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## Preface

This U.S.I.S.T.D. American Style Silver Manual is the official technique from which all future U.S.I.S.T.D. American Silver Rhythm examinations will be drawn. For this manual, a close study was conducted of all former figures in the syllabus, according to their popularity. These figures embody sound dance technique, but allow latitude for individual expression. It is also a great source of information for students who are keen to excel at their dancing. The technique has been consolidated and presented in an easy to read chart form. This enables the teacher to engage in the study of the leading exponents of both the past and present.

## About the Author



**Esther Don**

The book you are about to read was compiled by Esther Don, A Fellow I.S.T.D.- BB, LA and AM; I have been enthusiastically teaching since 1976. My experience has covered every aspect of teaching from beginners to medallist candidates and competitors. Presently I am coaching dance and training professional candidates to attain their professional accreditation. I am also a Competition Organizer. I strongly believe that, on a purely social level, Ballroom Dancing is the acceptable form of social "hugging " to music. This lead me to my second strong belief that competitive dancing, is a blend of proficiency, skill, and dexterity, exhibited as an athletic art form, which is a stylized and refined version of that same "hugging" to music. This manual strives to embrace both of those beliefs. The Silver styling is predominately used for competitive purposes, however it could easily be adopted on the social dance floor.

## Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge and extend my heartfelt appreciation to these people who were instrumental in the completion of this book. First and foremost to Lyall Bradshaw for the many hours he spent dancing figures, assisting in compilation of this material and for always being there for me day or night. Special thanks to the following people for working in assisting me in the final editing of the figures and printed materials. Jennifer Booth, Frederick Dunn, Miriam Ellis, Phillip Stephens. I would like to recognize and thank these wonderful people for so freely sharing their expertise.

## How to Study the Charts

This American Style Manual has been issued in chart form. A thorough study of the chart headings is important, so that the student understands the general principles of the changes that have been made. If the following notes are thoroughly understood it will not be necessary to memorize all the charts, which can be a long and tedious task.

### General Technical Terms:

**Time Signature:** The number of beats per bar or measure of music.

**Tempo:** The number of bars or measures per minute. (The speed at which the music is played.)

**Rhythm:** 1. The regular occurrence of accentuated beats. 2. The rhythm used for counting a particular dance, such as 'quick, quick, slow')

**Beat Value:** The amount of time assigned to the count used for each step in a figure or pattern, such as one whole beat,  $\frac{1}{2}$  a beat, etc.

**Beats and Bars (Counting in):** A system of counting the cumulative total of bars or measures of music occurring in a figure, pattern, or amalgamation, such as 1.2.3 4& 2.2.3 4& 3.2.3 4&, etc.

### Chart Column Headings

**Step:** Each step in a figure is assigned a number in the charts, and the number is listed in the first column on the left side of each chart.

**Timing:** The numerical or rhythmic counting method assigned to each step or group of steps listed in the charts, such as QQS, 1.2.3.4, SQQ, etc.

**Foot Position** Refers to the position of one foot in relation to the other foot, when the foot arrived in Position, i.e. forward, back, side, diagonally forward or side and slightly forward. Other terms in the Foot Position column include:

- CBMP - a tracking of the foot and not a body turn
- PP - Promenade Position
- O/P - Outside Partner
- O/P on Left Side - Outside Partner on Left Side
- These terms are given when they alter the position of the foot.

**Amount of Turn:** Turn is measured from the position of the stepping foot and not the body. When the feet turn more than the body, it is noted by the term "body turns less" (BTL).

**Dance Position:** This always refers to the Lady's position in relation to the Man. (i.e. Closed, PP, CPP, O/P, O/P on Left Side, P/O on Right Side, P/O on Left Side, Fallaway etc). (See **Description of Dance Positions** on page V)

**Footwork:** Refers to the part (or parts) of the foot used when taking a step. (i.e. B, BF, BH)

**Bar Column:** Counting in Beats & Bars refers to the number of bars/measures of music prescribed to a figure.

### Description of Figure:

This column provides a brief description of the figure to be used as a guide. In Rumba, Mambo and Bolero, the description is given for each bar or measure in the figure. In Cha-Cha-Cha and Swing, where the actions being described often overlap from one bar or measure to the next, the description is given for a group of actions, and may not always match up correctly with a precise or complete number of bars or measures.

The formula used in this column normally is as follows:

1. Chart Heading (includes dance position and foot you are standing on).
2. Everything in the Foot Position column and/or the proper name of the movement used and Dance Position you are in.
3. Where turn is made. (Man must always mention his turn first then the Lady's turn, (while the Lady only describes her turn).
4. Leads and/or holds where necessary.
5. Count.
6. Ending dance position if different from the beginning position.

### ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE CHARTS (listed in alphabetical order)

|      |                                 |          |                                 |
|------|---------------------------------|----------|---------------------------------|
| (&)  | ½ beat of music                 | IE       | Inside Edge                     |
| BF   | Ball Flat                       | L        | Left                            |
| BH   | Ball Heel                       | LF       | Left Foot                       |
| B    | Ball of Foot                    | Open CPP | Open Counter Promenade Position |
| bet  | between                         | Open PP  | Open Promenade Position         |
| BTL  | Body Turns Less                 | O/P      | Outside Partner                 |
| Com  | commence                        | P/O      | Partner Outside                 |
| Cont | continue                        | PP       | Promenade Position              |
| CBM  | Contrary Body Movement          | Q        | Quick                           |
| CBMP | Contrary Body Movement Position | R        | Right                           |
| CPP  | Counter Promenade Position      | RF       | Right Foot                      |
| e/o  | End of                          | S        | Slow                            |
| H    | Heel                            | TTO      | Toe Turned Out                  |

### Training For Professional Examinations

*Teachers who are training for examinations should focus on the following priorities:*

- 1) Ability to dance the figures to a Silver standard of dancing. Male candidate must lead a Lady. However the Female candidate has to make a choice to either dance (a) as Lady or (b) as Man. Should the Ladies chooses to dance as man attention should be paid to their poise when dancing.
- 2) Have a good knowledge and understanding of the technical details.
- 3) Presentation of correct and balanced solo demonstrations.
- 4) Have an understanding of the musical requirements, i.e. Time Signature, Tempi, counting in Beats and Bars, and Beat Values.
- 5) Be able to explain simple teaching methods.
- 6) Have good voice projection.
- 7) A professional approach.

The above is your Formula for success. Know the Formula, it works!

### **Normal Hold and Poise**

**Man:** Stand facing Lady approximately 6 inches apart, Lady slightly to Man's R side. Elbows should be raised to just below shoulder level, and should be slightly forward of the body so that they are midway between Man and Lady when viewed from the side. Man's R hand is placed on or just below Lady's L shoulder blade, and his L hand will lightly clasp Lady's R hand with the joined hands raised to just above eye level

**Lady:** Lady dances the natural opposite to Man, but places her L hand on or just below Man's R shoulder

**Poise:** Taking care to keep the shoulders down, slightly lift the rib cage. Stand in an upright but relaxed manner with feet together or apart to side. Body weight should be balanced over the balls of the feet with heels lightly resting on the floor.

### **Description of Dance Positions**

1. **Closed Position** - Partners face each other squarely as for Normal Hold.
2. **Contact Position** - As for Closed Position, but the couple will have light body contact and the arms will be slightly higher than normal. It should be remembered that Contact Position in the Rhythm dances is not static the arms breath a little to allow free flowing movement..
3. **Promenade Position** - A position in which Man turns slightly to L (Lady slightly to R) so that the partners form a "V" shape. Man is slightly in advance with Lady on Man's R side. Man's R side and Lady's L side are towards each other. Partners are moving forward to Man's L and Lady's R
4. **Open Promenade Position** - As for Promenade Position, but further apart and using the following holds. The distance apart varies depending on the figure danced.
  - Man's L hand holding Lady's R hand
  - Man's R hand holding Lady's L hand
  - Man's R hand holding Lady's R hand (handshake hold)
  - Double Hold
  - No hold
5. **Fallaway Position** - Partners in the same position as described for Promenade Position. The direction of travel is reversed so that both partners are moving back to Man's R and Lady's L.
6. **Counter Promenade Position** - A V-shaped position in which Man's L side and Lady's R side are slightly towards partner with Man's R side and Lady's L side turned slightly away from partner.  
The Hold with Man's R and Lady's L hands is slightly released, Lady slightly in advance. Partners are moving forward to Man's R and Lady's L.
7. **Open Counter Promenade Position** - As for Counter Promenade Position, but further apart and using the following holds. The distance apart varies depending on the figure danced
  - Man's L hand holding Lady's R hand
  - Man's R hand holding Lady's L hand
  - Man's R hand holding Lady's R hand (handshake hold)
  - Double Hold
8. **Outside Partner Position** - Whichever partner is stepping forward in CBMP, Outside Partner. This Dance Position is known as O/P on Right Side or O/P on Left Side.
9. **Partner Outside Position** - Whichever partner is stepping back in CBMP, This Dance Position is known as P/O on Right Side or P/O on Left Side.
10. **Open, Open Facing and Apart Position** - Are variations of the Closed Position. Facing and away from partner, approximately at arms length.
  - Man's L hand holding Lady's R hand
  - Man's R hand holding Lady's L hand
  - Man's R hand holding Lady's R hand (handshake hold)
  - Double Hold
  - No hold The latter is normally referred as the Apart Position

### Description of Dance Positions (Continued)

11. **Right Side by Side Position** - Lady on Man's Right Side both facing the same way. Generally uses a Right to Left hand hold.
12. **Left Side by Side Position** - Lady on Man's Left Side both facing the same way. Generally using a Left to Right hand hold
13. **Left Angle Position** - Lady at 90 degrees to man on his Left side
14. **Shadow** - Lady directly in front of or behind the man. (also known as Tandem)
15. **Right Shadow Position** - Lady on Man's Right side slightly in advance or slightly behind, both facing the same way, Generally using Right to Right hand hold with the Left hand extended.
16. **Left Shadow Position** - Lady on Man's Left side slightly in advance or slightly behind, both facing the same way, Generally using Right to Right hand hold with the Left hand extended.

### General Analysis

**Leads** : They are four different kinds of leads employed in this syllabus

**Weight Change Leads:** Are achieved by a distinct change of weight by the Man from one foot to the other. The Lady follows by sensing the Man's weight change and dancing the natural opposite. (i.e. Man steps on his LF and the Lady steps on her RF, both taking complete weight on the foot.)

**Physical Leads:** To be able to convey these Leads the Man uses a degree of tension in the contacted arm(s). This is matched by tension in the Lady's arm(s), enabling the Man to lead her to the requisite position. During movements in which the Lady requires Physical Leads her contact arm will slightly retract with tension.

**Visual Leads:** Is when the Man dances a shine step, known as a challenge step (danced solo), then the Lady meets the challenge and dances the same step as Man (danced solo).

**Shaping Leads:** Are produced by the Man through arm positions, hand holds and body position. The key is to shape the body and/or arms, making the movement evident to the Lady. During movements that are achieved thru shaping leads the Lady's contact arm will usually retain minimal tension.

**Use of Arms:** Movements of the arms are subtle and should be in rhythmic harmony with the movement of the body, allowing personal expression. Arms should move naturally and in an 'unaffected' way. The free arm or arms should never look static or 'unemployed'.

## **General Analysis (Continued)**

### **Forward Walk:**

Commence in normal upright posture with weight on RF, LF back with toe turned out and pressure on inside edge of L toe, and both legs straight. Settle weight fully into R leg, simultaneously moving hips to R and flexing L knee and allowing body weight to commence moving forward. Keeping foot in contact with floor, move LF fwd, first on toe, then on inside edge ball of foot. As the weight is taken onto the foot the heel should lower, the knee straighten and the heel of the opposite foot should be released from the floor as the hips move softly sideways in the direction of the stepping foot, allowing the back foot to turn out, completing the rotational hip movement. (THE FRONT LEG IS NOW STRAIGHT AND THE BACK KNEE IS FLEXED, so that both knees are almost in line with each other).

**Things to remember when dancing a Forward Walk,**

**1. Body, 2. Flex knee (and feel a compression in the knee), 3. Foot, 4. Straighten, 5. Hip.**

**Note:** A slight difference occurs on all subsequent walks. To continue with a forward walk on RF, simultaneously release pressure from R toe, flex R knee and move RF fwd as described above while straightening L knee and pushing off the LF. The L knee WILL NOT STRAIGHTEN UNTIL YOU ARE LEAVING THE LF. In Rumba, Cha-Cha-Cha and Mambo, weight is settled into the supporting leg prior to commencing the first step of the dance. This causes a slight lowering, placing the dancer slightly BELOW normal standing height. If normal standing height is achieved on each step taken, the dancer will create an 'up and down' action in these dances that is undesirable. This difference occurs on all steps in each of these dances after the initial step is taken. Once the weight is settled or 'lowered' into the supporting leg to commence the first step of the dance, it is never raised again to normal standing height.

### **Backward Walk:**

Commence in normal upright posture with weight on LF, RF forward with slight pressure on inside edge of toe and both legs straight. Settle weight fully into L leg, simultaneously moving hips to L and flexing R knee. With very slight backward movement of body weight and keeping foot in contact with the floor, move RF back on ball of foot with part weight, knees together with R knee flexed and L leg straight. The R toe will be turned out, and hips have rotated to L. Special attention is paid to the front toe of the LF remaining in contact with the floor. (The R knee will straighten and the R heel will lower at the commencement of the following step)

### **Comparison of the Forward Walks**

**Comparison of the Forward Walks (International and American Styles)** The technique of the Bronze walk is very similar in both styles except in the American Style the step is taken shorter (so that the front heel is approximately in line with the toe of the back foot) with the knee flexed with pressure but without weight. As the weight is taken onto the foot the heel should lower, the knee straighten and the heel of the opposite foot should be released from the floor as the hips move softly sideways in the direction of the stepping, foot allowing the Back Foot to turn out completing the rotational hip movement. (THE FRONT LEG IS NOW STRAIGHT AND THE BACK KNEE IS FLEXED so that both knees are almost in line with each other).

In the International Style the step is taken stronger with knee slightly flexed and as the foot is placed in position the heel lowers and the leg straightens just before the extent of the stride and the opposite heel releases from the floor. Then with a smooth action the weight is taken over the front foot allowing the back foot to turn out completing the rotational hip movement. Retain tone in the back leg with pressure on inside edge of toe. (BOTH LEGS ARE NOW STRAIGHT)

### **Point to Remember when dancing a side step**

As weight is taken on to a side step the heel of the non- supporting foot will be released with the inside edge of the ball of foot in contact with the floor.

**Glossary** (Definitions and other terminology as used in this Manual but not fully described elsewhere.)

**Break Step-**

- The Break step is an element in dancing which serves as a change of direction. It is used to move (a) from forward to back, (b) from back to forward, and (c) from side to replace. The most important thing to remember when dancing a Break step is to have two distinct changes of weight. The Break step is also known as a Rock Step.
- Whenever dancing a **Back Break Step** - Although the footwork is given as **BH** for the backward step of a Break Step or Rock-Step, weight is maintained on the ball of the foot and the heel will **very lightly** touch the floor. The lowering of the heel occurs **very late** on these steps, and is done at the commencement of the following step. It is permissible to dance these actions without lowering the heel.
- In the **Open Break** partners face each other squarely and both partners step back and away from each other in Open Facing Position with arms just above waist level and not quite straight at the elbow.
- An **Open Point Break** is a version of an Open Break where the Man Points his LF to side without weight instead of a Back Break while leading Lady to dance an Extended Back Break otherwise known as a "Sit Check". He will bend his R knee on the first Q extending his left arm leading the Lady to sit well back on her R leg. (Her right leg is Bent and her left leg is straight). He will then straighten his R knee while leading Lady to step forward, a small step, with her left leg on the second Q.)

**Chasse-** In Cha-Cha-Cha and Swing, this is an action comprised of three changes of weight, all traveling in the same direction. The first step can move in any forward, backward, side, or diagonal direction. The second step will move in the direction of the first step, and may close, or close towards. The feet normally end apart on the third step, although they do occasionally end together.

**Chasse Turn-** Consist of 3 steps, forward, side, close or back, side, close.

**Cross Triple-** consists of a group of three steps moving forward or backward and a locking action is used. (see Introduction to Bronze Cha-Cha-Cha)

**Forward or Back Runs-** consists of a group of three steps forward or back steps passing the feet ending with feet apart.

**Running Triple-** Is three steps forward (R,L,R) to end with RF back.

**Cross Body Lead-** In the Cross Body Lead the Man leads the Lady and across the front of his body in PP, while Lady dances a Promenade Run to end in Closed Position. Always 3 Dance Positions are exhibited, the following being examples used in this syllabus,

- (a) From Closed Position, to Promenade Position, ending in Closed Position.
- (b) From Closed Position, to Promenade Position, ending in Open Facing Position.
- (c) From Closed Position, to Promenade Position, ending in Left Side by Side Position.
- (d) From Closed Position, to Promenade Position, ending in Outside Partner Position on Right Side.
- (e) From Closed Position, to Promenade Position, ending in Open Counter Promenade Position.

**Hitch Kick-** is a kick ball change action.

**Pivot-** A Right or Left pivot is executed on one foot to a prescribed amount of turn. Special attention should be paid to the Leg tracking in all Left Pivots. (*Legs are held in CBMP*).

**Spiral-** A strong forward walk (with the knee locked), turning, crossing the free leg loosely in front without weight, making up to a complete turn.

**Swivel-** Is a prescribed amount of turn executed on one foot. (A Fan is also known as a swivel).

# Swing

Time Signature 4/4 with the first and third beat accented.  
"Slow" count = 2 beats. "Quick" count = 1 beat. "And" count = 1/2 beat.  
Counting in beats and bars 1234, 2234, 3234, 4234etc.  
*Recommended Tempo: 34 - 36 MPM*

## Silver Swing Step List

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## Introduction to Silver Swing

### Hold:

The hold is similar to that of the normal hold except the Man's Left arm and the Lady's Right arm are a little lower (just above waist level) and not quite straight at the elbow. Having the arms lowered makes the hold looser and more flexible. Man's Left palm is up and Lady places her Right hand gently in his palm.

The weight of the body should be kept forward and not be allowed to fall back into the heels. The knees are flexed naturally. The hips should be kept free so that a very slight lateral lilt is felt as the weight is placed onto a foot, particularly when chasses are being danced sideways.

### Footwork:

The footwork is Ball Flat through-out. However, depending on the speed of the music, the advanced dancer uses different footwork in chasses and they are as follows:

|   |    |    |    |                   |
|---|----|----|----|-------------------|
| 1 | BF | BF | BF | (Slow Tempo)      |
| 2 | BF | B  | BF | (MOST USED)       |
| 3 | B  | BF | BF | (Medium Tempo)    |
| 4 | B  | B  | BF | (Very fast Tempo) |

### Break Step:

1-The Break step is an element in dancing which serves as a change of direction. It is used to move (a) from forward to back, (b) from back to forward, and (c) from side to replace. The most important thing to remember when dancing a Break step is to have two distinct changes of weight.

2-In the **Open Break** both partner's step back and away from each other, facing Squarely with arms just above waist Level and not quite straight at the elbow.

3- The Break step is also known as a Rock Step.

4- Whenever dancing a **Back Break Step Note:** Although the footwork is given as **BH** for the backward step of a Break Step or Rock-Step, weight is maintained on the ball of the foot and the heel will **very lightly** touch the floor. The lowering of the heel occurs **very late** on these steps, and is done at the commencement of the following step. It is permissible to dance these actions without lowering the heel.

### Chasses:

It is very difficult to remember what type of chasse you are dancing unless you learn the normal chasses, *and then you memorize the unusual chasses*

| The normal Chasses  | The unusual Chasses (some examples)                                     |
|---|---|
| LF or RF forward or back  | LF or RF (IE) RF diagonally forward to chasse R,L,R end with RF forward |
| LF or RF to side  | LF or RF (IE) LF to side to chasse end with LF diagonally forward       |
| LF or RF diagonally forward or diagonally back                        | LF or RF (IE) RF forward to chasse R,L,R end with RF back               |
| LF or RF turning Chasse, an almost closing Chasse and Chasse in place |   |

**Running Triple:** Is three steps forward (R,L,R) to end with RF back

No alignments are necessary for Swing, but definite amounts of turn are required for examination.

### Beat Value:

The beat value of all Chasses in Swing is 1/2, 1/2, 1.

*For Swing Basic:*

|                          |     |     |   |     |     |   |   |   |
|--------------------------|-----|-----|---|-----|-----|---|---|---|
| Number of Step           | 1   | 2   | 3 | 4   | 5   | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Timing                   | 1   | &   | 2 | 3   | &   | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Beat Value               | 1/2 | 1/2 | 1 | 1/2 | 1/2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Counting in Beats & Bars | 1   | &   | 2 | 3   | &   | 4 | 2 | 2 |

## Dance Positions , Holds and Lines



Figure 1 – Closed Position



Figure 2 - Open Promenade Position



Figure 3 – Fallaway Position



Figure 4 –  
Man: Outside Partner on Left Side  
Lady: Partner Outside on Left Side



Figure 5 - Open Facing Position  
with Man's left to Lady's right hand hold



Figure 6 - Open Facing Position  
with Right to Right hand hold



Figure 7 - Open Facing Position  
with double hold

Dance Positions  
Holds  
and Lines



Figure 8 - Open Facing Position  
with no Hold in apart position



Figure 9 - Right Shadow Position



Figure 10 - Left Shadow Position



Figure 11 - Shadow Position  
As used in the figure Catapult