

Hambo - Swedish

There are many good Hambo records available. The following on the FOLK DANCER label are especially good for those about to learn the dance. They have a pronounced beat, and are played by the same musicians who play for all the Scandinavian affairs on the East Coast. MH 2003, 2002, 2004...all good. RCA EPA Tivoli Hambo

THE SWEDISH HAMBO is one of the more difficult folk dances, yet every folk dancer wants to learn it. Because the man's step is different from the lady's step it is not feasible to teach it as a couple dance, or to teach it to a large group. The best method is to separate the men and ladies. Teach the step first. Then the teacher should do the dance with each person. It is important that the first attempt at the Hambo be with someone who thoroughly knows the dance. Then and then only should couples try the dance together.

Here we give the pattern of the dance first, then follow through with the sequence in which the steps should be taught to insure good results.

THE DANCE COMPLETE: Couples, side by side, inside hands joined, free hands on hips. Lady is to Right of Man, face counterclockwise.
Start on outside foot, (Man's L, Lady's R).
Step on outside foot, swing inside foot forward.
Step forward on inside foot and swing outside foot forward.
Walk forward 3 steps (Man does L,R,L; Lady does R,L,R).
Immediately face partner and take shoulder-waist position and turn with 5 Hambo steps (The 5th Hambo step is sort of minimized, or watered down as couples use this 5th turn to open up into starting position and a repeat of dance.

MAN'S HAMBO STEP: First do this:
Step forward on R foot. (Count 1.)
Step forward on L foot (Count 2)
Bright R foot down parallel to L foot and balance on balls of both feet (count 3).

Practise the above several times, noting that the R foot must be down on the floor on count 3.

Now do this:

Step forward on Rfoot (bend knee in semi-crouch) (Count 1)
Step forward on Lfoot with bent knee at beginning of Count 2, and then straighten up to be on L toe at end of count 2.
Bring R foot down beside L foot (Count 3).

NOW add this:

Step forward on Rfoot with bent knee (count 1).
Step forward on Ltoe with bent knee and pivot R on it, and straighten up at end of pivot for count 2.
Brace yourself by bringing down R foot beside Lfoot (count 3).

As you turn with the Hambo step you will note that the R foot touches the ground twice, at the end of count 3, and at the beginning of count 1. The third count is the important one, both feet must be on the floor for this count. Relaxed knees are important. IMPORTANT, there is no jump, leap, hop or run in the Man's Hambo step. The principal is that you approach the girl on count 1 with bent knee in preparation for othe turn. On count 2, you begin the turn as you rise up on the L toe. On Count 3 you come down on both feet. Centrifugal force is what makes the Hambo work, so do not lean on partner. Man must be sure to place his R foot between Lady's feet on count 1. Have a pulling away feeling in shoulder-waist position as you dance.

(Lady's step on reverse side)

Lady's step: Practise this first:

Step forward on L foot with slight dip for count 1,
Touch R toe solidly down on floor slightly behind and next ^{to} L, foot
for count 2 and dip down.
Leap forward on R foot for count 3.

Practise this in a straight line until you feel you have the step. Now practise the same, but on your tippy-toes.

Now when you do this step with the Man, the lady will find she has to approach the man face-to-face and not to the side. Step towards him with the Left foot Right between his feet. This is the foot she will be pivoting on as man turns her.

Be sure to put the R toe down in BACK on count 2, and not in front. For if you put it forward, you will find yourself hopping, instead of leaping, then the poor man has a hard time dancing with you, plus the fact that it will not be a Hambo step. Also do not put the R toe too far back on count 2, as you will look ungainly getting into the leap following the step. Just place near the Left heel.

Do not cling on ^{to} your partner. Straighten arms out and pull away. Centrifugal force makes it work. Lady's steps should be small and neat, so should the man's step be equally small and neat. Lady's should not flail feet out in back, as someone may be hurt. Flailing feet are the mark of a bad Hambo dancer, although the good Lord knows how hard it is not too flail if a big lug of a man gets hold of a Lady and doesn't know how to Hambo!

In teaching the Hambo have the Ladies do the first part of the dance...that is do two step-swings and 3 walking steps...then follow through with the ladies doing the Hambo step in one big loop with 4 Hambo steps, rather than having them do a complete turn. It is the Man's job to turn the Lady so it is not necessary to have any turning practise sessions for ladies.

If the Lady will remember to sink down into a semi-crouched position on count 2, it will help the man do his step and look a lot better too.

The Hambo is no more strenuous than a waltz and should look effortless on the floor. Remember that the steps should be small, crisp and close to the floor. Many American male folk dancers have a tendency to do a 1,2, hop (a fake mazurka step) which tends to throw couples off balance.

Take time out to learn the Hambo with a capable teacher and you will experience one of the true joys of folk dancing....Oh yes, remember, The Hambo turn is done in shoulder-waist position.

This sheet issued as refresher notes for those taking Hambo lessons at Folk Dance House and at Maine Folk Dance Camp. Copyright by FOLK DANCE HOUSE
Directed by Michael Herman
Box 201 Flushing LI NY 11352