

1914 TANGO ARGENTINO
(Buenos Aires, Argentina)

"The true Argentine Tango, the one and only" as described by Nicanor Lima, Buenos Aires, ca. 1914.

These are some of the most typical figures from the 50 figures and 125 variations described in this rare illustrated tango manual.

MUSIC: Any early tango with 8-bar phrases. If these steps are rearranged into freestyle improvisation, the music need no longer have 8-bar phrases.

RHYTHM: 2/4 TEMPO: 66-74 bpm

FORMATION: Cpls in Ballroom pos.

STEPS: Ftwk described for M; W use opp ftwk.

PATTERN

Measures

1-4 INTRODUCTION No action

PART I

1 PASOS PASEOS SERENOS M walks fwd L and R. Timing: S S.

2 SALTITO #3 M steps diag/L; closes R to L cutting R toe under heel; steps fwd L. Timing: QQ S

3-4 MEDIA LUNA "VAI VEN" M touches R ft fwd w/o wt, sweeping in a crescent arc around to the R side; takes a small step R bkwd; touches R back; takes a small step fwd L. Timing: S S S S.

5-6 MEDIA LUNA "MENDOCINA" Grapevine toward the ctr of the hall thus: M crosses R over L; steps side L; crosses R behind L; steps side L; approaches R to L (not quite closing). Timing: S S S QQ.

7-8 Returning: M crosses L behind R; side R; crosses L over R; side R; approaches L to R. Same timing.

PART II

1-2 PASOS PASEOS SERENOS M steps back R; walks fwd L, R, L. Timing: S S S S

3-4 EL OCHO Both cross-step toward the ctr of the hall then back thus: M crosses R over L; steps side L; approaches R to L. Timing: S QQ. Repeat opp, crossing in front again. W also crosses in front both times.

5-6 MOLINETE (Rueda) M crosses R tightly over L, rises on balls of both feet and slowly turns in place CCW for 4 slow cts while W does a grapevine around him: W crosses L over R; side R; crosses L behind R; side R.

7-8 SALIDA M crosses R over L as W crosses L over R, both crossing toward LOD; face ptr in Ballroom pos, M facing LOD, as M steps fwd L and W bkwd in LOD; M steps side R; closes L to R; steps back R. Timing: S S QQ S

Note 1: The sequence may begin with a preliminary step M bkwd R and W fwd L (the very last step of this sequence) on the ct. 8 before the sequence begins.

Note 2: These steps may be recombined in a different order for freestyle improvisation.

Note 3: Many other vintage tango and modern social tango steps remain from the early Buenos Aires tango, and were also described in Lima's tango manual. If you know other tango steps, you may include them in your improvisation with the assurance that they were probably described in Lima's 1914 book. Some exceptions are the British closing without weight on a concluding step (the Argentines usually closed with weight and proceeded to step on the next alternating foot), German head snaps, pivots, and deep dips which probably came from Parisian Apache influence.

Note 4: Today's living tradition Tango Argentino is clearly based on this original framework, but done with a newer style which evolved over the past century, and embellished with many kicks, slides, sweeps and other intricate footwork.

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