



Issue 2, 14 May 2012

*My Daily Shuffle**

Hello and welcome back to My Daily Shuffle! So here we are at the start of a new semester. After a whole semester of dancing, some of you (hopefully a lot of you) may be coming across the problem that a lot of us face sooner or later. One hour a week of dancing is just not enough! And you don't get to talk to people enough in class, at least not without the teacher getting a little grumpy at you. Never fear, there is a solution, and this edition of the Shuffler is devoted to it — social dancing! (Swing and salsa dancers, this is particularly aimed at you guys.) Sounds daunting? Well trust me, it isn't. There's nothing like it to make your dancing improve, and you can even make some new friends. But if it still seems a little scary, come talk to one of your friendly neighbourhood committee members, there's almost always at least one or two of us out dancing somewhere, and others are more than welcome to tag along. So continue reading, and I hope to see many familiar faces out on the social floor soon!



* My Daily Shuffle is neither daily, nor restricted to shufflers. Monash Dance Sport would like to apologise for any confusion caused or hopes crushed by this disclaimer.

MDS Social Calendar Semester 2, 2012 (TBC)

- 2 August — Social
- 24 August — Performance Night
- 6 September — Intersivity
- 21 September — Medal Night
- 27 September — Dinner Dance
- 11 October — AGM/Social

Tired? Stressed? You'll feel better with MDS!

Is Monash getting you down? Do you wish the holidays could have continued for just that little bit longer? Then do we have the answer for you!

DANCING!

That's right, Monash Dance Sport is holding its first social of semester 2 next Thursday (2 August)! This time is going to be all about progressive dances, which are simple enough to not tax your brain too much, but fun enough to keep you smiling the whole song. Plus you can dance some of them to just about anything! It's free for members, and only \$5 for non-members, so grab your friends and we'll see you all at 6 in the West Cellar Room (TBC) next Thursday night!



Dance Camp 2012 – A Review

Dance camp this year was definitely a weekend to remember. Having never gone before, I was quite unsure what to expect. Would my lack of ballroom knowledge mean that I'd be unable to keep up? How would I get there? Who would be in my cabin? All these questions floated around in my head as I wrote my name down on the sign-up sheet.

This changed instantly when we reached the camp site. After a few introductory games (which I will admit were incredibly fun, unlike the usual, 'everyone stand in a circle and say your name awkwardly'), the dancing began. While some demonstrated much skill and technique, Emily and I showed off our moves by doing some crazy interpretive dance. After a long night of laughter and shaking our hips, the beach seemed like an ideal way to cool down. How naïve I was to think it'd only be a nice stroll along the sand. The boys decided that a midnight swim would be a great way to cool off. The only problem was that they decided everyone else should join them. I was one of the lucky ones; receiving only a wet hug. Others who weren't as lucky got dragged into the water, or in some cases, picked up and thrown in. Nevertheless, we all managed to struggle back to camp, cold but thoroughly amused.

A selection of classes were held the next day for us to choose from. I thought I'd try some styles that I'd never done before and so it was decided after much consideration, Cha Cha, Urban Hip Hop, Swing and Argentine Tango was the way to go. Cha Cha and Swing were both fast paced and involved a lot of footwork. Despite this, we were all able to pick up the routine and danced confidently by the end of the session. Urban Hip Hop provided a refreshing break from all the partner work and allowed us to focus more on our individual movement. It was tough but our teacher helped us through with his amusing yet effective instructions. Argentine Tango, however, was completely different to anything that I'd ever done before. Like for

most of the other beginners in the room, partner-finding at the start of the dance was definitely a highlight. Instead of walking straight over to someone, we were instructed to stare at them from afar until intense eye contact was made for a sufficient period of time, before proceeding to tango. These classes had provided us with a greater understanding of the different styles of dance and gave everyone the opportunity to try something different.

As the night approached, more and more green clothes, hats and leprechaun ears began appearing as the St Patrick's Day themed party drew closer. After a quick practice of an Irish dance routine in our cabins, we were ready to go. While we showed off what we'd learnt during the day, Moses impressed everyone with his amazing limbo skills. The night ended with everyone huddling together under countless blankets while watching Dirty Dancing.

Dance camp was definitely a huge success this year. Not only were we able to learn so much more about dance but also spend a weekend away with an awesome group of people. I look forward to seeing you all back there next year!

Bilin Zhou



Social Dancing

I joined the salsa classes at Monash just because I wanted to dance and it fit my timetable. For almost half a year I wasn't interested in social dancing - I was happy enough getting better by dancing in class. That was two years ago now, and a lot has changed!

I had no idea how much fun it can be to go out with friends, to try out the steps from class and just have fun with the music. It's when all the things you learnt in class finally make sense and fulfill their purpose. Plus, nothing beats a random dance with a new person who turns out to be a great dancer!

Even if you don't go out, do practice - hang around after class or organize another time. It doesn't have to be long - 15 minutes revision of the week's steps can make a huge difference! More practice means you communicate more clearly with your partner and feel more comfortable, and then you have more brain space for really listening to the music. The more experienced you are, the closer your movements can be to your intention!

But dancing with new people, who haven't been to the same classes you have, is the fastest way to improve your dancing. Novelty is fun and exciting!

When you do go out dancing, here are a few things I think are important:

(Disclaimer: I'm familiar mostly with the salsa scene. But I'm sure most of it applies to other styles as well.)

1. Be friendly and be courteous.

And expect the same in return!

2. Go out in groups, but don't just dance with people you know.

If you're experienced, make sure you dance with at least one beginner during the night. We were all beginners once, and one day that beginner might be your favourite dance partner.

3. Want to dance? Show it.

If you're a follow: stand near the floor, smile, move to the music and, importantly, make eye contact! Leads, pay attention to her signals, and if she doesn't say yes then she's in the wrong place; ask someone else.

(A side note: if you're approaching a group, make eye contact with one person and ask them to dance. Don't ask the group "anyone want to dance?" and make *them* decide who wants to dance with you. That's just awkward.)

4. If you have to pay to get in, it's probably a better place.

Places without an entry fee often cover their losses either with a dance class beforehand (which is great) or by selling alcohol. Paying to get in often means the crowd has a higher proportion of people who want to dance, rather than just have a night out. The exceptions to this are when you hear about it from dance people - there *are* some places where it's free *and* a good crowd. As cheap students, we'll probably be going to those places!

5. Girls, watch out for the sleazes.

By the time you're uncomfortable with how close he's dancing with you, it's probably too late to subtly push him away. So if you can't, just *tell* him: "I'm actually not comfortable dancing so close". It's totally your decision, and if he doesn't back off (make sure he heard you, of course!), walk away. Immediately. And tell everyone you know. This happens more often when it's free entry (see above).

Part of this is that *you* get to choose who to dance with. After a while you'll realise that everyone has a different style, and you'll like dancing with some people more than others. And that's the way it should be.

6. It's just a dance.

Guys, remember that girls don't usually go dancing to meet guys - they go to dance! Agreeing to dance does not mean she wants to have a drink with you. Don't ruin the fun.

7. And finally: it's supposed to be fun.

Dance is about how you listen to the music and how you choose to express what you hear through your body. Yes, steps are important - but only so that you don't have to dance by yourself. Listen to the music, listen to your partner and adjust. It's not a test - it's relaxing, it's fun, and it's just for you and whoever you're dancing with right then. A good partner will adjust to you, too. You're not dancing alone, so share the dance! Make eye contact, smile. The times when you and your partner have the most fun are often when you relax and muck around together.

There are many, many places to go dancing. If you want to, you can go dancing almost every night. I've talked mostly about salsa, but there are also latin, ballroom and swing places. Keep an eye on the 'MDS Salsa', 'Swing at Monash/Melb Uni' and 'Monash Dance Sport' groups on Facebook so you know when a group of us is going out somewhere or if there's a special event. There's also the 'Salsa and Bachata in Melbourne' group (which is not MDS affiliated) where lots of events are posted. If you're not on Facebook, tell someone who is so they can tell you when something is happening.

See you on the dance floor!

Bethany Sheahan



Moses Supposes...*a dance partner is as good as your favourite limb*

If you do have a favourite limb, then you know what I'm talking about.¹ However, for those few who are not familiar with this concept or have never taken part in a partner dance², I will try to explain this saying.

Imagine training for a marathon. At first, you can't even run further than a km. Your legs are weak and they do not understand why you choose to participate in such a pointless activity. They patiently put up with you and continue running longer and longer. In time, you can run marathon distances and though your legs still do not understand why you chose to do a marathon, they have become stronger for you. You can trust them to not falter. They will never fail you.

A dance partner is the same as the marathon runner's legs. At the start of any partnership, everything is awkward and you can't seem to connect. However with time, a bond starts to form. There is a strong silent trust, unflinching. Finally you can trust your partner more than you can your body. If you move one way, they will move the other way. If you jump, they jump. If you tap, they may slap.³ If you fall, they will catch you.

Of course people change partners from time to time hence going through the process of forming the bond over and over. However, every time you leave a partner, you can't help but feel a bit hollow. You can't possibly feel normal, if your legs are missing.

1. I favour my right foot...spins really well. And it always defends my honour. Attacks my enemies before I have even decided that I want to hit them.

2. You should take a long walk off a short cliff...figuratively of course. Though I do beseech you to dance with another person in the near future.

3. Seriously fellows, you should treat all ladies with respect. Any tomfoolery will be received with violence.