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Salsa Facts

History

Salsa's progenitor, the Mambo, developed from the Cuban dance Son, whose influences were African rhythms and Spanish music. In the 1940s Cuban musicians unleashed the Mambo in Havana, and it became an instant hit, traveling the globe for the next twenty years. Post-WWII New York City intermingled Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and African Americans to fuse Latin rhythms and jazz harmonies, spawning many dance and musical forms such as the Cha Cha, Charanga, Pachanga, Boogalo, and others. In the '60s and '70s Soul and R&B rhythms were added to the mix to create the hot "sauce" of rhythmic combinations now known to the world as "Salsa"—a term popularized by the NY Latin music record label, Fania. In the '80s and '90s New York dancer Eddie Torres re-popularized the nightclub-style dance Salsa—a contemporary, street version of the classic Mambo. Salsa is one of the most popular nightclub dances in the world today, and continues to evolve, integrating influences from Hip Hop, world music, and more!

Dance Characteristics

Salsa is a syncopated, sexy dance characterized by strong Cuban Motion, body isolations and intricate turning combinations. The dancer can choose to break, or change direction, on 1, 2 or 6.

Musical Information

- Time Signature: 4/4
- Tempo: 116-188 beats per minute
- Timing: 123(4), 567(8)
- Beat Value: 1-1-2
- Alternative Teaching Count: QQS, QQS
- Counting in Beats and Bars: 1234, 2234, 3234, 4234, etc.

Footwork

- Ball Flat throughout with the following exceptions:
 - Back Breaks: It is important to keep weight forward when taking a back break. For most dancers, using "Ball" on the back step helps keep the poise forward, but the heel may "kiss" the floor.
- Toes should be slightly turned out from the hip.
- Keep feet in contact with the floor using slight pressure.

Technical Tips

- Movement should reflect the character of the music, whether staccato and striking, or romantic and sensual.
- For more dynamic Salsa dancing, incorporate strong rib action with Cuban Motion.
- Stand with a forward poise to create connection with partner.
- Maintain same height throughout the dance, keeping the head up and the shoulders relaxed. Watch not to tilt the shoulders side-to-side.
- Use correct Cuban Motion, being sure to step with the knee flexed and delay straightening. Keep ribcage lifted and moving in opposition with the hips.
- Take small steps.
- Lead and follow from the "center", using compression and tone.
- Use the free arm in a natural way to complement the music and body movement.

Syllabus Notes

While many figures in this syllabus start with a Cross Body Lead, they may be danced without this entrance.

DVIDA Student Medal Program

What is the Student Medal Program?

This program is a fun and exciting way for students to learn to dance through a structured set of exams. The Medal Program provides the opportunity for students to progress through the various levels, giving them concrete goals and tangible proof of their progress.

Why Participate in the Medal Program?

Experts in the industry agree that a structured Medal Program is one of the best ways for students to become extraordinary dancers. Here are just a few of the benefits:

- **Improved dancing:** An upcoming exam provides a clear goal to help motivate students and focus their dance education. Students learn a wide variety of dance figures from the DVIDA syllabus and how to dance them together in a routine. This exam preparation improves technique, builds lead/follow skills and expands the understanding of dance concepts.
- **Increased confidence:** Students dance with their instructor, and with proper preparation, successfully attain a medal. Confidence soars for having met and mastered this challenge. And students receive a certificate to tell the whole world: I did it!
- **Friendship and camaraderie with other dancers:** There is a great sense of community and bonding in a studio among the students and instructors participating in the exams. In addition, the Medal Ball after the exams is a great party, often the highpoint of the entire year at a studio.

How Does the Medal Exam Process Work?

DVIDA offers Medal Exams for Bronze through Gold Levels in all American and International Style dances. Studios usually schedule exams two to three times a year. A nationally recognized dance expert comes to the studio to conduct the exams. Students perform the routine(s) with their instructor. The examiner grades the students' dancing and gives written feedback. Upon successfully completing the exam, a formal Certificate of Achievement is awarded from DVIDA – tangible proof of achieving a national standard of excellence.

How to Get Started

The first step is for the studio (or instructor) to set a date, contact DVIDA and hire an examiner. Instructors and students can then decide which exams are appropriate for the student's level (see the DVIDA Student Medal Program brochure), and plan their lessons accordingly.

Available Resources

DVIDA offers the following resources for Medal Exams. To purchase resources or obtain additional information, please visit www.dancevision.com or call 1-800-851-2813 from North America or 1-702-256-3830 from the rest of the world.

- Student Medal Program brochure
- Instructional dance videos that correspond with the DVIDA syllabi (American and International Style)
- Dance manuals that correspond with the DVIDA syllabi (American and International Style)
- A Teacher's Guide to Choreography for Medal Exams (American Style)
-

ProDVIDA Professional Certification

Why Should an Instructor Become Certified?

The ProDVIDA Certification process is designed to enrich a dance instructor's knowledge of all aspects of dancing and teaching. In addition to your confidence soaring for having met and mastered this challenge, certification has many more benefits:

- **Become a better teacher:** Preparing for a certification exam expands your understanding of dance concepts, improves verbal and presentation skills, teaches precise vocabulary for describing technical elements of figures, sharpens knowledge of musical terms, and enhances choreography skills.
- **Become a better dancer:** The expertise required to know the Leader's and Follower's part to pass the certification exam catapults one's dancing to an entirely new level. You will learn a series of golden rules that make your dancing more consistent, develop a language to be more effective in dance partnerships and achieve a mastery of technique that will stay with you for the rest of your career.
- **Achieve an objective standard of professional excellence:** The National Dance Council of America (NDCA), the highest governing body in the ballroom dance industry, recognizes ProDVIDA certifications. Upon successfully passing an exam, you will receive a certificate declaring your expertise to the world. You will be able to attract serious students, be a highly valuable employee in studios across the country, and be able to obtain a judging credential.

How Does the Professional Certification Exam Work?

A qualified DVIDA examiner conducts the exam, which is administered with the highest standards of fairness, objectivity, thoroughness, and professionalism. The exam is prepared in advance and is composed of four sections: Dancing (40%), Theory (30%), Teaching (20%) and Overall Presentation (10%). After successfully passing the exam, a Certificate of Completion is sent to you, along with the examiner's scores and written feedback on your dancing. Certification candidates must join ProDVIDA and be at least 16 years of age.

ProDVIDA has introduced a revolutionary new way of becoming certified. A candidate may now take their exams one dance at a time (Note: in the American Rhythm dances, the "one dance exam" requires two dances be performed). This method has proven:

- To be more accessible
- To be easier to prepare for, resulting in a greater number of dance instructors willing to take on the process
- To produce better instructors as a result of the immediate feedback they get from each exam
- To have a higher success rate overall

How to Get Started

The first step is for the studio (or instructor) to set a date, hire an examiner and contact Dance Vision.

Available Resources

DVIDA offers the following resources for Professional Certification. To purchase resources or obtain additional information, please visit www.dancevision.com, www.prodvida.com, or call 1-800-851-2813 from North America or 1-702-256-3830 from the rest of the world.

- Instructional dance DVDs/videos that correspond with the DVIDA syllabi (American and International Style)
- DVIDA dance manuals that correspond with the DVIDA syllabi (American and International Style)
- Get Certified DVD

Sample Junior Associate exam (available on the ProDVIDA website)

Introduction to the Basics

Progressive Basic (or Forward and Back Basic)

| LEADER | Commence in CP | | | | | |
|--------|------------------------|----------------|------|------------------|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| STEP | FOOT POSITION | DANCE POSITION | LEAD | AMOUNT OF TURN | COUNT | SUMMARY |
| 1 | LF forward | CP | WC | Up to 1/8 turn L | 1 | 1 st Meas: 1 st half of Progressive Basic |
| 2 | Replace weight to RF | CP | WC | | 2 | |
| 3 | LF back, small step | CP | WC | | 3(4) | |
| 4 | RF back | CP | WC | Up to 1/8 turn L | 5 | 2 nd Meas: 2 nd half of Progressive Basic |
| 5 | Replace weight to LF | CP | WC | | 6 | |
| 6 | RF forward, small step | CP | WC | | 7(8) | |

| FOLLOWER | Commence in CP | | | | | |
|----------|------------------------|----------------|--|------------------|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| STEP | FOOT POSITION | DANCE POSITION | | AMOUNT OF TURN | COUNT | SUMMARY |
| 1 | RF back | CP | | Up to 1/8 turn L | 1 | 1 st Meas: 1 st half of Progressive Basic |
| 2 | Replace weight to LF | CP | | | 2 | |
| 3 | RF forward, small step | CP | | | 3(4) | |
| 4 | LF forward | CP | | Up to 1/8 turn L | 5 | 2 nd Meas: 2 nd half of Progressive Basic |
| 5 | Replace weight to RF | CP | | | 6 | |
| 6 | LF back, small step | CP | | | 7(8) | |

Closed Basic (for styling only)

| LEADER | Commence in CP | | | | | |
|--------|----------------------|----------------|------|----------------|-------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| STEP | FOOT POSITION | DANCE POSITION | LEAD | AMOUNT OF TURN | COUNT | SUMMARY |
| 1 | LF forward | CP | WC | Nil | 1 | 1 st Meas: 1 st half of Closed Basic |
| 2 | Replace weight to RF | CP | WC | Nil | 2 | |
| 3 | LF closes to RF | CP | WC | Nil | 3(4) | |
| 4 | RF back | CP | WC | Nil | 5 | 2 nd Meas: 2 nd half of Closed Basic |
| 5 | Replace weight to LF | CP | WC | Nil | 6 | |
| 6 | RF closes to LF | CP | WC | Nil | 7(8) | |

| FOLLOWER | Commence in CP | | | | | |
|----------|----------------------|----------------|------|----------------|-------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| STEP | FOOT POSITION | DANCE POSITION | LEAD | AMOUNT OF TURN | COUNT | SUMMARY |
| 1 | RF back | CP | WC | Nil | 1 | 1 st Meas: 1 st half of Closed Basic |
| 2 | Replace weight to LF | CP | WC | Nil | 2 | |
| 3 | RF closes to LF | CP | WC | Nil | 3(4) | |
| 4 | LF forward | CP | WC | Nil | 5 | 2 nd Meas: 2 nd half of Closed Basic |
| 5 | Replace weight to RF | CP | WC | Nil | 6 | |
| 6 | LF closes to RF | CP | WC | Nil | 7(8) | |

Box Basic (or Side Basic)

used only as a prep for other patterns, not as a pattern on its own

| LEADER | Commence in CP | | | | | |
|--------|----------------------|----------------|------|----------------|-------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| STEP | FOOT POSITION | DANCE POSITION | LEAD | AMOUNT OF TURN | COUNT | SUMMARY |
| 1 | LF forward | CP | WC | Nil | 1 | 1 st Meas: 1 st half of Box Basic |
| 2 | Replace weight to RF | CP | WC | Nil | 2 | |
| 3 | LF side | CP | WC | Nil | 3(4) | |
| 4 | RF back | CP | WC | Nil | 5 | 2 nd Meas: 2 nd half of Box Basic |
| 5 | Replace weight to LF | CP | WC | Nil | 6 | |
| 6 | RF side | CP | WC | Nil | 7(8) | |

| FOLLOWER | Commence in CP | | | | | |
|----------|----------------------|----------------|--|----------------|-------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| STEP | FOOT POSITION | DANCE POSITION | | AMOUNT OF TURN | COUNT | SUMMARY |
| 1 | RF back | CP | | Nil | 1 | 1 st Meas: 1 st half of Box Basic |
| 2 | Replace weight to LF | CP | | Nil | 2 | |
| 3 | RF side | CP | | Nil | 3(4) | |
| 4 | LF forward | CP | | Nil | 5 | 2 nd Meas: 2 nd half of Box Basic |
| 5 | Replace weight to RF | CP | | Nil | 6 | |
| 6 | LF side | CP | | Nil | 7(8) | |

Side Breaks

| LEADER | Commence in CP | | | | | |
|--------|----------------------|----------------|------|----------------|-------|-------------------------------------|
| STEP | FOOT POSITION | DANCE POSITION | LEAD | AMOUNT OF TURN | COUNT | SUMMARY |
| 1 | LF to side | CP | WC | Nil | 1 | 1 st Meas: LF Side Break |
| 2 | Replace weight to RF | CP | WC | Nil | 2 | |
| 3 | LF closes to RF | CP | WC | Nil | 3(4) | |
| 4 | RF to side | CP | WC | Nil | 5 | 2 nd Meas: RF Side Break |
| 5 | Replace weight to LF | CP | WC | Nil | 6 | |
| 6 | RF closes to LF | CP | WC | Nil | 7(8) | |

| FOLLOWER | Commence in CP | | | | | |
|----------|----------------------|----------------|------|----------------|-------|-------------------------------------|
| STEP | FOOT POSITION | DANCE POSITION | LEAD | AMOUNT OF TURN | COUNT | SUMMARY |
| 1 | RF to side | CP | WC | Nil | 1 | 1 st Meas: RF Side Break |
| 2 | Replace weight to LF | CP | WC | Nil | 2 | |
| 3 | RF closes to LF | CP | WC | Nil | 3(4) | |
| 4 | LF to side | CP | WC | Nil | 5 | 2 nd Meas: LF Side Break |
| 5 | Replace weight to RF | CP | WC | Nil | 6 | |
| 6 | LF closes to RF | CP | WC | Nil | 7(8) | |

Back Rock Basic

| LEADER | Commence in CP | | | | | |
|--------|----------------------|----------------|------|----------------|-------|------------------------------------------|
| STEP | FOOT POSITION | DANCE POSITION | LEAD | AMOUNT OF TURN | COUNT | SUMMARY |
| 1 | LF behind RF, TTO | CP | WC | Nil | 1 | 1 st Meas: LF Back Rock Basic |
| 2 | Replace weight to RF | CP | WC | Nil | 2 | |
| 3 | LF to side | CP | WC | Nil | 3(4) | |
| 4 | RF behind LF, TTO | CP | WC | Nil | 5 | 2 nd Meas: RF Back Rock Basic |
| 5 | Replace weight to LF | CP | WC | Nil | 6 | |
| 6 | RF to side | CP | WC | Nil | 7(8) | |

Footwork note: Ball on 1 and 4

| FOLLOWER | Commence in CP | | | | | |
|----------|----------------------|----------------|----------------|-------|------------------------------------------|--|
| STEP | FOOT POSITION | DANCE POSITION | AMOUNT OF TURN | COUNT | SUMMARY | |
| 1 | RF behind LF, TTO | CP | Nil | 1 | 1 st Meas: RF Back Rock Basic | |
| 2 | Replace weight to LF | CP | Nil | 2 | | |
| 3 | RF to side | CP | Nil | 3(4) | | |
| 4 | LF behind RF, TTO | CP | Nil | 5 | 2 nd Meas: LF Back Rock Basic | |
| 5 | Replace weight to RF | CP | Nil | 6 | | |
| 6 | LF to side | CP | Nil | 7(8) | | |

Footwork note: Ball on 1 and 4

Cross Body Lead – see Figure 4.