

# The Latin-American Dances

## Jive

Jive, brought over from America has been initially developed from a dance called "Jitterburg" by eliminating all its acrobatic elements and polishing the technique. The first description of Jive made by London dance teacher Victor Silvester was published in Europe in 1944. The Boogie, Rock & Roll and the American Swing also influenced this dance.

Jive is a very fast, energy-consuming dance. It is the last dance danced at the competitions, and dancers have to show that having danced four dances they are not tired yet and still ready to go hard at it.

## Paso Doble

Paso Doble originates from Spain. It developed on the basis of movements performed by the matadors during the bull fights. In Paso Doble the man (matador) is in focus more than in any other dance. The lady is left with playing a role of a cape ("cappa") the red canvas of the torreador or a bull, depending on circumstances. The dance came into fashion around 1920.

It is probably the last dance you will learn if you take up Latin American dance classes. That's because it is based around previously agreed choreography (arranged precisely to the music) and it is far more difficult to lead and improvise it.

## Cha-cha

Cha-Cha-Cha is the newcomer of the Latin American dances. This dance was first seen in the dance-halls of America, in the early fifties, following closely Mambo, from which it was developed. Shortly after the Mambo was introduced, another rhythm started to gain popularity, a rhythm that was ultimately to become the most commonly known of the Latin American dances throughout the world. It was named Cha-Cha-Cha. The music is slower than Mambo and the rhythm is less complicated. The interpretation of Cha-Cha-Cha music should produce a happy, carefree, cheeky, party-time-like atmosphere. Recently it was decided to shorten the name to Cha-Cha.

## Rumba

The Rumba originates from Cuba as a typical dance of a hot climate. It has become the classic of all the Latin American dances. In its present form many of the basic figures of the dance retain the age-old story of woman's attempt to dominate man by the use of her feminine charm. In a well choreographed dance there will always be an element of "tease and run"; the man being lured and then rejected.

Other versions of Rumba are known as Beguine, Calypso and Guaracha.

## Samba

Samba originates from Brazil where it is a national dance. Many versions of the Samba -from Baion (pronounce: Bajao) to Marcha- are danced at the local carnival in Rio. To achieve the true character of the Samba a dancer must give it a gay, flirtatious and exuberant interpretation. Many figures, used in the Samba today, require a pelvic tilt action. This action is difficult to accomplish, but without it the dance loses much of its effect.

Before 1914 it was known under a Brazilian name "Maxixe" . The first attempts of introducing samba to European ballrooms are dated 1923-24, but it was after the World War II when samba became a popular dance in Europe.

Samba has a very specific rhythm, highlighted to its best by characteristic Brazilian musical instruments: originally called tamborim, chocalho, reco-reco and cabaca.