

Ballroom 2 Dance Journal
(PAC 160, Winter 2016)

Week 1

As a follower, this week I learned that keeping my own space is crucial when holding a frame with my partner. Along with just keeping my space, we are beginning the term with the waltz this week. There are three main components to the waltz: swing, sway, and rotate. Another important move to remember as a follower is to help/guide my partner to sway up at the appropriate moment of any move as we are dancing. Also having been about six months now since the last time I danced the waltz back when I took Ballroom 1, I also had to briefly remind myself the basic steps and movements of the waltz to even get started, and learn how to enhance my dancing skills of the waltz.

Week 2

We are learning movements that we learned back in Ballroom 1, but back then the moves were beginner level whereas now they are the moves at the intermediate level. This week, we have been working on the twinkle step where the amount of steps are reduced. Also along with the twinkle step, we were taught an addition of a rotation, where as a follower, will tend to turn more than the leader. Towards the end of the second class this week, we were also briefly introduced an additional move with the combination, which was a 2-step spin of the followers in between.

Along with the enhancements of previous moves, improvements and practice to other aspects of the waltz have also been addressed this week during class. When you and your partner are ready and wanting to dance, traditionally the leader will let out his left hand to the follower and the follower will place her right hand into his gentle, securely, and accepting to then dance. As a follower, I then gaze up to the left side of his frame, sort of being more to the right side of his body, keeping a strong center of my own body, then placing my left hand just under his deltoid muscle as he places his right hand on my back, alongside my left shoulder blade, and then with relaxed arms yet a strong frame, create and keep my own space between us as we start and continue to dance the waltz. At first you have the closed position and the one and main way we have been moving so far is with also the promenade position; we have been practicing and dancing with those positions. Also one guideline not to forget, is to help guide or possibly even lead upward and downward movements as we dance with the line of dance.

Week 3

Only had one class this week because of MLK Day we had Monday off. At the end of class we began to learn how to do a left turn in the waltz, but didn't go over it much. But before starting to learn how to do left turns, as a follower when accepting a dance, remember to create your own space. Be a diva, feel like someone you are not usually, it is okay not to feel like yourself. I feel like though that's just how any dancing is really when you really get into it, like dance when no one is dancing, just feel the music and movements in a sense. Oh and another move we learned was a spin as a follower. So rather than the other spin we learned last week where you would spin in the direction away from your partner, you will spin inward towards your partner. It's interesting. I don't actually remember which hand is where, I didn't get to practice it much since I was without a partner for one of the turns, but I do remember how the leader would glide his hand along your hand in the movement, so they don't interfere with you "No Zone" as you would turn. It's a nice somewhat intimate movement when it's done correctly and swiftly I suppose.

Week 4

Left turns and right turns. I feel like I got the left turns down, back with the right foot for the first part, then forward with the left foot for that second part of the move. At the moment, the left turn makes sense to me. The right turn on the other hand, I didn't quite understand, and do not have down yet. Hopefully maybe on Wednesday I'll get it down if we work on those turns more. Also have to remember my swing, sway, and rotational movements when I'm dancing. I'm not sure if I'm actually doing those movements without really thinking about them much, or I'm not doing them because I'm not thinking about them...

Right turns and left turns enhancement in the waltz.

Week 5

Finally moved on from the waltz to the foxtrot, which I actually haven't done before, because that was the unit back when I took Ballroom 1 that we skipped/didn't do. Today through we learned that we are going to be learning with the slow-quick-quick pattern. As a follower, you don't really go up as high as you do in a waltz, but yet imitate the motion with the rest of your body. Down on the slow part, and then rise with the two quick movements, moving with your partner. I suppose at the moment/today I learned to just get and understand the pattern of it mostly and how just the basics steps go, all with just moving backwards too. And we also did start doing a promenade position as we moved and continuing on with the dance. I learned that this is a very continuous dance with its movements, not a whole of just simply pausing/stopping. I sort of like it. But definitely if I do overthink the simply step, I will mess. Reason why I just keep me head held up high, smile, and just continue to simply move.

Continuing on with the foxtrot, we worked on a promenade step with the twinkle step for like the first half of class, and then for the second half of class, we began working on our right turns. There's quite a bit of steps, and being a few days since I had class actually, I don't really remember each step clearly. Most likely next week I we know and remember more with the right turns. I really enjoy dancing. It makes me happy ☺

Week 6

We worked more on our fox trot, mostly focusing on our right turns actually; working to getting better with them. As a follow, take a right foot back going into a promenade position, and then walking forward for about three steps as your partner dances his way around you, then he'll turn you into another promenade position, and then going back into line of dance, as a follow dancing backwards once again. Fox trot is fun, haha.

As a follow, I sell the move, haha. Your partner will initiate the move and you will finish it. We also learned/practiced/worked more with open right and left turns, along with flip flops in the fox trot.

Week 7

Learning more on not losing momentum with movements as a follow. Not only is it easier on your partner, the move will appear more complete and easier to finish. This week we worked with combining moves the open right turn and open left turn while dancing. Then we also learned how to do a promenade grapevine in fox trot, which is kind of fun in my opinion, and we also practiced on how to add that move with our open turn combination too.

Week 8

We move on to learning how to dance the tango! From Ballroom 1, the tango was my favorite dancing style that we learned back when I took it during the Spring 2015 term last year. I just really enjoyed the sharp and strong movements that come with dancing the tango overall; it makes me happy, haha. Anyway, in this class we are learning the American style of the tango which allows open work while dancing, whereas the Argentina style of the tango keeps the dancers in a close position the whole time, which usually allows the connection between the dancers stronger for longer in a way. Not only does most of the movements that we learned for the waltz and fox trot can also be applied in a way with dancing tango, we also learned more moves for the tango too, such as the basic curving movement with the feet (which was also a nice refresher how the footwork in the tango is, I honestly did forget part of the basic footwork from the last time I learned that tango, even though it was my favorite dancing ballroom style, but I got it now, for now, haha), a corte, a rock step, getting into and linking with the promenade position in the tango, a left closing from promenade, a reverse turn, walks to ochos, and reverse turn to ochos. So many moves to remember, but I like it. ☺ The more I am exposed to, the more I experience, which I appreciate, especially with the dance style tango.

Week 9

This week, we learned more open work moves with the tango, and continue to practice with moves that we already have learned. Honestly, these moves that we learned this week have to be some of my favorites move overall all term, because I suppose it is due to the fact that these moves take up more sense in a way and they look cool too when you and your partner do it correctly and enjoy doing it, haha. Anyway, one of the moves is as a follow, when your partner spins you out and only being connected by one hand and spins you back in. And another alteration to this move is when you both at the “circles in the sand” addition to it when your partner brings you back into closed position, which can look pretty cool when done correctly, haha. And then the other move which I really do like is the fancy open work move, which I honestly don’t remember what is actually called at the moment... But yeah, it is when your partner spins you out where you both are facing the same direction, adding an optional flick of foot, and then another optional addition where you both switch positions in a sense where the follow spins while doing so and that the leader can possible do also, which is also really fun to do, and then to finish the move, you both will go in a closed position, where it is tempting as a follow to turn your head to the right but it has to stay looking left as you both move to move back into line of dance, which can also be fixed/danced with a rock step added to the combination. I really like the tango, especially that last move that we learned ☺

Oh, the last move is called a valentine fan move, got it, haha

Final Questions for Ballroom 2

1. Techniques that we incorporate as intermediate dancers that help us to dance silver level dance figures are fully executing movements from just dancing in box steps learned back in Ballroom 1, and also styling our footwork and body position in a way where we can complete our intermediate level movements as well, which also increases our dance posture, poise, and frame.
2. A difference between the dancing techniques of Ballroom 1 dancers versus Ballroom 2 dancers is the footwork. We are taught to dance with more box-like movements such as with the waltz back in Ballroom 1, whereas in Ballroom 2, we are taught to follow through in a sense with our footwork, and not entirely follow the pattern the whole time with our movements, where we alter our footwork in a sense to fully complete the figures that we do learn. Another difference would then be the types of movements and figures that we do learn and practice in Ballroom 2, which plays a part in our overall dancing techniques. And also how dancing with your partner is not only how you move your feet, such as learned back in Ballroom 1, but also how you move with your whole body while dancing, which really makes what you are doing with your partner appear more amazing visually.
3. One mistake that a beginner dancer can make from a follow's point of view, is leading and not having your partner lead. And another mistake a beginner dancer can make is not dancing in frame with your partner and/or not keeping your frame with your partner- losing that connection as you both dance together.
4. It's fun when you have a perfect dance with someone! It feels like you both know what you are doing and you don't have a dreading feeling as you both dance together. It's nice when you have a perfect dance with someone. Overall, you can both enjoy yourself and have fun on the dance floor ☺
5. From the American Waltz, Fox Trot, and Tango that we learned in this class, the Tango was my favorite partner dance, which is also explained why in my dance journal from this term.
6. Having proper technique, especially from a follow's point of view, allows your partner properly lead, making a dance partnership follow through with every movement initiated. Also, if one of us then makes a mistake with a move, understanding that mishap, will have both of you forgive one another easily and learn and try figuring it out together if needed, which then will make it to be more fun to dance together since you both then developed a slightly connection of that it is okay to mess up and that you will/can both work through it together.
7. I would have to say that the most important technical concept that I have learned in Ballroom 2 that has helped me to grow as a ballroom dancer is that having that strong frame and connection with your partner at all times and really feeling your partner lead no matter what others and music tells you what you should do as you both dance. Because with ballroom dancing, what really matters is you and your partner as you both dance together.