Innovation Tango
Richard Powers

Vernon Castle, shown at the right, created a version of tango where partners danced without touching each other, naming it Innovation Tango. Vernon borrowed the idea from Vaudeville routines where two dancers would enter the stage solo, then delay the embrace of couple dance position until the end of the choreography. Later Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers would use the same idea in their films. Vernon’s Innovation Tango used social tango steps of the time, so all of these steps are from 1914, the era of Vernon and Irene Castle.

EL CHASSÉ (pas chassé, la promenade, corte de lado) Both promenade forward 2 steps, solo, beginning outside feet, face partner for a quick side-close, take one more promenade step fwd. 5 steps, S-S-QQ-S timing. The floor pattern is traveling toward the center of the hall diagonally away from each other.

EL ABANICO (l’eventail, the fan) Step forward on the inside foot then sweep the outside out and around the inside foot, toe to the floor (in the style of el frottado) ending by crossing completely over. This ronde de jambe movement is especially slow, taking the time of two slow steps, four quick counts.

LA VIGNE (grapevine, el paso de lado) Beginning with man’s L crossing over his R (the abanico above), and the woman crossing R over, returning back to place, M then steps side R, crosses L behind R, and steps side R (W steps opposite). Four quick steps.

LA MARCHA The M walks forward L and R to LOD, W backing, 2 slow steps. Close to partner, not touching, EL MEDIO CORTÉ (el corte, cortez) M fwd L, close R to L taking weight, back L. W opposite. QQ-S timing.

REPEAT the Paseo and Medio Corté, backing the M against LOD, beginning opposite feet.

EL DOUBLE CRUZADO (double scissors, les ciseaux, las tijeras, zig-zag) The M crosses L over R with weight, steps side R, crosses L over R again, then points R to the right (or touch-kick with the R instead). QQ-S timing. The W crosses behind. Repeat with opposite feet. This travels in a zig-zag path, backing the W LOD.

DOUBLE RUEDA (circa, ring, pirouette) Both walk forward around each other, R shoulder to R shoulder, 4 slow steps.

PROMENADE TURNOUT Take Promenade Position and promenade against LOD 2 slow steps; Pivot 2 quick steps turning only halfway to face LOD; Repeat the promenade but toward LOD; Repeat the two quick pivots; Facing center of hall step side lunge diagonally left toward center, rock back to place opening away to semi-closed position (releasing held hands). At the very end, don’t release after the pivots, but instead take a 3rd pivot step, backing the M, with W slightly lunging forward toward the M.

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