

## Cha Cha – Supplemental Information

This document supports the cue sheet for “**Another Saturday Night**” choreographed by Larry Caves and Kaye West. While there are different approaches to dancing Cha Cha, the ideas here supplement the document *The Character of Cha Cha* and provide information gleaned over many years of dancing and teaching dance which comports with natural body movement and principles of physics and body mechanics.

Some of the techniques described here are somewhat intricate, so dancers should be quite familiar with the routine first prior to adding the various nuances. Learning to dance is a “sculpting process” so that dancers begin with the basics (where the feet go and the timing) and add layers of additional technique if they choose to do so. Information included here represents *many years* of ballroom lessons. It is hoped that it can inform dance enthusiasts and teachers of helpful practices to shorten the time required to learn them. It takes much practice to incorporate new techniques and transfer the knowledge to other routines, so dancers should be patient with themselves and realize they can gradually substitute new techniques for older practices as they concentrate on only a few changes at a time.

As the Director of Ballroom Dance at Arizona State University for 27 years, licensed in every category of ballroom dance, and a professional ballroom instructor for decades, Larry has taught thousands of people to dance, coached over a dozen round dance leader couples over the years, spawned many other ballroom professionals, and his collegiate teams routinely took highest honors at competitions.

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### COMPONENTS

Each measure in the Cha Cha “**Another Saturday Night**” has two components: (1) a **Rock, Recover**, the first two beats (or two weight changes) and a **Chasse’** (also known as a **triple**) comprised of the third beat, divided in two, combined with beat number four. So there are three changes of weight in those two beats with timing 3/&, 4. (To understand timing conventions, see *The Character of Cha Cha*.)

Components are interchangeable parts found in many figures. On the cue sheet some component names are provided in square brackets ([...]). There are also entire common figures used as components.

Naming components on the cue sheet allows for more rapid processing of information than deciphering the step-by-step footwork (which is still provided for confirmation and for those who may be new to the figure). Essentially components provide fewer items to process. Years ago round dancing moved to figure names instead of step-by-step oral cues. Using components in cue sheets extends that idea for the same reason: more efficient and faster understanding.

### INTRODUCTION

If sections of this routine are used on a social dance floor, it doesn’t matter which direction dancers face. It was selected to begin facing the Center of the Hall to “show off the Lady.” This starting position also allows the Lead to view the Center of the Hall (and other dancers) which is generally the pleasure of the Follow. Should cuers desire to have the Lead face the Wall (to begin each section instead of the Center), that is fine since all dancers move in the same direction, though dancers should be cautioned that in other venues they might begin facing the Center. Doing something different from normal can increase dancers’ flexibility.

**Passing Chase Turn** is a two-measure figure with both dancers beginning with the right foot. It is composed of a **Back Basic** (how a Lead would normally do a **Back Basic**) in the first measure followed by a measure consisting of a **Switch Turn** and a **Turning Chasse’**. Essentially it is two measures of the Follower’s part in a normal **Chase** with her turning to face partner, thus ending with a **Turning Chasse’** instead of a

Forward/Lock Forward. The **Back Basic** is composed of **Rock-Recover** plus a **Forward Chasse'** (known more commonly as **Forward/Lock, Forward**). Note that toes always point out (See **Body Awareness – Walking** to understand how and why this happens).

Most commonly danced as the first two changes of weight in Cha Cha is a **Rock** (sometimes called a “Rock Step” in ballroom). A **Rock** always has two weight changes, whether or not it is stated. When the first step is made, the unweighted foot generally remains in place in order to regain weight on that foot on the second beat. In round dancing the second weight change is called a “**recover**”; in ballroom it is sometimes described as “**replace**.”

Rocking action should always be described by including the term “rock” because “back” (or another direction) by itself would imply that the other foot moves to be next to the ankle of the moving foot part-way through the step.

**Switch Turn** is an action occurring frequently in this dance with two changes of weight and a turn of ½ on the first weight change to face the opposite direction. The first step is what is called a “**delayed forward walk turning**.” At the end of the previous measure the body is on a slant so that the first step of the **Switch Turn** (here with the left leg) is made “forward and across” the standing leg. The thighs are tightly crossed. The turn is made while the body moves from one foot to the other to avoid unnecessary friction on the floor (which would happen if weight is entirely over that foot when turning which can create knee damage), and dancers *end* so that the foot is “back” in relationship to their own body with thighs tightly crossed. It is “delayed” because full weight is transferred on the *second half* of the beat (on the & count) in contrast to a normal Latin walk when nearly all weight transfers at the *first half* of the beat (when the beat is heard). A **Switch Turn** essentially is a **Rock-Recover** because the other foot remains in place on the floor and weight is transferred back to it on the next beat.

This **delayed-walk-turning** action allows the body weight to be in balance ending with body weight over the receiving hip at the end of beat one. If a regular forward step is taken with a turn, the majority of body weight is not over the supporting leg, so the dancer loses balance or must rapidly readjust balance.

**Turning Chasse'**. A **Turning Chasse'** with Q/& Q timing always begins with a forward step with a turn, a crossing-in-front step (possibly with a turn), and the third step can vary, but typically is back or side. The amount of turn varies, but forward w/1/4 turn, cross in front w/1/4 turn, and back is a very common pattern described in this dance, yielding a total of one-half turn. The path on the floor resembles a curve; beginning with the left foot the path is clockwise and beginning with the right foot the path is counterclockwise.

**Cross Rock with Side Chasse'** essentially is the Lead's footwork of **Shoulder to Shoulder**. Historically the **Rock – Recover** was danced with the body in a neutral position so that one's shoulder moved next to the partner's shoulder (hence the name). Now, the Rock/Recover is danced with contra body action (meaning that one's shoulders and hips are not on the same alignment) with upper bodies slanted toward their partner so *dancers can look at each other*. With identical footwork, contra body action creates rotary movement around a common center.

Note that the bodies *rotate first* and then rock forward so the crossing action occurs *because the bodies rotated*. The path for the feet in the **rock step** is essentially the same “straight” path of the **forward chasse'**. The spiraling action toward the partner is very flirty (in contrast to moving away from partner for the **cross rock**).

For advanced style, instead of bending the knee in the **Rock step**, one can use a **Checked Rock** action with a straight leg as explained in **Body Awareness – Cuban Motion / Latin Hip Action**.

**Opposite Spot Turn.** The Lead makes a transition by taking only two weight changes instead of three after the *Switch Turn*. While the cue sheet specifies his timing as 1234, which is fine, his feet would match the Follow's feet better if he holds the timing on beat 3 and takes weight on counts /&,4. It is an "opposite" Spot Turn because dancers move away, in opposite directions, from each other.

Note that the *Switch Turn* uses the *Delayed Forward Walk Turning* technique. See above or *Body Awareness – Walking* for full description.

## PART A

**Start Cross Body.** The Lead's right foot moves only slightly, to become straight instead of toes pointed out. A slight left-faced turn of the body should allow his foot to straighten automatically.

**Checked Circle Vine; Natural Opening Out with Pullback.** The Lead has a series of body rotations in these two measures. His first body rotation is left-face as he *lunges* to the side with his right foot. (He must initiate the left-face rotation of his left hip *first* to allow the Follow to move forward, before he lunges to the side.) His body returns to normal for the *vine*, then rotates right-face to lead the *Opening Out*. Recovering from the Opening Out, his body rotates left-face for the *Ronde Chasse'* ending (using *ball-change* action in the *quick-rock* and *side*), then right-face again at the end of that measure.

While the cue sheet says his left arm extends across his body toward the Lady, it is better if he has simply rotated his body with his arms in their normal rounded position *without a change of angle at the shoulder* throughout these two measures.

Note that the *Ronde Chasse'* here (rock forward, recover/ronde, *rock Xib/recover; lunge side*) is slightly different from a technique possible in other situations (rock forward, recover/ronde, *Xib/side, side*).

The Follow may wish to elevate her left arm in the Pullback. To do so in as straight a line as possible, she begins with fingers pointed down and her thumb near the side of her body. Her hand moves straight up and when her forearm is horizontal, her hand flips so her fingers point up and the back of her hand passes closer to her face and her elbow moves close to her body. As the fingertips continue to move straight up, the arm rotates (the only way it can), and when the arm is perfectly vertical, she can bend the wrist so her hand moves outward with fingers spread somewhat apart and the middle finger and thumb fairly close together (perhaps sufficient space to hold an egg). This hand posture is sometimes called "flamenco hands."

**Finish Cross Body to Fan.** To lead the Follow to step forward with her left foot, the Lead rotates his left hip back while keeping his left arm/hand in place in space then shifting weight onto his right foot by rotating his body slightly left-face so that his foot *ends* back (it *doesn't move very much from its position on the floor*). (In this figure some attempt to step back with his energy going perpendicular to how the lady is moving, which isn't harmonious so feels awkward. In ballroom books, the foot description often represents the foot placement at the *end* of the step, so that might explain why this step sometimes is misconstrued as *moving* back.)

His first step is a Rock Step and, as he recovers, his body faces the Lady (her right hip stays back after taking her first step so her right foot steps forward with the *delayed forward walk turning* action (her right leg crossing in front of her left leg with thighs tightly crossed and with bodies temporarily in a slight Shadow position); she turns left-face on that right foot in the *Switch Turn* action (his hand extends out to encourage her to move forward and circles back towards himself because their joined hands come closer to him after she turns; his hand *follows* her body change; it doesn't *cause* her turn).

In the *chasse'* portion of this measure, instead of cl R/cl L, sd R (as written), the Lead could step  fwd R/ cl L, sd R or he could do a ***hip twist chasse' ending*** so as not to create too much distance from the Follower.

**Start Hockey Stick to Shadow.** The Follow makes a CCW path with her right foot to bring the leg in alignment with her body. The inside edge of the ball of her right foot ends next to her weighted left foot with ankles together and toes pointing out; her right knee is bent and across her left knee, and her left hip is back. As she changes weight to the right foot (swiveling right-face onto that right foot) her right leg straightens, her right hip goes back, and her left knee bends then her lower leg extends forward in preparation for walking forward. This hip action is called a “hip twist” and provides an interesting beginning to this figure.

Note that much of this action occurs *prior to the beat* so she can take weight on her right foot as the beat is heard.

**Open Out to Handshake Fan.** Dancers end in a position also called a Facing Fan (when without a handshake) where the Lead faces the Follow. In the next measure when the Lead steps forward, the Follow steps back, in contrast to the action begun in Fan position when they face different directions (as in ***Start a Hockey Stick***). When rocking back the Follow settles into her hip on the & count. The Lead must delay leading the Recover (until the count of “a”) to allow time for her settling action. See **Understanding Timing and Body Awareness: Cuban Motion / Latin Hip Action** for further details.

Again in the second measure (#8), both dancers have similar parts as measure #4, but since they begin in Shadow position with their left hands joined, on the second weight change of this measure they are in a partially-wrapped position and the Lead's left hand doesn't move very much. After the Follower turns *left* (on her right foot) to face the Lead, he changes to a handshake position (right-to-right hands) for the *chasse'*.

## **PART B**

**Same Foot Flirt - 4 Measures.** The Lead makes a transition in the first and fourth measures so that dancers can be on identical footwork so their rock steps are highly compatible. Initially this pattern should be cued as separate measures, and if this sequence becomes a popular combination, the cue “Same Foot Flirt 4 Measures” might eventually be sufficient to communicate to dancers what they do in this pattern.

The ***Side Chasse'*** is done along one straight path (moving toward Wall or Center) in alignment with the direction of the ***Rock-Recover*** beginning the figure; the ***Rock step*** in Varsouvienne or Left Varsouvienne is always *on a diagonal*. In the first measure the Lead provides a slight impulse with the right hands (in Handshake) then drops hand contact to indicate that the Follow should turn left to end in Varsouvienne.

If cuers desire to cue these measures as ***Rock & Chasse' Turn*** or ***Rock & Chasse' to Varsou (or Left Varsou)*** to assist dancers, that is fine.

After leading the Follow to spin left face in the fourth measure by keeping the left hands joined and a slight left-face rotation, the Lead transitions both hands and feet.

**Reverse Underarm Turn.** To lead the Reverse Underarm Turn, the Lead elevates his lead (left) hand in a clockwise arc (out and up) as if on the *outside* of a large ball, so that his hand is flat and his fingers slant toward the direction the Follower should move. His hand is approximately at the height of her face. (This is his signal for a reverse underarm turn.) His fingers allow the Follow's fingers to also straighten so they can rotate against his palm (his hand simulates a “socket,” and her fingers simulate a “ball”).

The Follow's hand, from her perspective, has elevated in a counter-clockwise arc as if on the *inside* of a large ball. After hands are positioned for the reverse underarm turn, the Follow continues the upward motion to lift the hands (in a slight arc) and steps under the joined hands (hands are then above her head with her hand palm up *below* his which is palm down). Her fingers smoothly rotate against his hand during the turn.

Maintaining hand-to-hand connection in this manner eliminates the extremely unsightly hand, elbow, and arm placement or awkward finger change scraping against the Follow's palm which is created when Leads lift the hands straight up.

With her hand remaining against his hand (which is her responsibility) the Lead has the possibility to guide the placement of her subsequent step. After she takes weight on the step under the joined hands and completes her turn, the hands return to a normal position. (See also descriptions of hand connections in the document *Harmonious Movement*.)

After the Reverse Underarm Turn the Follow should face her partner in keeping with the principle of harmonious movement that dancers return to face their partner as soon as practical after moving apart.

**Man Back into Aida.** While stepping *through* to an *Aida* for both partners is often done in round dancing, having the Lead *back into* the *Aida* is more common in ballroom. With good arm tone, his turning right-face to step *backward* is the lead for the Follow to also rotate right-face to step *forward* to begin the *Aida*. That action also provides an opportunity for her to place her free left hand on the Man's chest. In either case, dancers must be facing each other in Butterfly in order to lead the *Aida*.

Dancers may choose to dance "through to Aida" without interrupting the flow of the dance. To prevent dancers from competing for "shoulder space," they remain in Butterfly with upper bodies facing their partner and both step forward and across in the style described above as *delayed forward walk turning*.

**Quick Rock and Face.** This component has Q/& Q timing and provides an interesting way to return to face partner as an ending to the *Aida* without adding another measure. "*Quick rock*" and "*ball-change*" for the two quick changes of weight mean essentially the same thing.

## INTERLUDE

With the exception of the addition of the first two measures, the Interlude is identical to the Introduction.

## END

**Hip Rock Twice.** Typically the feet are slightly apart with toes out to do the *Hip Rock* twice. See **Body Awareness – Latin Hip Action** for further explanation. These are *Quick rocks* (just two beats). The *Hip Rocks* occur only once in this routine, so they are a clue that the dance is ending after only the following three measures of Part A. It is tempting to want to continue dancing more measures!!!

The blending to Closed Position can occur *following* the *Rock, Recover* of starting the *Cross Body*.

**Brush,** done in Latins with the *knee* coming in front of the standing leg, occurs when gravity moves the free leg next to the standing leg and then subsequently moves away, sometimes in a different direction. This is not to be confused with the *brush* described in early round dancing as scraping the foot along the floor, which Webster's dictionary more specifically calls a "*scuff*." The *brush* after the *Hip Rocks* in this routine allows the foot to be under the body ready to begin the next figure. Without the brushing action it feels awkward to begin the next figure.

The Lead may also elevate his right arm (with fingers in a more natural position), matching the Follow, to end the dance.