

Dancing by Radio

Mr. Ted Priestly explains

THE MODERN WALTZ

THE waltz, in its varying forms, has been danced for well over a century. It is generally supposed that the movements and rhythm were based on one of the oldest of the German folk dances. Of this, however, we have no definite proof. What is now known as the old-time waltz was first danced in Vienna, and its popularity was enhanced by the wonderful compositions of Strauss, the most famous of which is the immortal "Blue Danube."

This was the first dance to depart from the set, or square dance, of that period, and it raised a storm of criticism. The cause of this was the necessity for the gentleman to place his arm round his partner's waist—the first time in dance history. With the passing of years, however, this objection died out, and, with scant modification, this hold is now universal. The waltz remained the most popular dance until the War period, when the fox-trot was introduced from the United States. The tremendous popularity of the fox-trot completely eclipsed the waltz until it returned in a varied form, later developing into the modern waltz.

The original waltz was danced on the toes with a circular movement, whereas the modern version is based on a natural walking movement, interspersed with variations.

Being danced on the tips of the toes, the old-time waltz was the more difficult, and the continued turning in a small circle tended to cause dizziness. The natural walking movement on which the modern waltz is based takes all unnecessary strain off the leg muscles.

The key signature remains the same, namely 3/4, while the tempo has decreased considerably and is now played at almost 36 bars per minute.

The fundamental movement of the waltz is a smooth walking movement, taking one step to each beat of music and closing the feet on the third beat. Note that the movements I am describing are the gentleman's, the lady's are exactly the opposite.

The Walk.

Step forward on the l., toe slightly off the floor and heel gliding lightly over the ground. Step forward on the r., toe off the floor and the heel gliding lightly over the ground. Close l. to r. Step forward on the r., then on the l.; close r. to l. Step forward on the l., and keep repeating. You will notice that each time the feet come together you change and step forward on the opposite foot. Let us now introduce the time. Step forward on the l. (one beat), forward on the r. (one beat), close l. to r. (one beat). Forward on the r. (one beat). Step

on the l. (one beat), close r. to l. (one beat). Keep repeating, taking one beat to each step and closing the feet on each third beat.

We will now take the right hand or—

Natural Turn.

Introducing the time: Forward on the r. commencing to turn to the r. (one beat). Step to side with l., continuing to turn (one beat). Close r. to l., completing a half-turn (one beat). Step back on the l., commencing to turn to the right (one beat). Step to side with r., continuing to turn (one beat). Close l. to r., completing turn (one beat). Step forward on the r. into the walk.

The Reverse.

The reverse, or the left-hand turn, is practically the exact opposite to the natural turn.

Step forward on the l., commencing to turn the l. Side with r., continuing to turn. Close l. to r., completing the half turn. Back with the r., commencing to turn to the l. Step to the side with l., continuing to turn. Close r. to l., completing the full turn.

Step forward on the l. into the walk. One beat of music is taken for each step, but make sure that the feet are together on each third beat.

Forward Change

This step links the natural turn to the reverse. Step forward on the r. Step to side with the l. Close r. to l. From that position step forward on the l. into the reverse turn. The forward change from the reverse turn to the natural is also simple:

Step forward on the l. Step to side with the r. Close l. to r. Step forward on the r. into the natural turn.

The waltz should actually consist of a natural turn, a forward change, a reverse turn and forward change, with any suitable variation worked in as circumstances permit.

The subject of the next article will be the Slow Fox-Trot.

Abbreviations.

Certain abbreviations have been used to simplify the text—they are:

r.: Right foot.

l.: left foot.

q.: Movement made quickly.

s.: Movement made slowly.



Mr. Ted Priestly and Miss Margaret O'Connor.

Both these teachers of dancing have recently been heard broadcasting from 1YA and 2YA. Notes on Mr. Priestly's talks have been appearing in the "Radio Record."

—Jauncey, photo.