

SURVIVAL TIPS FOR A CROWDED FLOOR

Hsueh-tze Lee - *Blue Tango*

The most popular dances are crowded (naturally!).

Crowded dances can also be the most enjoyable. It provides the opportunity to experience group dynamics (e.g., sharing the slowness and intensity of Pugliese, not just with your partner, but also with your neighbors and ultimately the entire room), thus taking one's tango to yet another extraordinary level.

The goal, then, is to add to the enjoyment of not only your and your partner's dance, but also that of your fellow dancers.

Here are some tips. They take practice. But don't give up. Everyone will have more fun dancing, and possibly achieve a "Group High" if they follow several simple etiquette guidelines.

FLOORCRAFT

As with many social dances, the line of dance is **COUNTERCLOCKWISE** around the room. In Tango, the floor pattern is ideally a series of **CONCENTRIC CIRCLES** around the center. On a crowded floor, a couple generally dances along a specific circular lane for one entire 3-minute dance, with **NO PASSING**.

What are the reasons for this? (These guidelines are not arbitrary!)

When crowded, we all would like to be able to gauge how much space we have to dance. Advancing counterclockwise in one's lane enables us to figure this out, without unexpected couples torpedoing in from the left, the right, from behind and **from in front!** Under circumstances when one *must* pass, then pass to the **left** side of the couple ahead, and continue on the next inner circle. Why pass on the left? Because leaders (except very tall ones) typically have a blindspot on their right arising from the head position. Again, it is even better **not** to pass.

Given this goal to stay in one's lane, what can one do if the couple ahead isn't advancing quickly?

Lots!!

COOL TIPS

1. Take smaller steps.
2. Dance in place with musicality.
3. Vary dynamics with fast smooth turns or rhythmic subtle moves or lilting suspensions.
4. Use the corners – corners have a lot of space.
5. Keep feet (especially heels!) close to the floor
Swinging appendages and uplifted heels are dangerous!
6. **IMPORTANT: Do not (!) move back against the line of dance!!**

When the couple ahead does advance, fill in the gap so that the couple behind can also advance.

A phenomenon seen at festivals such as Denver and Portland, where many of the best dancers in the country congregate, is that people form a "train" by sandwiching themselves between other dancers with good floorcraft. Not only does good floorcraft lead to a better dance experience, but bonding often arises out of mutual respect.

So dance away! One does not need to limit one's dancing on a crowded floor. Instead, wanting to dance well in a small space is a drive towards even greater creativity!!