



The Swing Doctors' notes on:

# Laminu: 2) variations



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### Insertion of 'Blues' steps

The first rock-step on 1-2, and most definitely the 'swaying' step-step on 5-6, have the feel of the Blues basic. At either of these points, you can repeat this 'rocking' as many times as you like, with whatever blues variations you know, before deciding to go on to the triple. Ray Cunningham, who taught us this dance, kept inserting different numbers of these even when demonstrating the basic, making it very difficult for us to work out what the basic actually was! (until we persuaded him to humour us and not to keep throwing in variations).

### Rocks

This is a simple variation: on either of the 'step-step' phases (eg beats 1-2 or 5-6), repeat them, so that the initial rock step becomes back, forward, back, forward etc.

### Additional chassés.

One the last triple stop, go out to the right rather than coming back to the left (leading with the hip, to give the lady the body lean she need to know what is going on – man's upper body will be leaning to man's L, but think about keeping the hip to the R, not the upper body to the L, and remember it should be subtle). As you step on 8, reverse the hip/body lean to prepare to triple to the left on 1&2, then to right again on 3&4. You can do as many of these as you like; after any of the right-going ones, you can begin your basic again with the usual rock step.

### Shuffles

After a basic (so leader's weight is on his R leg), leader keeps his weight biased over his R (trailing) leg and moves left, stepping LR, LR, LR etc. To reverse, on one LR, he should move his weight over the L, hold for a beat, then go the other way (RL RL) etc. You can follow any of these RLs with an R-hold, then begin a new basic. You can start on either phase: it just depends on which leg is free.

### Paddles

Same idea as shuffles, but the leg over which weight is biased becomes the inside of a circle and the other leg 'paddles' (like a coracle) the couple round. This can go clockwise or anticlockwise with either leg in the middle. So 4 moves, really.

### Fishtails

The leader leads standard jazz-step fishtails (ie sit back-left on left leg, leaving R leg straight, the body angled about 45 deg to R, then mov R leg back so you sit back on R leg, leaving left straight, and so on). Lady will be led to step forward into the man's stride, on her R foot as he goes back on his L foot, etc. The main should straighten up from his sit to finish this, and enter a normal rock step, for example. Contra body motion gives this some more style.

### The Fred Astaire

A variation on the 1-2. Think of a your left shoulder performing an anticlockwise circle, starting at 3-o'clock, during this move (it helps to give it style, and to communicate with the lady). On 1, lunge to the left, raising your left shoulder in a graceful arc up and left. On 2, follow the arc over and down to the right and back to your starting position.

### Closed turn

This sets up on the '1' of a standard Laminu basic (or rather, start the set up a fraction before): leader should raise his left hand, flat palm forwards, so that follower's R arm also raises - the hands should go to palm to palm. At this happens (beat 1), man should step back on his L leg: there will be some compression in the raised hands. On 2, man steps forward again, giving the follower some momentum, and his R arm rolls her out, so she performs a rapid turn c/w on 3&4. If the man sets this up properly, she will turn where she is and not open up any extra space (debugging: if she does move away, it is either because he pushed her with his left hand, or because she is not keeping her legs underneath her as she turns). On or just before 5, catch back into the closed hold. Leader can tap R fwd, and she will detect his body lean to tap her L back. Then leader can step backwards a little on 7, and she will step forwards, ready to start a new basic.

### Walks to cross

From the 'blues turns' (see the previous sheet), open out side-by-side – ie the leader stops turning c/w and relaxes his right arm so that the follower's momentum carries her round to his R side; his R hand drops to her R hip. With or without a rock step, walk forward ('scuff' the ground first, boogie forward style, if you like), outer feet, inner feet, outer etc. At the end of the walk, just before an inner foot step, leader should turn his inner leg slightly outwards (ir his R knee facing a little R) so that his leg is directly behind the follower's inner (L) leg. On the 'step', the leader should 'scoop' the follower's leg forward and across her front, so she is standing with her weight on her L leg across her R (and leaning a little to her L on the leader). Now, with a little forward momentum and use of his R arm, the leader leads the follower to move her R leg forward (clearing the obstruction of her L leg), and then in a deep cross towards him. The usual failure point here is that he leads the cross but not the movement of her R leg forward first, and that makes the follower's legs tangle. After enjoying the pose, the leader can wrap in across his follower's front to collect a normal hold, and go straight into blues turns (remember her weight will be on her R foot unless you do something about this).

### Tango cross (taught to us by Simon Selmon)

Begin the basic as usual, but let the space between you and the lady open up a little at the end of the first triple step. On 5, the leader should step back a little on R and lead the lady to step forwards but outside him to his right (leaders, use your right arm/hand to control this angle). On 6, leaders step back a little on left (just enough to give the lady room to manoeuvre), and lead her to step still facing diagonally past your right hand side. On 7&8, turn her back the way that she came and then to face you (this involves two sharp changes of direction, led smoothly, and looks quite tango-like).

### Apache to lunge (another one of Simon's variations)

1,2 – rock step as in the basic, but change the hand behind the lady's back (as you might in Balboa).  
3&4 – on the triple, unwind the lady and 'over-turn' her to create tension for coming back.  
5&6 – triple again; pull the lady back in, and as soon as she is coming, let go with your R hand and put it behind her back, to bring her into a 'normal' hold. She will be carrying momentum towards you.  
7 – step back with your L leg, letting the lady 'lunge' forwards on to you (her R leg still being bent, some of her weight leaning on you).

### Lift ending (*this is not from an original old movie, but just something we put into a class to make a fun ending*)

From Fishtails, make the R step back on 7 quite strong, and the L step back on 1 definitely strong, sitting back slightly but not fishtailing. She will lunge forward a little and, as she does, the leader should slightly and gently flex his R leg (which is not weight-bearing) to connect with the front of her L thigh (do not 'knee' her! This has to be gentle – we were confident teaching this because everyone in the class is an experienced balboa dancer). On 2, with the leader's weight still on his left (back) leg, flexes his R leg more, which flicks the follower's L leg up off the ground. She can either just let that one rise and fall, or, let both

legs come up off the ground, depending on the strength of the lead ('strength' has to do with timing and balance, not raw force).

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