



Edinburgh University Swing Dance
Society notes on:

Dean Collins' Shim Sham



NB – You are free to copy and distribute these notes intact, but please do not remove the header or contact address (this way, people can get back to me with any suggestions and corrections and everyone can benefit) jamie@swingdoctors.org.uk.

You are unlikely to be able to learn a new routine from notes alone; rather, these notes are meant as a reminder for people who have learned the routine in our 'live' classes (or someone else's classes).

Background:

The original (tap) Shim Sham, or "Goofers" as it was first named, was choreographed in 1926 by Leonard Reed and Willie Bryant for a Whitman Sisters' show in Chicago. Its first New York outing was performed by the group *The Three Little Words*, and they performed in the Shim Sham club, hence the name New Yorkers gave to the dance. Lindy hoppers removed the tap steps but kept the general structure for the Savoy-style Shim Sham.

Dean Collins learned the Savoy version in New York and adapted it, and made it a lot more complicated. He performed many versions of it in his California days, often dancing it with two other dancers flanking him. They were always men: Collins felt it was a man's dance and would never teach a woman to do it. The version here is the only one, to our knowledge, in which Collins was filmed dancing a version from beginning to end (the film was made by Andy Delarosa, and captured an exhibition performance at the Hollywood Palladium). The names of the moves post-date Dean Collins (who never named moves); the terms used here are the ones used by Markus Koch and Bärbl Kaufer, from whom I learned the steps.

Overview: (breakdown of steps follows)

Block one:

- Shim sham foot drags
- Hip pushes
- Tack Annies
- Half & Full Breaks

Block two:

- Suzy Qs
- Slide to side -> forward crosses -> hesitation Shorty George
- Tabby the cat -> front & back crosses -> slow & fast kicks -> modif break
- Savoy kicks -> heel kicks -> modif break

Block three:

- Savoy kicks to double triple break
- Ten count Savoy kicks
- Walk off
-

BLOCK ONE VERSE 1

Shim sham foot drags: (you need bent legs)

8 – ‘sitting’, put your R foot slightly diag fwd on the floor, flat, but no weight

.

1 – pull the R foot back under you and transfer weight to it

.

2 – put your L foot slightly diag fws on the floor, flat, no weight

.

3 – pull the L foot back under you and transfer weight

.

4 – put your R foot slightly diag fwd on floor, flat, no weight

.

5 – drag R foot back but do **not** transfer weight

.

6 – put your R foot forward again

.

7 – pull it back and transfer weight

8 – ‘sitting’, put your L foot slightly diag fwd on the floor, flat, but no weight

.

1 – pull the L foot back under you and transfer weight to it

.

2 – put your R foot slightly diag fws on the floor, flat, no weight

.

3 – pull the R foot back under you and transfer weight

.

4 – put your L foot slightly diag fwd on floor, flat, no weight

.

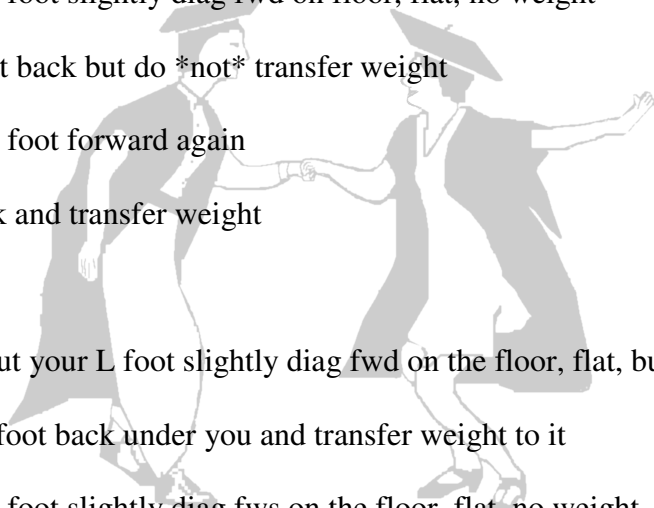
5 – drag L foot back but do **not** transfer weight

.

6 – put your L foot forward again

.

7 – pull it back and transfer weight



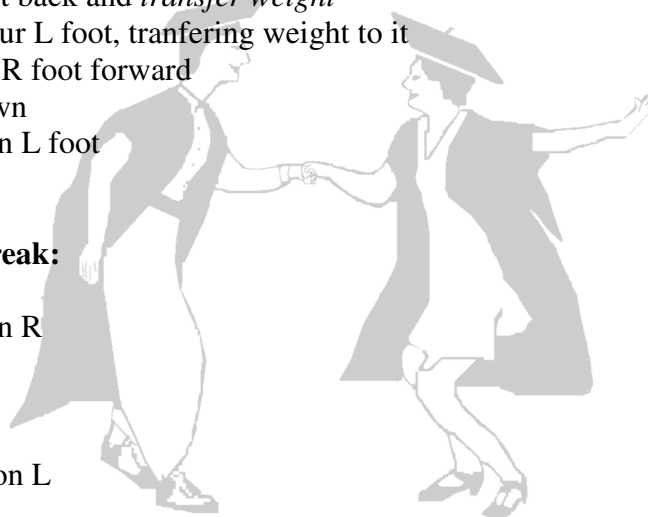
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...BLOCK ONE VERSE ONE CONTINUED

- 8 – ‘sitting’, put your R foot slightly diag fwd on the floor, flat, but no weight
- .
- 1 – pull the R foot back under you and transfer weight to it
- .
- 2 – put your L foot slightly diag fws on the floor, flat, no weight
- .
- 3 – pull the L foot back under you and transfer weight
- .
- 4 – put your R foot slightly diag fwd on floor, flat, no weight
- .
- 5 – drag R foot back and *transfer weight*
- & - step on your L foot, tranfering weight to it
- 6 – kick your R foot forward
- & - R foot down
- 7 – step fwd on L foot

Dean Collins Full Break:

- 8 – step fwd on R
- .
- 1
- .
- 2 – step back on L
- .
- 3
- .
- 4 – step back on R
- .
- 5 – step back on L
- .
- 6 – step back on R next to L
- .
- 7 – step fwd on L



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BLOCK ONE VERSE 2

Hip pushes

8 – turn 90 deg right and step on your R, pushing your hips forward over it

.

1 – bring hips back over your L foot

.

2 –step on your R, pushing your hips forward over it

.

3 – bring hips back over your L foot

.

4 – step on your R, pushing your hips forward over it

.

5 – kick your L across your R

.

6 – step on L

.

7 – pivot back to front and step on R

8 – turn 90 deg left and step on your L, pushing your hips forward over it

.

1 – bring hips back over your R foot

.

2 –step on your L, pushing your hips forward over it

.

3 – bring hips back over your R foot

.

4 – step on your L, pushing your hips forward over it

.

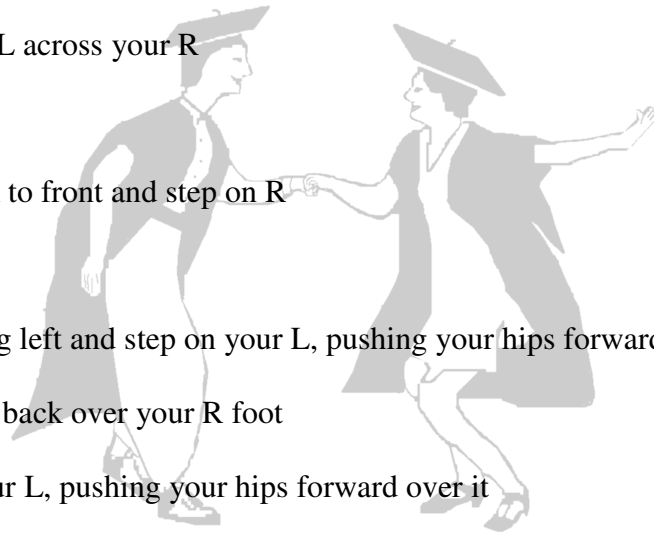
5 – kick your R across your L

.

6 – step on R

.

7 – pivot back to front and step on L



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8 – turn 90 deg right and step on your R, pushing your hips forward over it

.

1 – bring hips back over your L foot

.

2 – step on your R, pushing your hips forward over it

.

3 – bring hips back over your L foot

.

4 – step on your R, pushing your hips forward over it

.

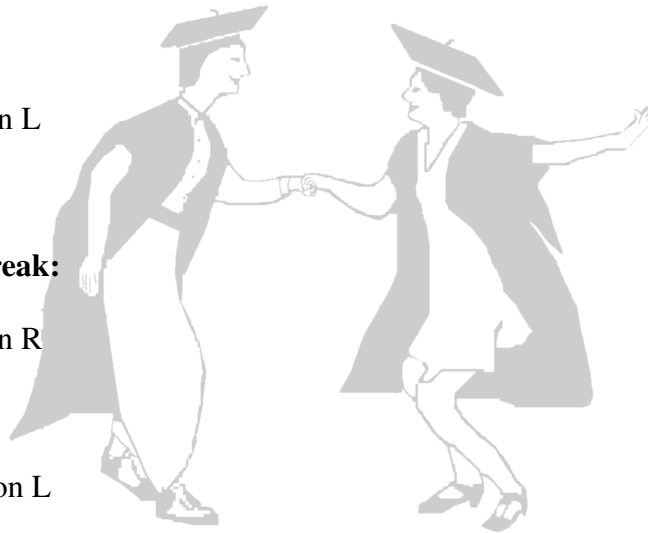
5 – step on L facing forwards again

.

6 – kick R

& - R down

7 – step fwd on L



Dean Collins Full Break:

8 – step fwd on R

.

1

.

2 – step back on L

.

3

.

4 – step back on R

.

5 – step back on L

.

6 – step back on R next to L

.

7 – step fwd on L

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BLOCK ONE VERSE 3

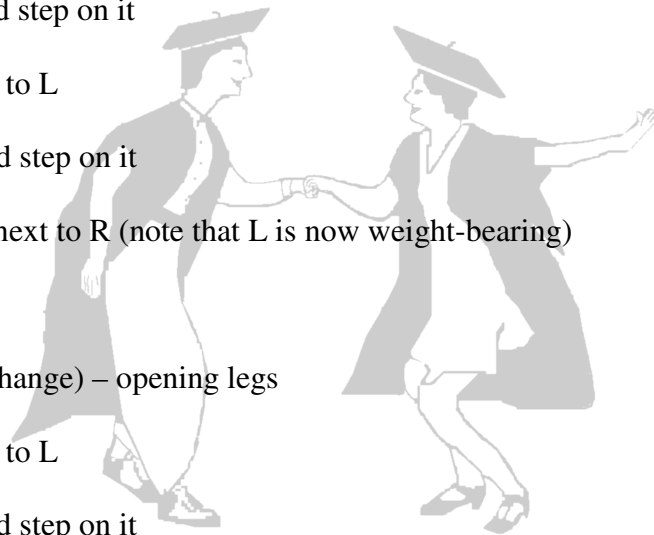
Tack Annies

& - right
8 – left (ball change) – opening legs

.
1 – tap R next to L
. .
2 – open R and step on it
. .
3 – tap L next to R
. .
4 – open L and step on it
. .
5 – tap R next to L
. .
6 – open R and step on it
. .
7 – step on L next to R (note that L is now weight-bearing)

& - right
8 – left (ball change) – opening legs

.
1 – tap R next to L
. .
2 – open R and step on it
. .
3 – tap L next to R
. .
4 – open L and step on it
. .
5 – tap R next to L
. .
6 – open R and step on it
. .
7 – step on L next to R (note that L is now weight-bearing)

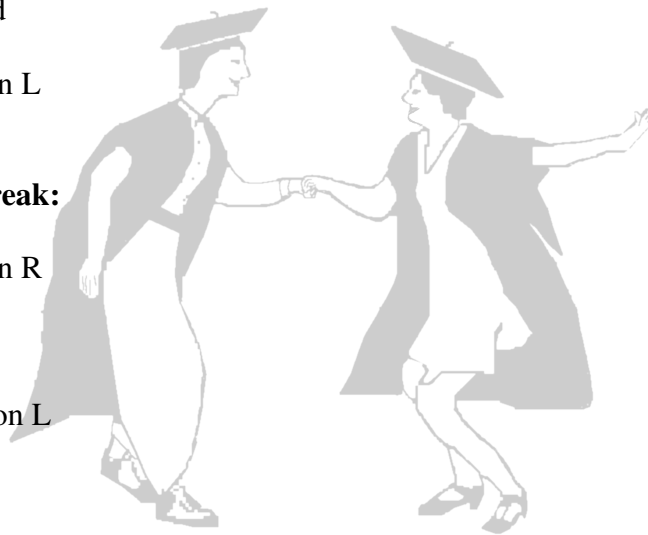


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- & - right
- 8 – left (ball change) – opening legs
- .
- 1 – tap R next to L
- .
- 2 – open R and step on it
- .
- 3 – tap L next to R
- .
- 4 – open L and step on it
- .
- 5 – step on R next to L
- & - step on L
- 6 – kick R fwd
- & - R down
- 7 – step fwd on L

Dean Collins Full Break:

- 8 – step fwd on R
- .
- 1
- .
- 2 – step back on L
- .
- 3
- .
- 4 – step back on R
- .
- 5 – step back on L
- .
- 6 – step back on R next to L
- .
- 7 – step fwd on L



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BLOCK ONE VERSE 4

Half breaks

8 – step fwd on R (weight over it)

.

1 – step back on L

.

2 – kick R fwd

& - Rdown

3 – L

.

4 – step fwd on R (weight over it)

.

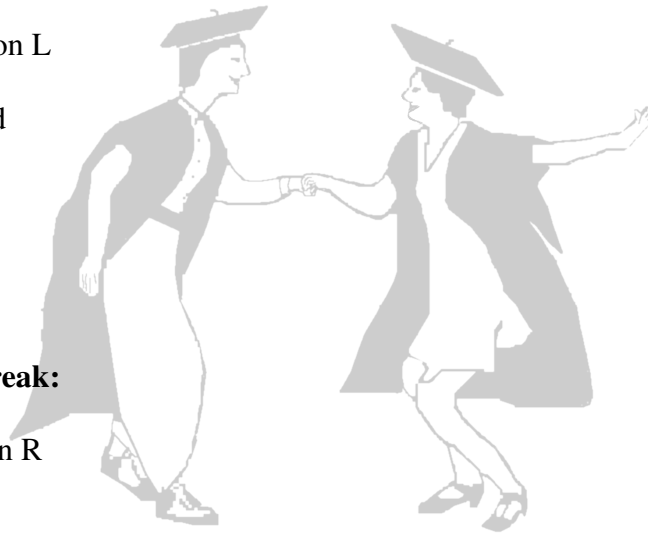
5 – step back on L

.

6 – kick R fwd

& - Rdown

7 – L



Dean Collins Full Break:

8 – step fwd on R

.

1

.

2 – step back on L

.

3

.

4 – step back on R

.

5 – step back on L

.

6 – step back on R next to L

.

7 – step fwd on L

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Half breaks

8 – step fwd on R (weight over it)

.

1 – step back on L

.

2 – kick R fwd

& - Rdown

3 – L

.

4 – step fwd on R (weight over it)

.

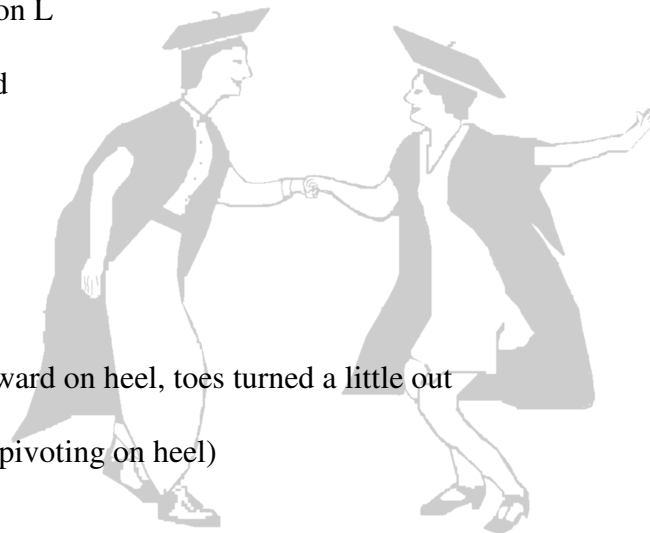
5 – step back on L

.

6 – kick R fwd

& - Rdown

7 – L



Turn Break:

8 – R foot forward on heel, toes turned a little out

.

1 – R toes in (pivoting on heel)

& - R toes out

2 – R toes in

.

3 – Lift R foot up from knee

.

4 – twist body c/w and step on R behind L

& - step on L and start twist going other way

5 – cross R right over L to set up the a/c turn

.

6 – turn a/c unwinding legs

.

7 – continue the turn

& - step R

8 – step L (ball change), opening legs apart knees pointing out, on L toes and R heel

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BLOCK TWO VERSE 1

Suzy Q

NB – this version of the Suzy Q does not involve one foot crossing the other or even being in front of it, but the rest of the leg action remains the same. If you already know the crossing Suzy Q, practice not crossing first, then gradually bring the feet into one left-right line so neither is in front. The arm action has arms bent but index fingers pointing down, and elbows coming in and out like the knees

Suzy Q left

- 1 – knees in, stepping on R to the left to close it to L foot
- .
- 2 – knees out, stepping opening on L
- .
- 3 – knees in, stepping on R to the left to close it to L foot
- .
- 4 – knees out, stepping opening on L
- .
- 5 – knees in, stepping on R to the left to close it to L foot
- .
- 6 – knees out, stepping opening on L
- .
- 7 – knees in, stepping on R to the left to close it to L foot
- .
- 8 – knees out, stepping opening on L

Suzy Q right

& - step on R

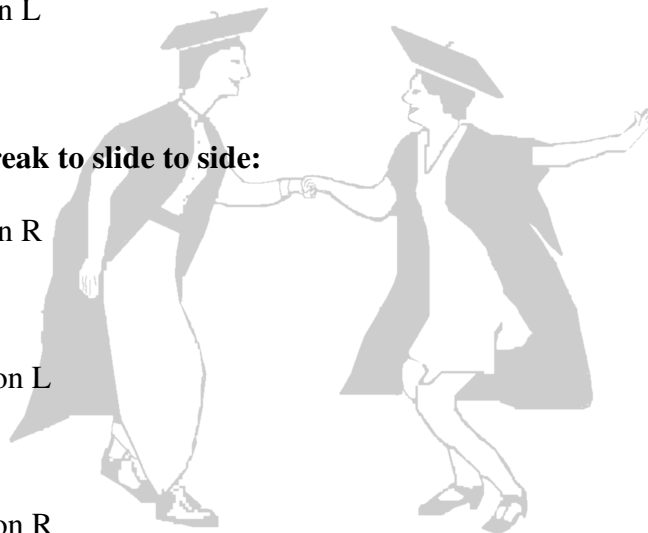
- 1 – step on L (ball ch), closing L towards R to start going the other way
- .
- 2 – knees out, stepping opening on R
- .
- 3 – knees in, stepping on L to the right to close it to L foot
- .
- 4 – knees out, stepping opening on R
- .
- 5 – knees in, stepping on L to the left to close it to R foot
- .
- 6 – knees out, stepping opening on R
- .
- 7 – knees in, stepping on L to the left to close it to R foot
- .
- 8 – knees out, stepping opening on R

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- & - step on L
- 1 – step on R (ball ch), closing R towards L to start going the other way
- .
- 2 – knees out, stepping opening on L
- .
- 3 – knees in, stepping on R to the left to close it to L foot
- .
- 4 – knees out, stepping opening on L
- .
- 5 – step on R
- & - step on L next to it
- 6 – kick R fwd
- & - step on R
- 7 – step fwd on L

Dean Collins Full Break to slide to side:

- 8 – step fwd on R
- .
- 1
- .
- 2 – step back on L
- .
- 3
- .
- 4 – step back on R
- .
- 5 – step back on L
- .
- 6 – turn 90 deg to the right and step fwd on R
- .
- 7 – step fwd on L



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BLOCK TWO VERSE 2

Frogs

& - R

8 – L (ball change) – legs apart and hip shooting forwards (like Jitt' stroll).

.

1 – step back on R

.

2 – turn 180 deg to L and step fwd (new direction) on L

.

3 – step fwd on R

& - R

4 – L (ball change) – legs apart and hip shooting forwards (like Jitt' stroll).

.

5 – step back on L (aud still to right)

.

6 – step back on R turning back to front

.

7 – cross L over R

Forward crosses

& - rock back on R facing diag front L

8 – and fwd on L (like a rock step)

.

1 – cross R over L and turn to face front R

& - rock back on L

2 – and back on R

3 – cross L over R

& - rock back on R facing diag front L

4 – and fwd on L (like a rock step)

.

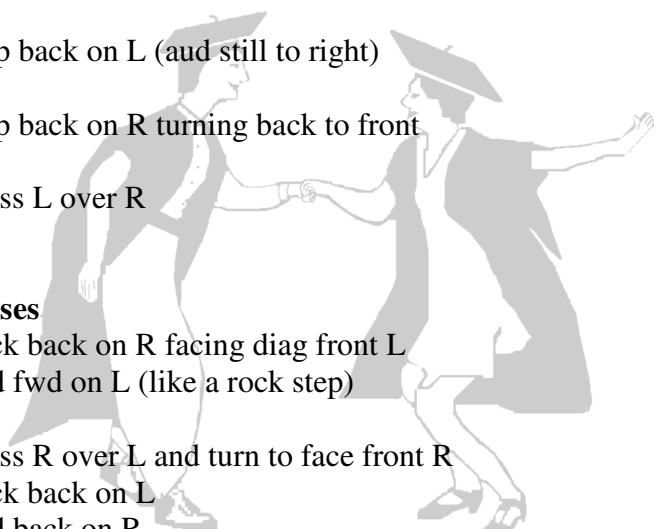
5 – cross R over L and turn to face front R

& - rock back on L

6 – and back on R

.

7 – close L, weight on it, and face forwards

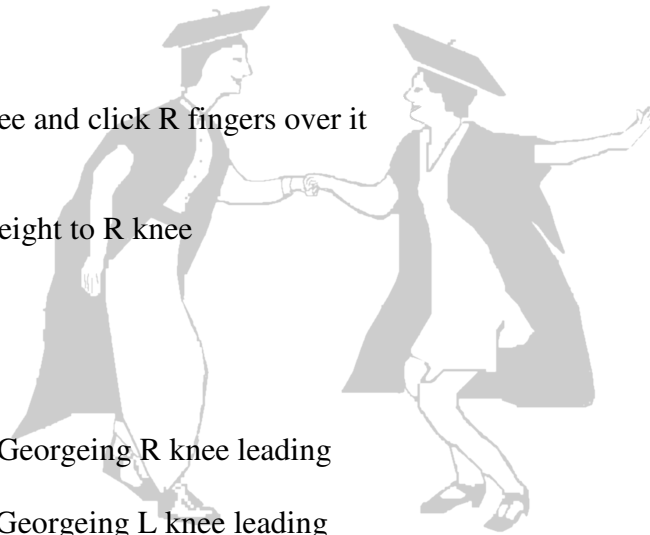


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Hesitation Shorty George

- 8 – kick R
- & - R down
- 1 – L, Shorty Georgeing L knee leading
- .
- 2 – R, Shorty Georgeing R knee leading
- .
- 3 – with R leg still bent, extend L leg diag forward
- .
- 4 – open R knee and click R fingers over it
- .
- 5 – R knee in
- .
- 6 – open R knee and click R fingers over it
- .
- 7 – R knee in.
- & - transfer weight to R knee

- 8 – kick L
- & - L down
- 1 – R, Shorty Georgeing R knee leading
- .
- 2 – L, Shorty Georgeing L knee leading
- .
- 3 – with L leg still bent, extend R leg diag forward
- .
- 4 – open L knee and click L fingers over it
- .
- 5 – L knee in
- .
- 6 – open L knee and click L fingers over it
- .
- 7 – L knee in.



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NB: some people have a slightly modified way of getting into the second hesitation Shorty George, just kicking instead of doing the mirror image thing.

CHORUS TWO VERSE 3

Tabby the cat

8 – step fwd on L

.

1 – put R foot fwd on R heel

.

2 step on L

.

3 – kick R

& - Rdown

4 – kick L

& - L down

5 – step diag fwd on R with your foot out beyond your weight

.

6 – pivot on both feet to face L – bend over well

.

7 – POP your hip back over you R foot

.

8

Front & Back crosses

1 – cross R over L

& - rock L, facing diag R

2 – R (finish rock step)

.

3 – cross L *behind* R

& - rock R, facing diag L

4 – L (finish rock step)

.

5 – cross R over L

& - rock L, facing diag R

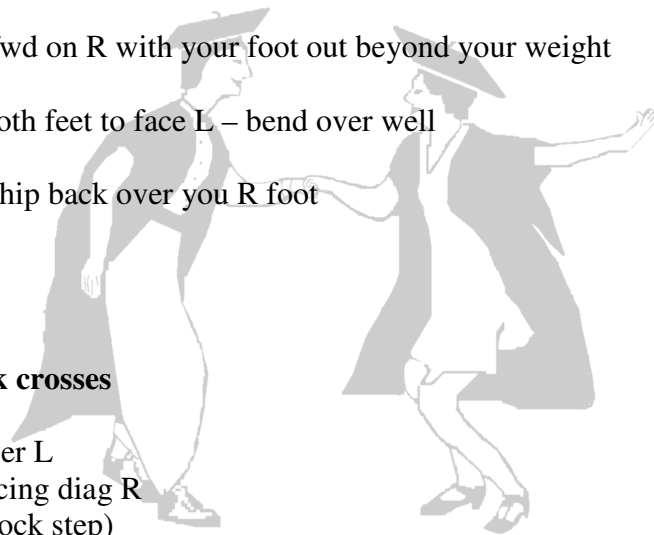
6 – R (finish rock step)

.

7 – cross L *behind* R

& - rock R, facing diag L

8 – tap L CHECK!!!



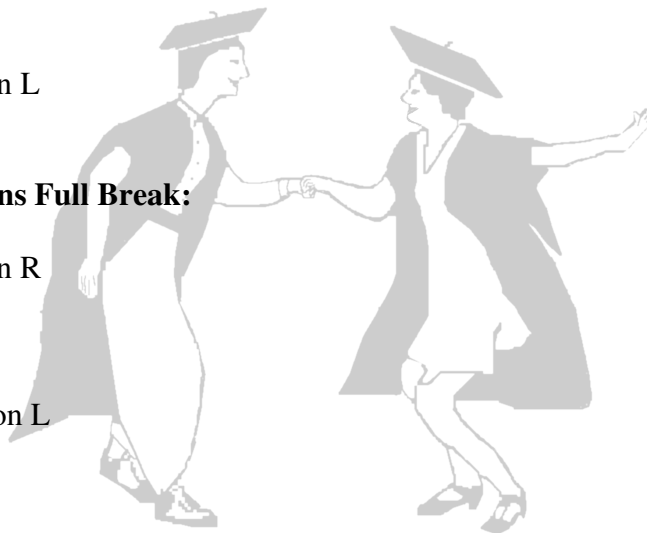
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Slow & Fast kicks

- 1 – kick L fwd
- .
- 2 – step fwd L
- .
- 3 – kick R fwd
- & - R down
- 4 – kick L
- & - bring L in
- 5 – kick L
- & - L down
- 6 – R kick
- & - R down
- 7 – step fwd on L

Modified Dean Collins Full Break:

- 8 – step fwd on R
- .
- 1
- .
- 2 – step back on L
- .
- 3
- .
- 4 – step back on R
- .
- 5 – step back on L a bit like a Lindy rock step
- .
- 6 – return weight to R
- .
- 7 – kick L fwd
- .
- 8 – bring L back



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CHORUS TWO VERSE 4

Savoy kicks (normal)

- 1 - kick L fwd
- .
- 2 – down on L
- .
- 3 – kick R forward
- .
- 4 – bring R in
- .
- 5 – kick R back
- .
- 6 – use your R foot to ‘kick your L forward out of the way’
- .
- 7 – L foot in
- .
- 8 – stretch and tap your l toes back behind you – low stretch

- 1 - kick L fwd
- .
- 2 – down on L
- .
- 3 – kick R forward



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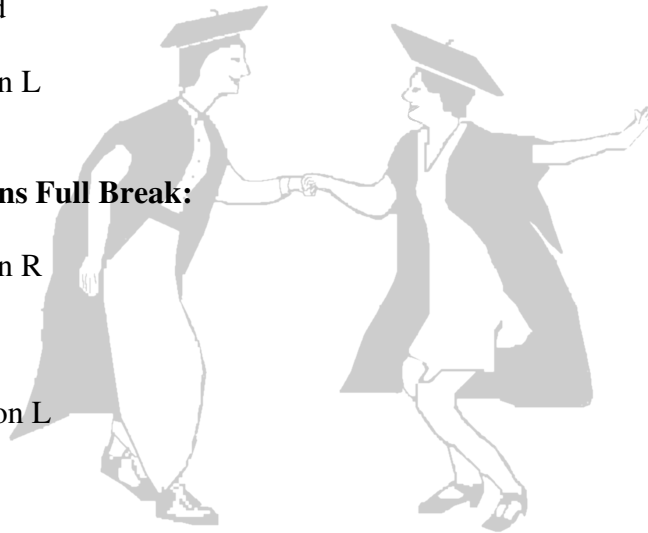
- 4 – bring R in
- .
- 5 – kick R back
- .
- 6 – use your R foot to ‘kick your L forward out of the way’
- .
- 7 – L foot in
- .
- 8 – stretch and tap your l toes back behind you – low stretch

Heel kicks

- 1 – kick L fwd
- .
- 2 cross L over R and commit weight, and let R go backwards into the air at the same time
- .
- 3 – kick R fwd
- .
- 4 – cross R over L and let L go up behind
- .
- 5 – kick L fwd
& -L down
- 6 – kick R fwd
& - R down
- 7 – step fwd on L

Modified Dean Collins Full Break:

- 8 – step fwd on R
- .
- 1
- .
- 2 – step back on L
- .
- 3
- .
- 4 – step back on R
- .
- 5 – step back on L a bit like a Lindy rock step
- .
- 6 – return weight to R
- .
- 7 – kick L fwd
- .
- 8 – bring L back

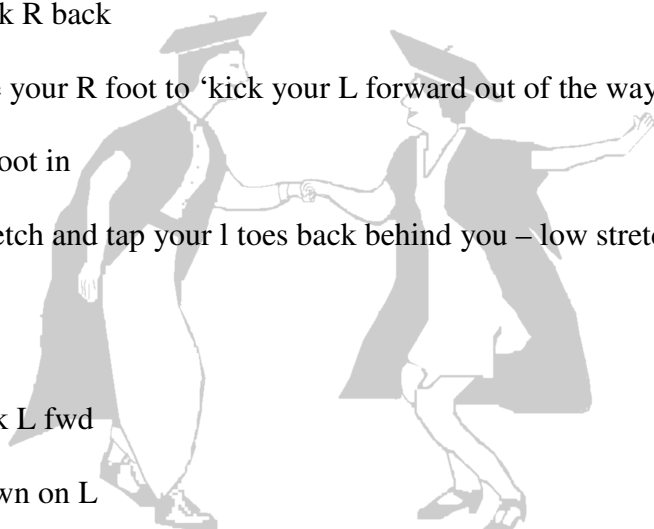


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CHORUS THREE VERSE 1

Savoy kicks (normal)

- 1 - kick L fwd
- .
- 2 - down on L
- .
- 3 - kick R forward
- .
- 4 - bring R in
- .
- 5 - kick R back
- .
- 6 - use your R foot to 'kick your L forward out of the way'
- .
- 7 - L foot in
- .
- 8 - stretch and tap your l toes back behind you - low stretch

- 
- 1 - kick L fwd
 - .
 - 2 - down on L
 - .
 - 3 - kick R forward
 - .
 - 4 - bring R in
 - .
 - 5 - kick R back
 - .
 - 6 - use your R foot to 'kick your L forward out of the way'
 - .
 - 7 - L foot in
 - .
 - 8 - stretch and tap your l toes back behind you - low stretch

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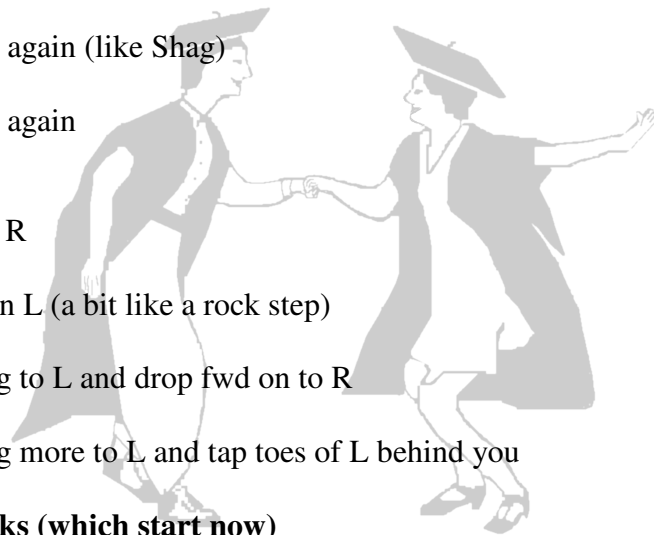
Double triple break

- 1 – kick cross L over R
- .
- 2 – L down
- .
- 3 – kick R fwd
- .
- 4 – step on R and kick L out
- & - L in
- 5 - kick L out again (like Shag double kicks)
- & - L down.
- 6 – kick R out
- & - R in
- 7 – kick R out again (like Shag)
- & - R in
- 8 – kick R out again

- 1 – drop on to R
- .
- 2 – step fwd on L (a bit like a rock step)
- .
- 3 – turn 90 deg to L and drop fwd on to R
- .
- 4 – turn 90 deg more to L and tap toes of L behind you

Ten count Savoy kicks (which start now)

- 5 – turn 90 deg on R and kick L fwd
- .
- 6 – turn 90 deg step on L as you face the front again
- .
- 7 – kick R forward as in Charleston
- .
- 8 – bring R foot back in



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1 – tap R toes back behind L

.

2 – R in again

.

3 – kick R fwd

.

4 – cross R in front of L in the air (like Wade in the Water)

.

5 – step on R to the right of your L foot

.

6 – tap L behind you like the end of a normal Savoy kick

and this is the second ten-beat Savoy kick

7 – kick L fwd

.

8 – L down

.

1 – kick R fwd

.

2 – R in again

.

3 – tap R toes back behind L

.

4 – R in again

.

5 – kick R fwd

.

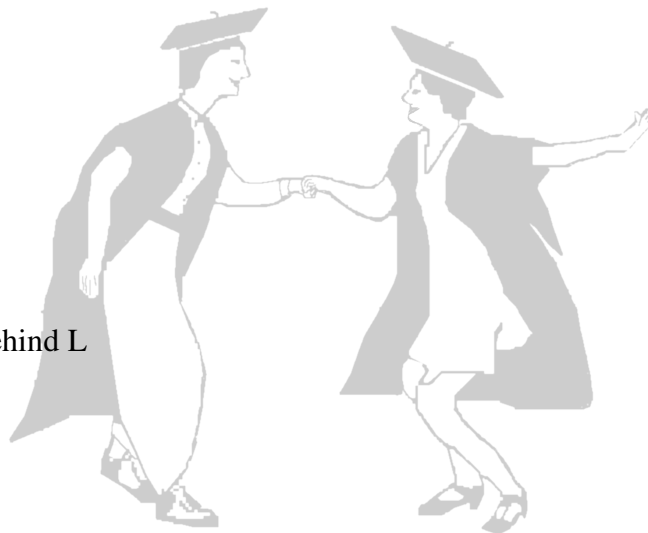
6 – cross R in front of L in the air (like Wade in the Water)

.

7 – step on R to the right of your L foot

.

8 – tap L behind you like the end of a normal Savoy kick



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Walk off

(yes, this is meant to start only half way through verse 2)

& - turn to L

1 – step fwd L

.

2

.

3 – step fwd R

.

4

.

5 – step fwd L

.

6

.

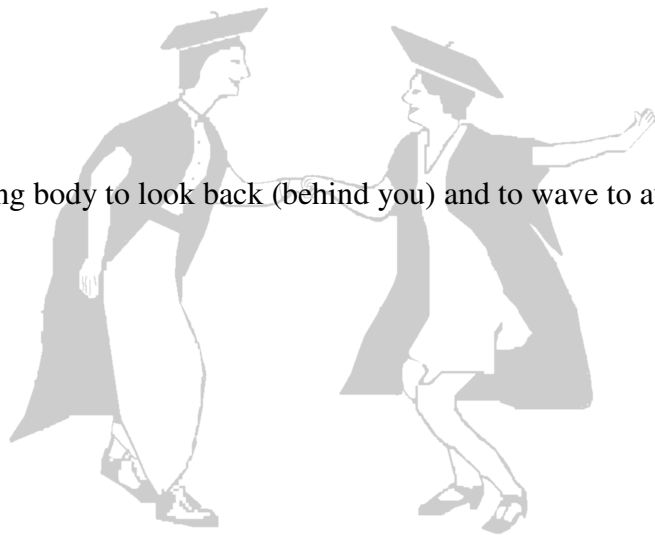
7 – step back R, turning body to look back (behind you) and to wave to aud

.

8

.

(repeat as necessary)



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