Introduction to Quickstep

**General** International Quickstep is in the smooth ballroom category of dances along with Waltz, Tango, Slow Foxtrot and Viennese Waltz. The Quickstep is a swing dance and characterized by movement across the floor, locks and chassés. Because the rhythm is fast the steps are not long and the rise is normally quick. To keep from tiring quickly while dancing the Quickstep, the dancer must be light on the feet and make maximum use of the ankles during rise and fall.

**Musical Timing** The musical timing for International Quickstep is 4/4 rhythm at 48 to 50 bars (measures) per minute. Most routines, in round dancing, use 46 to 48 bars per minute. Slowing the speed much more than that will cause the routine to become very heavy and tiring to dance. The step timing uses "slows" (S) and "quicks" (Q). A “slow step” uses one half a bar of music or two beats. A "quick step" uses one beat.

**Dance Position** The dance positions used in the International Quickstep are standard as for all swing dances.

**Footwork** The footwork for the International Quickstep is standard with the swing dances. A forward step that initiates rise is on the heel then rises to the toe. A step while up or continuing to rise is on the toe. A step with lowering action is on the toe lowering to the heel. A backing step with “rise” normally has no foot rise and is on the toe and rolling to the heel. The rise is through the body.

**Rise and Fall** These are the general rules for rise and fall in the Quickstep:

- **Forward Turns:**
  
  Step 1. Rise at the end of step 1
  Step 2. Up on step 2

- **Backward Turns:**

  Step 1. Rise at the end of step 1 with no foot rise
  Step 2. Up on step 2 with foot rise

  **Exception to the above rules:**
  Quarter Turns, Progressive Chassés, Forward and Backward Locks: These steps continue to rise on steps 2 and 3. The dancer is up on 4. This action requires the use of the knees in rise and fall.

Most figures use a quick rise on step one.

The lowering action begins, from an up posture, on the toe of the supporting foot. The dancer lowers to the heel of that foot as the moving foot collects under the body and is about to move onto the next step.
As the tempo of the music increases, the bending and straightening of the knees decrease, therefore the rise and fall will be less. When the tempo becomes faster, the steps become shorter. To help with the rise and fall (and the dance) the dancer must maintain the feet and knees compactly under the hips. Develop a feeling of the knees working toward each other so the feet will not spread out. Keep the action on the ball of the foot. Do not get “flat footed”. Keep the ankles flexible and springy to add lightness to the dance.

The following is the explanation of some terms used for Rise and Fall:

- **Rise at the end of 1 (rise E01)**: The rise begins immediately when transferring the weight to the supporting foot.

- **Up on 2 -**: The dancer attains the maximum rise on the second step.

- **Continue to Rise on 2 -**: The rise is still occurring and is not complete.

- **Continue to Rise on 3 -**: The rise is still occurring and is not complete.

- **Up on 3 -**: The dancer attains the maximum rise on the third step.

- **Up on 4, etc. -**: The dancer attains the maximum rise on the fourth, etc., step.

- **Lower at the end of 3, etc. -**: The foot lowers to the heel as the weight is fully transferred on the third, etc., step and the moving leg collects under the body.

**Amounts of Turn** There are two amounts of turn noted in the Figure Descriptions. One is the amount of turn made by the foot. If different from the amount of turn the body makes, this information will be in the "Technique" column. The other is the amount of turn that the body makes on a given step. This information is in the "Amount of Turn" column. While dancing some figures, the feet will make more turn than the body on a particular step. Usually the body catches up on the next step. We note this by the term "Body Turns Later".