
Tempo – The tempo varies a great deal
Rhythm – 8 walking steps

Description – Easy, made up of 8 walking steps sideways, fwd, or bk. Cuban motion is used by bending and straightening the knees. (don’t thrust the hips) Step with the inside of the ball of the foot, followed by rolling to a flat foot. (don’t shuffle feet) Contra body action – hip on non-moving side moves in opposite direction. Hold the lower body still and move rib cage side to side. This dance is suited to small, crowded dance floors.

History – Dance and music of the Dominican Republic and some extent Haiti. The meringue originated from around 1820-1844. It became popular in the mid 19th century. Meringue means whipped egg whites and sugar in Spanish. The history of this dance is a mystery; however, there are two versions of how the dance got its name:
1. The slaves were chained together and were forced to drag 1 leg as they cut sugar to the beat of the drums.
2. A war hero returned and was welcomed by a party. Since he limped everyone else did so to oblige him, hence drag 1 leg.

Styling – closed – M left hand eye level of W, right hand on waist (1 hand hold, 2 hand hold, X hold) Sweetheart position is a wrap.

**PASO DOBLE**
Style- International Latin
Meter- 2/4
Tempo- 120-124
Rhythm- March 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8
Style- Dramatic Latin bullfight

Description- This dance is done in a march like pattern. It is one of the most exciting to watch. It means “two step” in Spanish. The dance steps are designed around those made by the matador. This is passionate and dramatic.

History- Originally developed in France, it captures the dramatic spirit of the Spanish bullfight. It portrays the Torero (the male dancer) and his cape (his partner). The peak in popularity of this dance is around 1930.

Styling- Marches taken in pace, strong pressure on the balls of the feet. The style can be lowered, with heels nearly touching floor; high on the balls of the ft; or done with a gradual rise and fall. On each step the free foot should barely lift above the ground, immediately replacing the weight on the balls of the ft.

**RUMBA**

Style- American Rhythm
Meter- 4/4
Tempo- 128-144
Rhythm- S-Q-Q
Style- Cuban Motion

**Description**- Rumba is a spot dance. It is expressed through body movements. The character is romantic and sexy. The style or technique used is Cuban motion.

**History**- The Rumba was introduced in the 1920’s. It is slow and rhythmical. It is sometimes called the Latin waltz or waltz with a wiggle.

**Styling**- In closed position like waltz

**SALSA**

Style- Social/ Nightclubs
Meter- 4/4
Tempo- 160-220
Rhythm- Q-Q-S
Style- Up-tempo Latin

Description- Salsa translated means sauce, hot spicy and full of exotic Latin flavor.

History- Introduced to the U.S. during the Cuban and Puerto Rican immigration between the 1940’s-1970’s. Rhythm is a fusion of traditional African and Cuban along with other
Latin American rhythms. This dance allows for a lot of creative improvisation. It has many styles: Miami, Puerto Rican, N.Y., L.A., and Cuban.

Footwork- Cuban motion is used by bending and straitening your knees. You should be rolling through your foot with a ball heel motion.

Arm Styling- Lead hand at or slightly above waist level. Man’s R hand on W shoulder blade or hip. The salsa hold is more relaxed.

**SWING**

Style- American Rhythm, social swing, country and western
Meter- 4/4
Tempo- 136-144 (swing) 176 (jive)
Rhythm- S-S-Q-Q (single) or 1 a 2, 1 a 2, 1-2 or triple, triple, rock step (triple) or 1,2,1a2,1a2 M- (close L to R, replace wt to R, triple L, triple R) or done with a fall away rock which is a back rock (Jive)
Music- fast swing music

**Description**- Many forms: east coast, west coast, swing, lindy, lindy hop, jitterbug and jive. Swing is a spot dance. Its character is fast, fun and playful. It is a combination of rock steps and triple steps.
Jive is a faster version of swing using a more bouncy type of music, staying on the balls of the feet. It has a lot of kicks. It evolved from the jitterbug by removing the lifts and acrobatic elements. When doing the triple step, turn R when doing the triple to the R, and L when doing the triple to the left. When turning the W needs to spot her partner.

**History**- Originated in the 1920’s with the black community dancing Charleston and lindy hop to jazz music. Popular swing dance moves take their cue from jazz, Latin and traditional African dances.

Arm Styling- 2 handhold, open ( M L in W R), shake hands (R to R), solo (no hand hold), semi closed (bring lead arm down lower about waist height)

**TANGO**

Style – American Smooth
Meter – 4/4
Tempo – 120-128
Rhythm – S-S-Q-Q-S
Style – Medium tempo orchestral, march like

Description – Earthy and dramatic. This is a traveling dance that goes in a ccw circle. The steps are slow and slithery, sharp and staccato, stalking and sneaking.
History – Formed from African beats, Indian rhythms, Latin influences and the popular music of the pampas (flatlands) in Argentina and Europe in the 1800’s.

Styling for movement – The feet pick up and are paced on the floor, no gliding. When walking fwd walk heel first, then flat. When going bkw walk toe first. There is no rise and fall. Keep the body level constant.

WALTZ

Style- American smooth
Meter- ¾
Tempo- 84-96 bpm
Rhythm- 1-2-3 1-2-3
Music Style- slow ballads or instrumental music in ¾ time

Description- Smooth progressive dance characteristic by long, flowing movements, continuous turns, and rise and fall. It is done in closed dance position and is considered graceful and elegant. It is a dance of prestige and beauty. The feet should never be heard, but instead should float in a silent pattern.

History- Evolved from a German folk dance, the waltz gained its popularity in Vienna, Austria. The waltz was first introduced into the English ballrooms in the early 1800’s. It was denounced by both church and state for its vulgarity and immorality. This is the first time society had seen the outrageous closed dance position. When the waltz was introduced, the tempo was much faster and quite demanding to the average dancer. Today the waltz is danced to a slower tempo.

Movement- The waltz is a traveling dance done in a ccw circle.

Styling- 3 dance positions for the waltz.

1. closed- man’s lead hand held with his L in W R. Hold chin height. M R hand on shoulder blade. W L hand on shoulder with L arm resting on top of man’s.
   *banjo- W is slightly to M R
   *sidecar- W is slightly to M L
2. promenade (semi-closed)- head turn L for M, and R for W
3. counter promenade (reverse semi closed)

Sources:
www.ballroomdancer.com
www.expertvillage.com