Name/Title: Basic Waltz Steps (February 2010)

Purpose of Event: Students will learn five basic waltz steps, the history of the waltz, geography and climate of the countries of Germany and Austria.

Suggested Grade Level: 6-12

Materials Needed: CD player and appropriate waltz music. Full Lesson Idea PDF Format

Recommended music: The following are suggestions from several different genres of music: Could I Have This Dance (For the Rest of My Life) by Anne Murray; You Look So Good in Love by George Strait; You Light Up My Life by LeAnn Rimes or Whitney Houston; Piano Man by Billy Joel; Try to Remember from the Fantasticks; Edelweiss from The Sound of Music. If you are from Missouri or Tennessee you have your own state waltz – The Missouri Waltz or The Tennessee Waltz! **Shop for this Music at Amazon.com**

Beginning dance formation: The class will be in one large circle. All of the leads (usually men) should stand with the R shoulder toward the center of the circle. The follows, their partners, should face the leads with the L shoulder toward the center of the circle. Dancers may practice the steps facing one another without actually touching. After the steps are learned the dancers should perform the steps in ballroom dance position. (See description below)

Description of Idea

Full Lesson Idea PDF Format

Description of Ballroom Dance Position:

* Partners should be about six inches apart. They should stand upright with the head up and shoulders relaxed.

* **Lead's Position:** The lead's R arm should be placed firmly, with fingers and thumb held together, slightly below the follow's L shoulder blade. Gentle pressure on the back of the follow can be used to "lead" the partner in various steps of the dance. The lead's R arm should be kept firm and lifted at a 90 degree angle to his body making full contact with the woman's left arm.

* The follow's L arm should rest gently on the lead's upper arm with fingers on the lead's R shoulder. The follow's R hand should rest in the palm of the lead's L hand. These joined hands should be raised to eye level of the shorter person.

* Each dancer's eyes should be focused over his/her partner's R shoulder. Partners should not dance toe to toe. Students should be instructed to move slight to their own L, thus putting the R foot between the partner's feet.

Five Basic Waltz Steps:

1. **Box Step:** This pattern resembles a box. The partners perform opposite movements. When the lead moves forward the follow moves backward.

Count Lead's Part Lead Follow's Part
1 Left foot forward Closed Position Right foot back
2 Right foot side Closed Position Left foot side
3 Left foot close Closed Position Right foot close
4 Right foot back Closed Position Left foot forward
5 Left foot side Closed Position Right foot side
6 Right foot close Closed Position Left foot close

http://www.dancetv.com/tutorial/waltz/waltz1.html

2. **Under Arm Turn:** To initiate this turn, the lead raises his left hand in the air, which is a cue for the follow to turn underneath. The follow will take six walking steps forward in a small circle, returning to her original place by the sixth step.

3. **Waltz Left Box or Right Box Step:** One box step is done with a ¼ turn to the lead's L. The pivot is done as the lead steps forward and the "side step close" is done facing the wall to the L of the lead. On the next step the lead steps back R and the follow steps forward L again completing a ¼ turn. This sequence is repeated 2x and the dancers end up in the original position. The Right Box Step is also done with the lead stepping forward as follow steps back and pivots ¼ turn to the R. Note: A nice video of this can be seen at the web site listed below.

http://www.ballroomdancers.com/Dances/media.asp?Dance=AWA&StepNum=107

4. **Hesitation Step** – Lead steps forward L and together in place RL. Follow performs the opposite movement. The dancers can reverse the movement on the 2nd hesitation step with lead stepping back R, and, together LR and follow performing the opposite movement.

5. **Progressive Waltz Step** – The lead goes forward on counts 1 and 4 performing the box step in place after each forward step. The cue for the lead is: forward L(1) side R(2) close L(3) forward R (4)side L(5) close R(6). The follow performs the opposite movement.

Teaching Suggestions:

Anticipatory Set: The waltz is a romantic dance done in triple time. It is considered the mother of present day dances and began in southern Germany in the 17th century. The ballrooms of Vienna popularized a faster version of the waltz that became known as the Viennese Waltz. The fast whirling of partners that appeared to be in an embrace shocked polite society. Religious leaders of the times viewed it as vulgar and sinful. More recent studies have shown that waltzing can be beneficial for cardio-respiratory function. (More information can be

found at the web sites listed in the lesson idea.)

http://www.castleschoolofdancing.com/standard.htm

http://www.centralhome.com/ballroomcountry/waltz.htm

Climate and Geography of German and Austria: Germany is a country in Central Europe. It is Europe's most populated nation. In 1949 two German states were formed, Germany and East Germany. The Berlin Wall, which divided the country, came down in 1989, and democracy came to all Germans. Austria lies to the south of Germany. It is totally land locked and is very mountainous. The mountain ranges are known as the Austrian Alps. The musical, The Sound of Music, took place in the country of Austria. Today, Austria is known as the walking and hiking capital of Europe. The climate of both countries is much like some parts of the US. The winter lows are in January and February with the temperature possibly as low as 0 degrees. In July and August, when it is very hot, the temperature may reach 100 degrees.

German is the official language of both Germany and Austria.
Want to learn some German words?

Hello in German is "Hallo;" Good morning is "Guten Morgen;" Goodbye is "Auf Wiedersehen" (w sounds like a V); Please is "Bitte;" "Bitte" also means you're welcome!

Try counting the waltz steps in German:
1. Eins
2. Zwei
3. Drei
4. Veir
5. Funf
6. Sechs

Images:



Submitted by **Brenda Goodwin** who teaches at Missouri State University in Springfield, MO. Thanks for contributing to PE Central! **Posted on PEC: 3/9/2010**.

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