

Positions in Dancing

### CHAPTER III

#### POSITIONS IN DANCING

##### THE CORRECT POSITION FOR HOLDING PARTNERS

*(Closed or Waltz Position)*

NOTWITHSTANDING the fact that there is virtually only one position which might be said has been universally adopted, there are many people who, desiring to become conspicuous, try to set the fashion by using such positions as the Bunny Hug, the Grizzly Bear and other awkward positions, which are the subject of much criticism.

However, the most fortunate thing is that these positions, which are neither practical nor beautiful to behold, are only short lived. Even the Associations of Dancing in America and various dance teachers have oft discussed the subject and tried to originate and introduce a new position which would take the place of the one and only correct



position which has been in use for over one hundred years.

This position is both practical and graceful.

The dancers take the half face-to-face position (standing a little to the right of each other) the gentleman's right arm partly encircling the lady's waist; this arm (in case of emergency) should act as a support. He takes with his left hand the right hand of the lady; these hands are held to the side about twelve inches from the body and a little above the waist line. The arm should be bent and so relaxed that he can move it at will in any direction. This left hand of the gentleman should act as a guide, as all signaling is done with this hand. The left hand of the lady should rest gracefully on the gentleman's right arm.

The upper part of the body should be held gracefully erect and perfectly relaxed and the dancers should look over each other's right shoulder. (See illustration page 27.)

*This position is assumed by all the professional dancers of to-day.*

#### TANGO POSITION

This position is virtually a new position which has come to life with the Modern Dances; it



THE OPEN POSITION



is often used, being very pretty and most practical.

It is similar to the Closed Position with the exception that the dancers stand side by side, shoulder to shoulder (instead of face to face), both the lady and the gentleman facing the line of direction, with hands clasped in front.

*Note.*—The line of direction is the direction in which the dancers move around the room, which is left from the center of the room. (See page 27.)

#### OPEN POSITION

Same as the Tango Position, with the hands released and held down at the side.

This position is the same one used in the old Barn Dance.

Dancers standing side by side, right arm of gentleman encircles lady's waist and outside hands hanging at side. (See page 37.)

#### YALE OR AMERICAN POSITION

The dancers take the regular Closed Position and place themselves decidedly to the right of each other, so that the gentleman's right foot can pass the lady's right foot when he takes the step forward. (See page 39.)



THE YALE POSITION



This position is recognized throughout the world as the American Position.

#### POSITION OF THE FEET

It would seem rather strange and not at all scientific to write a book on Dancing without giving the Fundamental Five Positions of the feet. Yet seemingly there are many at present teaching the new dances who have not the remotest idea of the positions or could even analyze the correct Waltz.

The principal positions that are used in the Modern Dance are the Second Position, Third Position, Fourth Position, and Fourth Rear Position. Occasionally in the Tangos we have a Crossed and a Rear Crossed Position.

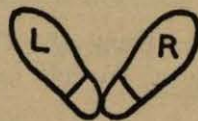
#### FIVE POSITIONS

constitute the rudiments of dancing, and they bear the same relation to the dance as the notes to music or the alphabet to a language, and a *thorough knowledge of this is indispensable.*

The positions are divided into two classes: closed positions (feet together) and open positions (feet apart). The closed positions are the odd

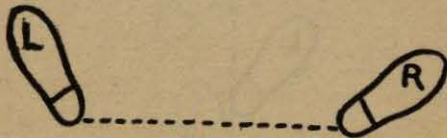
numbers, first, third, and fifth, and the open positions are the even numbers, second and fourth.

While executing the positions with the one foot the other foot retains the first position with weight of body resting on it.



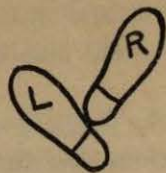
FIRST POSITION

First Position—Stand with the heels together and the toes turned outward, to form a right angle.



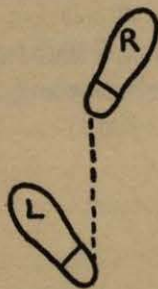
SECOND POSITION

Second Position—Move the right foot direct to the side, the heel being raised and the toes touching floor.



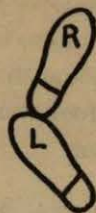
THIRD POSITION

Third Position—Bring the right heel to the hollow or middle of the left foot. (See frontispiece).



FOURTH POSITION

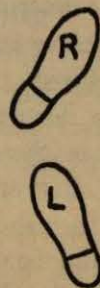
Fourth Position—Advance the right foot (as in walking), the heel raised and the toes touching the floor.



FIFTH POSITION

Fifth Position—Bring the heel of the right foot to the left foot, so that it touches in front of the toes of the left foot.

Rear Positions—These are the positions where the foot in question is placed in the rear or back of the other foot.



CROSSED POSITION

Crossed Position—One foot crossing the other, in front or in back.



These positions should be performed with the left foot as well. In order to execute the positions with the left foot, transfer the weight of the body on to the right foot and move the left foot into the various positions.

#### DESCRIPTIONS AND DIAGRAMS

*In the description of the dances here given instead of using the words right foot and the left foot these feet will sometimes be referred to as the executing foot (free foot), and the supporting foot. The executing foot is the foot that is about to move, and the supporting foot is the one that supports the weight of the body.*

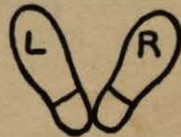
In order to make the description of the various dances more comprehensive and to remove doubt as to the exact and correct positions and movements of the feet, the descriptions are given according to the *Newman System of Dance Writing*, which consists of diagrams of the feet and the direction in which they should move.

These diagrams should be enlarged and drawn upon the floor with chalk. The student is next asked to place himself directly on the starting position and follow accurately every move indicated by the arrows.

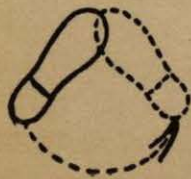
*It is most essential to note that in the description of the dances, only the part of the gentleman is described. The lady will take the same steps starting with the other foot—in other words, the counterpart.*

#### THE STARTING POSITION

This position is indicated in the diagrams by the feet drawn thus



and the dotted foot is the terminus of the step. The arrow indicates the direction in which the R. F. and L. F. mean the right foot and the left foot and the numbers (1) (2) (3) (4), etc., are the counts.



This drawing shows a pivot, moving the heel of the foot in the direction of the arrow, pivoting on the toe.



## ABBREVIATIONS

R. F., right foot; L. F., left foot.

(1) (2) (3) (4), etc., are the counts, and (x) is between counts, or in other words it is counted and.

2-4—count two to the measure.

3-4—count three to the measure.

The Castle Walk, Castle Glide,  
One-Steps, Horse Trot