

Introduction to Dance (continued)CHA CHA CHAHistory

The *Cha Cha Cha* is a Latin American dance. It is a variation of the *Mambo*. To give zest to a slow tempo *Mambo*, three steps are taken on the pause (4 and 1 cts.). The *Cha Cha Cha* is popular because the music and rhythm is exciting and it is easy to learn and dance.

*Mambo* is an outgrowth of the *Rhumba*. During 1947, devotees of Latin American music observed that orchestras were playing certain pieces with a peculiar accent to the rhythm. A few dancers, instead of using the familiar rhumba step, were interpreting the music with a different body movement and step pattern.

To achieve better interpretation, dancers began to alter their rhumba style to fit this new syncopated form of music. In New York during the middle 40s the off-beat rhumba became popular. At the same time in Havana, at the end of the war, a more vigorous style of dancing was developed, based upon the same rhythm. This dance, with its quick lunging movements or "charges" forward, sideways, or crossover, was called *Camando*. In 1947 the two dance styles were merged and given the name *Mambo*.

Arsenio Rodriquez, a noted Cuban musician and composer, is credited with developing the peculiar mambo rhythm. In 1934 in Havana, Cuba, he began to experiment with various African rhythms of the Congo region. He was becoming bored with the familiar rhumba rhythm, and he began to experiment with these strange and unusual rhythmic patterns. Thus, the modern mambo rhythm was born. Rodriquez's ideas were not immediately accepted. The peculiar rhythms, with the accented off-beats, sounded strange at first, and the other musicians called him "loco." Only gradually did they learn to play and appreciate the odd-sounding music.

Rhythm

4/4      1   2   3   4

Unit

Forward and Back Box

Footwork

Man      L, R-L, R, L-R, L, R      Lady      R, L-R, L, R-L, R, L

Records