

Tango Whirligig

by Harold & Meredith Sears



A whirligig is an object that spins or whirls -- they are also known as pinwheels, buzzers, comic weather vanes, gee-haws, spinners, whirlygigs, whirlijigs, whirlyjigs, whirlybirds, or just plain whirlies. Whirligigs are most commonly powered by the wind (Wikipedia) -- see some examples at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lnm_16KUF0M

A **Whirligig** is also a tango figure composed of two twist turns -- first the man twists and then the lady.

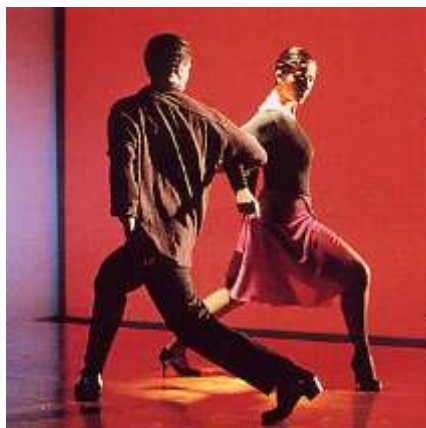
In semi-closed position (SCP) facing line of dance (LOD) step forward L (W fwd R), forward & across R, turning right-face step side L to face DRW (W fwd R between the man's feet). This first measure is danced SQQ and we end in SCP RLOD, trail feet free.

In the second measure, the man whirls -- I mean, he twist turns. He crosses R in back of L (W bk L). He twists on both feet 1/2 right-face to end with feet almost together, weight on L, facing DLW. The lady makes this happen by walking backward around the man unwinding him: bk R, bk L, bk R, for a total of 4 backing steps. Because of the tight turn, the last step for the lady is really a cross behind, leaving her L free and crossed in front of her R. The timing of this second measure is QQQQ for the lady. The man is really equally weighted, but you can think of shifting to the R and then back to the L again, SS. We are in SCP DLW, trail feet free..

In the third measure, the lady has crossed feet and is ready for her twist turn. Staying close to the lady so he doesn't pull her off balance, the man walks forward around her: fwd R (W unwinds), fwd L, fwd R unwinding the lady to end approximately in SCP DLC with lead feet free. On the last beat, we



sharply swivel RF on the trail foot and tap L (W tap R) to SCP LOD. The timing here is QQQQ, but we only have three weight changes. The last Q is the swivel and tap, leaving lead feet free.



Standard timing for the Whirligig is SQQ; QQQQ; QQQQ. It is a fast, rushing figure, but it begins with that slow count, allowing you to take a breath before you dive in. The **Quick Whirligig** is a variation that has the timing QQQQ; QQQQ; QQS. The steps are the same, but we start with a "quick" and end doing our tap on a slow count. Here, we dive right in and take the little breather at the end.

It is interesting to find one use of the Whirligig in a waltz (*Moon River* by Doi). It uses ten weight changes as does the tango version, but it starts and ends with the trail feet free (and it has no tap). The timing is 123; 123; 12&3. In a nutshell, we begin in SCP LOD. We step thru R (W thru L), trng RF sd L to fc DRW (W fwd R between man's feet), XRIB of L to fc DRC (W bk L in SCP); comm twist 1/2 RF on both feet (W walk around M bk R), cont trn (W bk L), cont trn and shift wgt to L (W bk R); walk arnd W fwd R, L/R, sd & fwd L to SCP (W XLIF of R, twist on ball of both feet/cont trng shift wgt to L, sd & fwd R) end SCP LOD, trail feet free.

