

Extending patterns to hit accents

WCS is a two-beat dance. As a result, it is easy to extend patterns by two beats in order to phrase the music. In order to remain on the same foot, we'll use a double rhythm unit to extend the pattern, and we'll put the extra double between the rhythm units of the base pattern. In next week's post, we'll apply this technique in order to phrase the music.

The Drill:

The first drill is to extend a left side pass and put the extension between the two triples. With a partner, dance the side pass and stop on 4. Leaders: as you stop on 4, step towards your follower rather than away so that there is light compression in your connection instead of the normal tension of a post. Now, the leader should walk towards the follower on beats 5 and 6; the follower will mirror that action by stepping backwards while staying in compression. At the end of beat 6, both partners return to an away connection and then anchor as normal on beats 7 and 8. You can also put the extension before the first rhythm unit of the pattern. Again, connect with your partner. This time, both partners walk down the slot on 1, 2 so that the relative body positioning is exactly the same as when you started. Now, dance the left side pass: walk walk, triple, triple.

Finally, you can put the extension between beats 2 and 3. With a partner, dance a left side pass and pause on beat 2. Now both partners should do a walk walk down the slot at the same speed as the follower was going. After these two beats, the spacing between the partners should be identical to what it was on count 2. Finish the side pass as normal with the two triples.

The first two options are the easiest because the follower is clearest about what will come next. Every pattern in WCS ends in an anchor, so the follower knows an anchor has to be coming after the first option. In the second option, the follower knows that a walk walk starts every pattern, so she can plan accordingly. The third option is trickiest because the follower is in the zone of least certainty: after the walk walk, everything goes crazy, and extending the pattern there makes things even more crazy.

Bonus Variations:

You can do the same drill with any pattern. There are two keys to these extensions. The first is to extend between rhythm units, not in the middle of rhythm units. Putting a walk walk between 4 and 5 works well; it does not work well between 5 and 6.

The second key is to keep the relative body positioning the same throughout the extension. It is the change of relative body positions that creates the lead for different movements, so it is necessary to keep the body positions the same in order to avoid creating the lead for the next part of the pattern. For instance, in every basic pattern the follower should not be past the leader by count 2. If you want to extend after count 2, then the leader needs to stay in front of the follower for that whole extension.

You will find that some patterns are awkward to extend in specific places; for instance, extending whips between beats 4 and 5 doesn't work well unless you turn it into a continuous whip with additional rotation. Focus on finding places where the extensions work well.