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During the course of conversations of several years with Irene Evans, it became obvious to me that her knowledge and experiences should be related to a wider audience.

I invited her to lecture at our 1991 Annual Congress at Blackpool, and the response was so great, that she was encouraged to document her experiences, recollections and knowledge.

The Result is this charming booklet which relates the history and development of latin-american dance in the UK since the 20's.

I feel that this book will become the authoritative guide to this vital part of our dance history, and it can only be a matter of time before this sector is included in Professional Examination syllabuses.

David Roberts

Company & General Secretary

A DEDICATION

Dedicated to Miss Doris Lavelle who not only passed on her own deep love and understanding of "authentic" Latin but also showed me how it was danced in Cuba.

I am also indebted to her for permission to use her copyrighted material and for her personal assistance in the compilation of this booklet.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am pleased to acknowledge the help and advice given to me by Mr Walter Laird in the compilation of Chapter Four (1991 - 1955) together with permission to quote from the preface to the current edition of his "Technique of Latin Dancing".

I also acknowledge the help given by my son Peter, a multi-linguist, for his research into the derivations of the Spanish, Portugese and French languages and my daughter Jennie for the many typed drafts required in the polishing and repolishing of my script.



*Pierre and Lavelle demonstrating the "Banderillas"
(circa 1955)*

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Although the Dance Teacher is, generally, the main source of instruction, and long may that continue, much has been written about Latin American, or more correctly Latin and American dancing, much more said and so much forgotten, so I will try to refrain from adding unduly to the flood by presenting this History as concisely as possible in chronological order, mainly for the benefit of future students who may be called upon to sit a written examination under impending European legislation or even if our own Royal Society of Arts were to accept dancing as one of its subjects.

I also hope that it will be of interest, and maybe of use, to established professionals.

Irene Evans
Borth, Dyfed
1992

INTRODUCTION

Latin American dancing was introduced to the U.K. via Paris in the 1920's but it should be borne in mind that, like Ballroom dancing its roots go back to Folk dances and such which took centuries to refine into the present format.

Illustrating this process we can look at "The Volta" (see also under Chapter Seven; Rumba; "Natural and Reverse Top") a quick and continuous turning dance popular in France for over a hundred years beforehand which gave rise to the "Slow" and "Quick" waltz around 1775, its memory being retained in the "Volta Movements" used in present day Latin.

For the main foundation of Latin American dancing in the U.K. we have to look to a Frenchman, Pierre Jean Phillipe Zurcher Margolie, known professionally and affectionately as Pierre. Born in Toulon near Marseille, his engineering studies at Zurich University were cut short due to losing the sight of one eye after being struck therein by a tennis ball, after which he went to live in Paris where all his spare time was spent in the Dance Halls and Clubs also frequented by Cuban, Argentinian, Brazilian and Spanish immigrants who danced their national dances to bands of their contemporaries who were there as Artistes and Entertainers.

A heavy man, he only appeared to be slow moving but his natural aptitude soon brought him to the forefront of the Parisian dance scene.

He capitalised on both his dancing and musical talent by coming to London in the mid 1920's to demonstrate and teach the then "new craze" of Latin American dancing, his repertoire consisted of the Argentine Tango, the Paso Doble and later a form of Samba followed by the Rumba, although nowadays the Tango, rightly or wrongly, belongs to the Ballroom Branch.

By way of an aside it must be said that by this time Paris had begun to lag behind New York as the centre of Latin American dancing, probably due to the closer proximity of the United States to South America, particularly Cuba, plus the advent of its own "Jazz Age Dancing" (see under "Jive" - item no. 4 of Chapter Five).

Pierre's studio was in Piccadilly - imagine the rent of it today and where would you get the clientele able to afford the economic admission charge, but in that era most of the great Dancing Masters, such as Josephine Bradley and Victor Sylvester, lived and taught in or around the West End of London.

In his footsteps came Monsieur and Madame Chapouls, well known French demonstrators who gave an exhibition of Rumba at the Cafe de Paris followed by Don Azpiazu and his Dance Band who introduced "true" Rumba music to London.

In the early thirties he engaged a young pupil as his partner, none other than the now famous Doris Lavelle. It took several years but eventually she was acknowledged as the "Queen of Latin" alongside Josephine Bradley as the "Queen of Ballroom" and on the subject of honorary titles, Pierre was known as "The Emperor".

The studio later moved to Greek Street in Soho, a cosmopolitan area of shops, pubs, restaurants and living accommodation where it was then safe to walk around at any hour of the day or night.

And now, for the dates and descriptions of the dances in chronological order.

CHAPTER ONE

PRE-WORLD WAR TWO (Circa 1925 to 1939)

Pre-1931 - See "Introduction".

1931

As previously stated, Pierre's dances consisted of the Argentine Tango, early forms of the Paso Doble and Samba but in the late 20's a Cuban Bandleader, one Alcedes Castellanos, was playing and teaching a new dance in Paris called the Rumba. Pierre immediately went there to acquire the dance in order to extend his repertoire.

He made many visits with Miss Lavelle in the early 30's and they taught and demonstrated it with much success. However, the dance appeared to be somewhat limited but they had to wait until after the war to discover on visits to Cuba, the home of the dance, that the reason for the limitation was that they were dancing the Square Rumba.

1932

The Rumba demonstrated in London by Monsieur and Madame Chapouls.

1933

Rumba music introduced to London by Don Azpiazu and his Band.

1934

Pierre made the first definite reference to Rumba rhythm which he counted in "quicks and slows" as against the later numerical count.

1936

The Imperial Society adopted standard steps for the Rumba although the Profession, generally, took little interest for nearly 10 years, unlike the dancing Public who were taking every available opportunity to learn the dance.

CHAPTER TWO

WARTIME (1939 - 1945)

There were no more visits to Paris, but when the American Servicemen came to England they brought a new dance to brighten the wartime gloom, The Jive, purely American danced to "Swing" music. At that time (1943) the only teachers were the G.I.'s themselves but it became very popular wherever they were stationed and remained so after they left.

They were particularly encouraged to Greek Street where Pierre and Miss Lavelle absorbed the new technique, with its figures, names and routines.

A wartime blow to the larger London dance venues was the Ministry of Defence restriction in the numbers allowed to attend due to the high casualty risk from night and day Air Raids, the restriction also applied to high density gatherings at Cinemas, Theatres, Football Matches etc.

Unfortunately the Dance World was to justify the restrictions when the Cafe de Paris in London's West End, suffered a direct hit which cost the life of the Band Leader, Ken 'Snakehips' Johnson and several of the dancers and band members.

However, to its credit, dancing continued to flourish in the Studios generally and in the Dance Halls of the Provinces, enabling a full resumption on the cessation of hostilities.

CHAPTER THREE

IMMEDIATE POST WAR

1946

The I.D.M.A. (now amalgamated) and the N.A.T.D. introduced Syllibi for the Latin American dances.

1947

Suzy 'Q' Riviera Runs

This was the year of the "great discovery" since, due to his dissatisfaction with the Rumba as then danced, Pierre took advantage of the lifting of travel restrictions to visit Cuba, and, quoting from Miss Lavelle's diary, on dancing with Suzy of Pepe and Suzy Riviera, the then Cuban champions, the first thing she said was "you are out of time" so he had a lesson every day and danced at the Acadamias every night. He returned after six weeks having lost a stone in weight but a happy man.

The explanation was that Europeans, due to their Ballroom heritage, commenced to dance on beat one whereas the Cubans began on beat two and it is this all-important difference which captures the spirit of true Latin.

The new timing was not well received and Pierre said "It will take them five years to accept" - he was three years out, it took eight.

For the record, from thereonout, the "count" at Greek Street was 2, 3, 4, the 1 only being spoken, of necessity, when using such figures as The Spiral and The Curl, and I (and no doubt most of her pupils) can still remember Miss Lavelle's "counting voice" and its overriding emphasis on the initial TWO of each bar with a lower inflection on the 3, 4, sometimes using the word "cruise" in place of 4 to extend the fourth beat.

1948

Pierre introduced to the U.K. what he called "The Cuban System of Ballroom Rumba".

1951

Pierre, Miss Lavelle and Mr James Arnell, a talented Cameraman and Latin American dancer, teamed up to pay the first of their many visits to Cuba to enhance their Rumba technique, with a prior stop-over in New York for a closer look at the dance scene in America.

The visits ceased when Castro came to power and they later learned that their friends and teachers had fled the country, most of them to the U.S.A., mainly in and around Miami.

Their findings were as follows:-

(a) The Americans were dancing the [✓]Triple Lindy (their name for the Jive) and the Mambo (their version of the Rumba but to a much faster tempo with exaggerated solo work albeit commencing on the second beat).

It seemed to them at that time that we were two years ahead in formulating a syllabus for these two dances.

(b) In Cuba, the mambo was compared to the Rumba and it emerged that both were founded on the Bolero. They were impressed with the neatness of the dancing, no exaggerated hip movements but very rhythmic.

Out of the many Rumba lessons taken in Havana, from (amongst others) Senor Pepe Llorenz and his wife Aida, they gained many new figures and refined the old ones.

They also found that, for effect only, Cuban Dance Bands were adding extra beats into Rumba music, but since their patrons were instinctive dancers, they marked these beats with their feet and thus the Cha-Cha-Cha began to form although it was not until the mid 1950's that the separation was finalised.

However, more of that later.

It soon became their joint opinion that Rumba variations originating from Cuba contained more natural rhythm than those made up in other countries.

1953

The trio journeyed to Brazil to polish and extend the Samba, where they found three different styles housed in separate types of dance halls:

(1) GAFIERIAS These were popular halls, mainly for "locals".

(2) DANCINGS Mainly for tourists.

(3) SCHOOLS OF SAMBA Founded by ethnic groups in the hills outside Rio de Janeiro.

In view of this diversity it was almost impossible to compose a Syllabus consisting entirely of authentic figures, but, with what they already had, plus the new knowledge, after a year or two's usage they evolved a revised Syllabus based on, I quote, the "most ballroomlike and teachable steps", which proved acceptable.

1955

The technique used and proposed by Pierre and Miss Lavelle was formally adopted.

As a postscript to this section and for interest, I would like to pass on one of Pierre's comments made in the mid-50's to the effect that "An essential condition for the enjoyment of Latin American dancing is a keen sense of rhythm which can be developed or improved by prolonged listening to correct music" which is still as true today as it was 35 years ago.

CHAPTER FOUR

LOOKING BACK (1991 - 1955)

With one notable exception, there were no single great names in the literature of the Latin-American dance world during this period of gradual change into current style and technique, since most of the adaptations and revisions were carried out by various committees of the several ruling bodies - for example -

1974

The revised Technique of Latin American Dancing was collated by a Committee of and published by the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing to include and enlarge the separate parts they had previously published between 1971 and 1973.

It has, naturally, been and will be the subject of further revisions and enlargements as and when necessary.

The exception, without whom this would be a very dull period, is Mr Walter Laird, three times World Professional Latin American Champion, whose search for Latin music and dance was worldwide, since in:

1961

His "Technique of Latin Dancing" was first published and adopted by the International Dance Teachers Association as their standard technique. A monumental task calling for a master's in-depth knowledge allied to absolute dedication and sustained precision.

There have been a number of techniques published over the years but what makes Mr Laird's uniquely alive is that for the ensuing 30 years, he has carefully monitored his manual, which originally covered Associate and Member, the Fellowship figures being added in 1964 with new editions in 1972, 1977, 1983 and in 1988 a hardback edition; each one continuing, to quote from his preface "the policy of up-dating the book about every five years to take account of changes due to natural development of this 'live' art form, or new information resulting from my continuing research into, and analysis of the principles and techniques used by top class dancers to achieve high quality performances that are aesthetically beautiful and perfectly synchronised with the music".

In my opinion the last few words of the quotation, contain a precept which we, as dance teachers, should thoroughly instil into our pupils.

CHAPTER FIVE

Let us now proceed to add some background to the various dances taken in current syllabus order:-

1) RUMBA

The original dance was a simple rustic portrayal of the pursuit of the Hen bird by the Cockerel and as he never catches her, in the dance that is, it was virtually a solo dance in which there was no body contact. The lady also used a scarf to emphasise her provocative movements but the solo aspect was phased out when the dance gained respectability by moving into clubs, dance halls and social gatherings where the joining of hands became customary.

Its music and rhythm was developed in Cuba over a period of some 150 years mainly from the Bolero, an old Spanish dance enlivened by American Jazz in the 1920's and due to its simple and definitive technique, it became highly popular amongst the Latin dancing fraternity.

It should be noted that in all probability it was, like the Tango, first danced in restricted spaces, such as around camp fires or on street corners and so, originally it was not a "MOVING DANCE".

2) SAMBA

Its origins are a trifle obscure, possibly African, but it seems to have first surfaced circa 1931 as the "Brazilian Maxixe" (see also under Chapter Six) imported to Paris at the turn of the century and used in Cabaret and Demonstrations by Brazilian Artistes. It finally emerged as a dance in its own right between 1921 and 1923 complete with a more rhythmical form of Maxixe music, after which it was stylised in America to be used in a number of their 1930 and early 1940's musical films, mainly by Carmen Miranda, which helped its ultimate acceptance.

For reference it should be noted that the main language of Brazil is Portuguese.

Unlike the Rumba it is a "MOVING DANCE" and therefore progresses around the room with some of its figures such as the Rolling Movements and I quote Miss Lavelle "having to be well danced if they are not to look somewhat silly".

3) PASO DOBLE

The Spanish "National Dance", played at nearly all Bullfights is an amalgam of two themes:

- a) The original Spanish, based on walking people or marching soldiers, hence the Sur Plas simulates soldiers marking time, reputedly, whilst a herd of cattle crosses the road - and
- b) The flourishing of the cape used by a "Torrero" in controlling and avoiding the rushes of the bull. For instance the Displacement represents the Torrero quickly stepping aside and lowering his cape. Strictly, "Torrero" means "a man dealing with bulls" so it is either the large or small cape of the Torreador or Matador.

It is this combination developed in Paris between the wars, say from 1916 to 1925 mainly by a Spaniard known as Salvador, and brought to the U.K. by Pierre the basis of which is in current use for professional exams, competitions, teaching and medal tests.

You will note that the names of its figures, due to passage through Europe, are tri-lingual.

Since it is a "character" dance, wherein most figures are complicated and need space to portray, the dance is not really suitable for a crowded floor, although you may have noticed that the floor is not particularly crowded when the band strikes up Paso Doble music. This may be a good thing because bullfighting is carried out in great style, with of necessity, very precise footwork so these two features are an essential part of the dance.

4) JIVE

Is our title for it but in its homeland it is principally called "Single" or "Triple" Lindy and sometimes "Swing", "Jitterbug" or "Boogie Woogie" but call it what you will - it is the most viable way to interpret Swing music.

Essentially American with most figures having been learned from them or are similar to theirs although we do have different names for some of the basic steps, for instance our "Change of Places" is their "Tuck-in Step".

Traceable from "The Jazz Age of Dancing" which lasted for about 25 years from circa 1900 when the public began dancing to "Ragtime" music. The first efforts, for example The Black Bottom and The Shimmy, were somewhat wild and to a dance purist crude or even vulgar, but nevertheless they were symptomatic of the era of change and unrest surrounding World War One (1914 - 1918).

The standardising of these dances was begun by the, then, internationally known American dance teachers and demonstrators Vernon and Irene Castle and the 1939 romanticised Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers version of their lives is well worth watching if only for the Maxixe demonstration.

This standardising and simplification was completed in circa 1925 by their even more well-known pupil, Arthur Murray, who put the result on the market with outstanding success.

5) THE CHA CHA CHA

The name came about due to the Cubans counting the beat as "step - step - cha - cha - cha" as against our then Ballroom count of "step - step - chasse".

Based on the Rumba and akin to the Mambo which was Americanised and still danced over there, although Mambo music is very much influenced by Swing whereas Cha Cha Cha music is 100% Cuban.

As already stated the dance evolved by reason of extra beats added into Rumba music by Cuban Bands, but it was a long time before our bands played or recorded the music which included these extra beats.

The Committee formulating the Syllabus classed it as an entirely separate dance.

However, Pierre and Miss Lavelle continued their authentic Latin teaching at Greek Street and they used most of the figures, for example the Shoulder to Shoulder, Sliding Doors and New York etc., with equal facility in both the Rumba and the Cha Cha Cha.

CHAPTER SIX

SOME OF THE DANCES WHICH CONTRIBUTED

That covers the Syllabus but I feel that it would be appropriate at this point to make a brief list of some of the dances which did not gain popular acceptance but nevertheless made a contribution to those that did.

THE MERENGUE

Dating from the beginning of the century it was introduced from the Dominican Republic by Miss Gwenethe Walshe a distinguished teacher of Latin American and Ballroom dancing who also introduced the Twist to this country.

A nice story from another source maintains that, in its country of origin, this dance arose from the disability of a war-wounded Generalissimo who dragged his right leg and out of respect to a national hero, the people copied his action in their folk dancing.

THE MAMBO

Still danced in the U.S.A., sharing with our Rumba the common root of:

THE BOLERO

Which is danced to slow melodic Spanish/Cuban ballroom music.

THE CARIOCA

An American invention dating from around 1934 and featured in some early Hollywood musicals.

THE GUARACHA

A fast (55-60 bars a minute) ballroom Rumba.

THE SON

Similar to the above but to medium tempo Rumba music.

THE DANZON

Again, similar but to music of a much slower tempo.

THE MAXIXE

Originating from a South American Indian dance brought to Paris circa 1913 by Brazilians, it was one of the main ingredients of the Samba. (See also under Chapter Five - Samba).

THE BAIAS

A Brazilian dance which never really left those shores.

THE FAROL, THE GAIFERRA AND THE SALSA

All from pre-1920 which with a seasoning of Rock and Roll gave rise to:

THE LAMBADA

Which has enjoyed a recent revival but here again it could well, like the Merengue, fade for lack of suitable music in sufficient quantity.

THE BEGUINE

Danced to Bolero music.

Here seems a good place to mention:

THE CONGA

Which with a "hold" similar to that of the Rumba was, originally, a dance in its own right, not just the novelty 'party warming' Conga Line or Chain used today.

There are many others that have passed into limbo but we should salute their forgotten names and techniques as being the forerunners of what we now call Latin American Dancing.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE NAMING OF A FEW FIGURES

As part of its history we can now look at the naming of a few of the figures in the various Latin American dances, bearing in mind that they converged upon the U.K. from such far away places as Brazil, Mexico, Cuba, Spain and the U.S.A., a few directly, others via France and all with no written technique.

Initially, Pierre had to make notes of figures and techniques in order to teach, later he both published those techniques and made them available to Committees and individuals from which, by adaptation or addition, the present technique was formulated.

In this context I include the anecdote from Miss Lavelle that in the early days when devising a variation in the Jive which involved taking the partner's hands in shadow position, Pierre called out to Doris "Alice where art thou ?", the title of a then popular ballad. An unadopted variation but it illustrates how a name for a figure can arise.

We now proceed with the origin of some names and/or derivations which I hope you will find of interest but please bear in mind that to the Linguist there is often no definitive since some of the literal meanings are lost in the mists of time.

RUMBA

THE FAN:

This is self descriptive and a direct translation of El Abanico from Cuban Spanish.

THE HOCKEY STICK:

Again, self descriptive in that the Lady's turn followed the imaginary straight and curve of a hockey stick the 5th step then being curved not a forward step as we know it today.

PROGRESSIVE WALKS:

Obvious, and is from the original El Paseo, meaning "the walk".

SIDE STEPS:

Again from the original El Paseo Lateral.

CUCARACHAS: (Pressure steps)

Since the word is Spanish and Italian for Cockroach. it is easy to see the similarity of the foot action in this figure to that used in exterminating one of these pests.

HIP TWISTS:

Another obvious title, although in the Guaracha, the Open Hip Twist was known as "The Shuttle".

NATURAL AND REVERSE TOP:

Originally The Vuelta meaning The Turn and one wonders if this crossed over in England to the Samba as the VOLTA MOVEMENTS, (see also paragraph 2 of the Introduction) since both names belong to the same Spanish word group and there is some resemblance to each other and in the steps. However, since an Historian has no access to 50 year old thoughts, reasons and misconceptions, one can only speculate.

AIDA:

The Christian name of an aforementioned Cuban dance teacher's wife, a figure which she danced superbly well and just for the record, syllabus ending No.2 making two spot turns is as danced by Aida, but as it proved rather difficult for the average dancer, ending No.1 consisting of a rock in place and then a spot turn was devised.

KIKI WALKS:

"Kiki" was one of the foremost dancers in pre-Castro Cuba, and gave his name to this figure which he introduced.

SLIDING DOORS, FENCING AND ROPE SPINNING:

Cuban based although not authentic Cuban so the names are English, due to them being descriptive of those actions.

THREE THREES:

The original name was PENICILINA and they were devised by Pepe and Azveno Rivera the, then famous, Cuban professionals.

Amongst others were "Cuban Salute", "American Break", "Las Alamanos" and "Opera Step" (or Caress).

|| Slightly out of context I would here like to mention that in Pierre's original Technique in such figures as the Alemana, Hockey Stick, Open Hip Twist and the Three Threes etc., the Lady had a choice on the first step (count 2) of either closing Right foot to Left foot or crossing it rather tightly behind the Left foot and "using one or the other was just a question of style".

Since Pierre and Miss Lavelle interchanged some of the figures, this option also applied to two or three figures of the Cha Cha Cha.

SAMBA

Although Pierre had some command of the language, only a few of the figures collected in Brazil have been graced with Portuguese names so, in the main, they were given part French, part English titles, the few exceptions being:

|| BOTA FOGO:

The name of one of the bays along the coast line as it roughly follows the shape thereof.

|| CORTA JACA:

Is reputed to mean "the cutting of the apple" although other fruits and confections are also used.

|| PLAIT:

An authentic figure originally named "O Trancadinio" (pronounced "o transadjinio").

CUM BATU:

Used originally as a change of feet.

|| THE CRUZADO:

Or more correctly QUADRADO CRUZADO, an authentic figure only included as a popular Variation, but part of it, I am happy to see, is now in the Syllabus as "The Cruzado Locks", since it presents a very Latin-looking picture.

Here are a few old figures which were not adopted:-

CONVITE A DANSA:

Or Invitation to the Dance of which we now see competitors use many forms both in Latin-American and Ballroom.

VAE-A-VEM:

Or Coming and Going used as an alternative to the Rocks.

AMACA:

A form of whisk.

It is interesting to note that the early Argentine Crosses were danced from corner to corner to end with man facing Line of Dance thus giving a wider choice of figures to follow and we as teachers described them as a series of crossing steps on alternate feet which made the figure much easier to teach.

We also taught and danced Rolling Off The Arm after the Criss Cross which made teaching and dancing it much simpler.

PASO DOBLE

Enlarging what has already been said, the name means in Spanish - "walk together" and describes the custom of walking up and down the Plaza in the cool of the very late afternoon before adjourning for the evening meal, which custom I think most of us have seen with our own eyes on a Spanish holiday. The dance began in Spain, was enlarged in France and migrated to the U.K. so the naming of the figures is tri-lingual and being comparatively modern there is very little mystery apart from the exotic names in our syllabus; viz:-

SUR PLACE:

French meaning "on the spot" or in place.

APPEL:

French - literally "call" and since in France after the Concierge had locked up for the night, one gained entry to an apartment block by calling the nightwatchman with loud handclaps, the noise made by stamping the floor in this step giving a similar sound possibly gave rise to the name.

DEPLACEMENT:

In French it has several related meanings but for our purpose we can take it as "Abrupt Movement" which describes the Torrero quickly stepping aside and lowering his cape to avoid the charge of the bull.

THE HUIT:

French for eight, the figure having eight steps which portray the Torrero waving his cape whilst he, mainly, marks time and it follows that THE SIXTEEN also got its name from its sixteen steps.

LA PASSE:

Portrays the Bullfighter leading the bull to charge the cape which he then flicks against his side so that the bull passes very close.

BANDERILLAS:

Hooked sticks used to goad the bull, the figure represents the action of the Torrero placing them into the skin of its neck, consequently, as in most Paso Doble figures, the man's stance and arm action is important.

COUP DE PIQUE:

The word "pique" in French has several meanings, one of them being the injection of fat into cooking meat by way of a long hollow "needle" a similar action to the final thrust of the sword on Step 1 and its rapid withdrawal on Step 3.

As most of the arm movements in this dance are based on a particular action of the Torrero here are three from the current syllabus in which, to be danced properly, arm movements are all important.

✓ ECART: Properly ECART ET VERONIQUE and translated as "a separation".

✓ FREGOLINA: The cape being whipped quickly behind the Torrero.

FAROL: Now incorporated in the last named figure.

Finally, for the record, here are three original but unadopted figures:-

MARCHE:

The March of the Torrero into the ring.

PAS BATTU:

A jubilant little "showing off" step by the Torrero after he has made the Bull pass him (a side-to-side action being used).

BRAVADE: (bravado)

A poised position with feet crossed, adopted by a Torrero to precipitate a charge.

JIVE

There are no language or pronunciation difficulties here and the names are, generally, descriptive of the action. I have already quoted an example although it didn't take on, which illustrated how a name can arise.

To add force to the importance of a study of history and how it can be used to current advantage, I draw attention to Pierre originally advocating commencing this dance with two small chasses, known to him as "The Rock Basic Movement" which, since becoming a teacher in my own right, I have successfully used, as pupils seem to find it easier than the abruptness of the now usual "Fallaway Rock".

Before leaving the Jive here are some unadopted figures which may pass into oblivion:

Kicking Through

The Throwing Whip

The Pull and Push

The Suzy Q

Change of Hand (Giving rise to our Change of Hands behind the back)

Throwaway from Fallaway (Now known as "The Fallaway Throwaway")

Traffic Lights (Now more or less our Stop and Go)

The Apache (A double spin)

To and Fro

The Rodeo

The Bunny Hug

Finally, there are those figures, such as "The Big Apple" familiar from Hollywood films, not suitable for Ballroom use and in any case best left to young and fit semi-gymnasts.

CHA CHA CHA

The full title of this dance is Cha Cha Cha and we, as professionals, should avoid the sloppy reference to it as The Cha Cha.

Since the syllabus, although broadly based on authentic figures brought back from Cuba by Pierre and Miss Lavelle, was formulated in London, most of the names are in English so there are few language difficulties.

Again, for the record, here are some of the Cuban figures which did not make it into the syllabus or the popular variations:

The Cha Cha Cha Sliding Doors

The Cooks Tour Variation

The Cha Cha Cha Trick Rhythm steps

The Fall Over step

CHAPTER EIGHT

IN CONCLUSION

I still count Miss Lavelle and Mr Arnell among my close friends and when visiting either of them in London the talk centres around dancing, not only of the olden golden days but also the current scene plus a little speculation about what the future may hold for Latin dancing.

Sadly, although fittingly, Pierre, whose like we can never see again, collapsed and died whilst officiating at a dance promotion being held at The Empire Rooms, Tottenham Court Road, London in 1963 and, as a tribute I reproduce one of my favourite pages from his Technique to let you share the clarity of his descriptions:-

CRUSH DANCING

Owing to the fact that Latin American dance music is played in all smart Dance Clubs and Restaurants "Crush" versions of all the dances are almost indispensable.

In the Rumba the Basic Movement should be used extensively danced with small steps. The Side Step, Cucarachas and lady's last 3 steps of Alemana, the Natural Top and Opening from Natural Top into Basic Movement are also suitable steps.

Although the Rumba in its usual Ballroom form does not progress around the room one is sometimes forced to progress along L O D when many couples as so often happens do not understand the Rumba and dance ordinary Fox Trot Crush Dancing to Rumba music. In this case the Side Step can be used as a progression movement and also Progressive Walks forwards or backwards. The Basic Movement danced with a gradual turn to left is very useful to steer in a small or crowded room.

HIP MOVEMENT

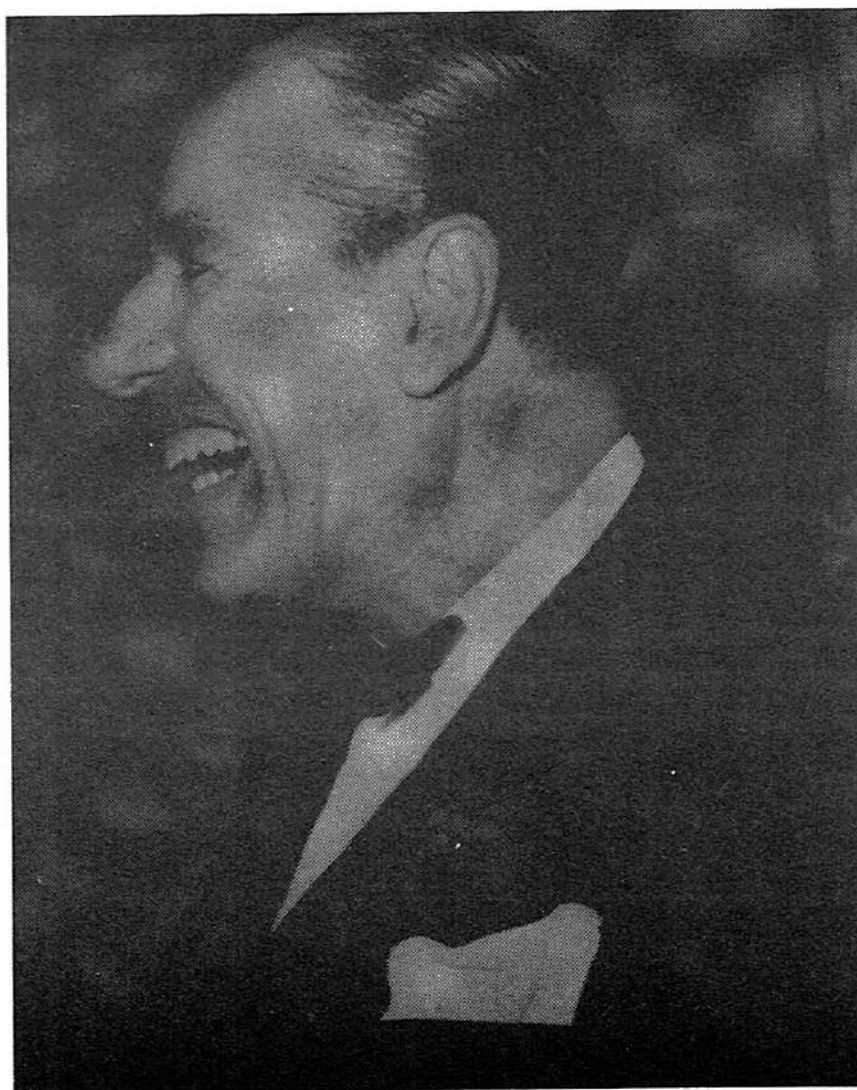
The Full Rumba Hip Swing is only used for a few bars of music at a time (about four bars) and should only be attempted by fully experienced dancers; it is initiated by a leg action and can be described as follows:-

Stand with feet together, right leg braced, weight on R.
Place L down with left knee bent.
Gradually transfer weight on L,
gradually bracing left leg and bending right leg.
Repeat movements placing R down etc.

The hips will swing to the same side as the leg when it is fully braced but not immediately the weight is transferred as the bracing is done gradually.

The body from the waist upwards should be kept quite motionless but relaxed. The Hip Swing can be danced at the end of the Side Step when both the partners' feet are closed transferring the weight rhythmically from one foot to the other ending with a Basic step.

"Thank you Pierre"



"PIERRE"

NOTES