

The Dynamic Duo

By Jim and Barbara German

The Cha Cha is one rhythm where new skills are being developed. Specifically, the skills are addressing the man's action and allow the man to create a more dynamic look with his partner to create a Dynamic Duo. Lets look at some suggestions.

Starting in Latin closed dance position, the man can execute a more dynamic looking Forward Basic. For the man, step 1 will be left foot forward on a quarter note. Step 2 will transfer the weight back to the right foot and will occur on the second quarter note. Step 3 will be a left foot back for the man and will only take $\frac{1}{2}$ of the quarter note (i.e. $\frac{1}{8}$ note).. Now, step 4 will change as the man will cross his right foot slightly in front of his left foot on the second half of the quarter note (i.e. $\frac{1}{8}$ note). The lady will respond by crossing her left foot slightly behind her right foot. The final move, step 5, will have the man move his left foot "diagonally" back to uncross his feet on a quarter note. This completes the measure of music. The lady will feel the man's "diagonal" movement and will respond by moving her right foot "diagonally" forward to uncross her feet.

To have the crossing action move smoothly, it is important that the man dance the proper timing of $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{8}$ $\frac{1}{8}$, $\frac{1}{4}$. In addition to timing, the man will need to lead the lady to cross in back. The lead is subtle yet very important. On step 3, the first $\frac{1}{8}$ note step, the man should take his left foot side and slightly back. This action will move the man's body slightly to his left. The lady will feel this action and will follow with a side and slightly forward action on her step. Now the man has the lady's attention and he can lead her to lock. For the man, the action will be to move his right foot sideways in front of his left foot on the second $\frac{1}{8}$ note (a locking action). By moving his right foot sideways, the man's body will move sideways leading the lady to move her left foot sideways behind her right foot. For step 5, the man will move his left foot sideways to uncross his feet and transfer his weight to his left foot. The lady will feel the man's continued sideways action and will uncross her feet and transfer weight to her right foot. Because of the foot movement and the transfer of weight, step 5 requires a full $\frac{1}{4}$ note.

The use of the word sideways is to indicate a more side then back action with the placement of the man's foot. The lady's action will be a more side than forward. The more side than back action allows the man to cross and uncross his feet and lead the lady to follow with a crossing and uncrossing action. Of course, the locking action can be incorporated into the back half of the cha basic. Step 1 for the man will be right foot back ($\frac{1}{4}$ note). Step 2 will transfer weight forward to the left foot ($\frac{1}{4}$ note) Step 3 will be a side and slightly forward with the right foot ($\frac{1}{8}$ note). Step 4 will be a more sideways step for the man as he crosses his left **behind** the right foot ($\frac{1}{8}$ note) and leads the lady to cross in front. Step 5 will be a sideways step with the man's right foot and lady's left foot to uncross the feet and complete the measure ($\frac{1}{4}$ note). The locking action feels good and adds a lot of "life" to the basic and does not take a lot time to incorporate into your dancing.

Another combination of interest for the Dynamic Duo would be the half basic to fan. Starting in Latin closed position, let's complete the half basic, measure one, and stop. The man has his right foot free and the lady has her left foot free. To lead the lady to fan position, the man will step back with his right foot and bring the lady forward and slightly closer to him. This action gains the lady's attention and indicated to her something is about to change. As the man transfer his weight to the left foot, he will turn toward his left leading the lady to continue her turn as she steps back. Now, lets' add the interesting variation. On step 3, the man will continue a slight left face turn and take a forward step on right foot leading the lady to step back. This step will be toward LOD but still a diagonal movement. (If you wish, the man will be leading the lady one step closer to her fan position.) The man, on step 4, will close his left foot to his right foot and continue to lead the lady to step back. On step 5, the man will turn his body slightly toward the right as he takes a side step with his right foot to end in fan position. The lady will step back on her left foot and draw her right foot toward her left creating a press line look. This is really a lot of fun and well worth a little time to develop. Remember to keep the cha timing as described above.

For those who like to have a lot of fun by dancing on the edge, here is another Dynamic Duo variation. From fan position, the next measure could start a Hockey Stick. The lady's actions and footwork will be

normal. The man's will be enhanced. Starting in fan position, step 1 for the man will be a small step forward with the left foot. Step 2 will replace the weight back to the right foot. Step 3 (1/8 note), step 4 (1/8 note), and step 5 (1/4 note) will be a sailor shuffle action starting with the man's left foot. Remember that the man needs to also lead the lady while enhancing his steps. To finish measure two of the hockey stick, the man will take step 1 back with his right foot turning slightly right face. Step 2 will be a small forward step with his left foot moving behind the lady. Steps 3, 4, and 5 will be a forward/lock, forward starting with the right foot. The lady will complete her normal second measure to complete the hockey stick.

Think of the dynamic look you have now added to the full basic or half-basic to fan followed by a hockey stick. As a couple, can you put all of the enhanced and exciting actions together? Can you do it to music with cha timing? You are just great!