

THE MERENGUE

The Merengue originated in the West Indies, where it changed gradually through the years from a wild, half-savage folk dance to its present sophisticated ballroom version.

The chief characteristic that makes the Merengue different from any other ballroom dance is a "lame-duck" motion—that is, a step taken with a slight limp (a movement supposedly derived from a dance-loving Latin American army officer with a wooden leg). In the Merengue you step to every beat of the music, and the lame-duck styling is used on Steps 1 and 3. All steps are taken with a bright, staccato tempo and with Rumba hip motion (see page 10). The Rumba motion is essential. The side step, or chassé, described at left is a basic Merengue step. The woman's part is the natural opposite of the man's. That is, she steps to the right with her right foot, bringing her left foot next to her right, always accenting Steps 1 and 3.

The Basic Merengue Forward

In this step continue to use the lame-duck styling on Steps 1 and 3, taking a long step on those accented counts. Take a very short step on the even counts, Steps 2 and 4. Use Rumba motion on every step. The woman's part is the natural opposite of the man's; that is, she will start back on her right foot when he leads this step, taking long, accented steps on the odd counts.

MAN'S PART

1. Take a long step forward with left foot, left knee bent and weight on right.
2. Shift weight to left foot and take a short step forward with right foot, right knee bent.
- 3, 4. Repeat Steps 1 and 2.

The Basic Merengue to the Side

MAN'S PART

1. Step to left side with left foot, accenting this beat.
2. Bring right foot next to left foot.
- 3, 4. Repeat Steps 1 and 2.

