

## The Line Dance Through Time

(U.S.A.)

Although 1920s jazz step patterns like the Shim Sham were sometimes performed by one or two dancers, the 1950s Madison was the first Line Dance -- a social dance featuring an entire room full of dancers all facing in one direction, without partners, performing a sequence of steps together as a group.



To clarify, the Shim Sham has *become* a line dance today, after Frankie Manning revived it in the 1990s and taught it to large rooms filled with social dancers. But the original Shim Sham was usually only one or two dancers performing onstage. And other early ensemble choreographies like Busby Berkeley routines were performative. The Madison was the first social dance to fit this definition of Line Dance.

### The Madison

(U.S.A. circa 1958)

- Music: 2/4 meter Madison Time by Ray Bryant, 1959
- Formation: Individual dancers, all facing the top of hall.
- Steps & Styling: Dancers face the top of the hall throughout the dance, without turning to face a different wall. Free hands may slightly in front and sway in opp direction as cross-tapping L.

This notes the Basic Step and three variations. One version (there was more than one) is done correctly in John Waters' original version of *Hairspray* (pictured right). Watch it on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5MiMrtI3aQ4> or search "It's Madison Time."



These are called Line Dances because they were originally done in lines, with the dancers standing side-by-side. Here is a photo of The Madison from the Baltimore "bandstand" show The Buddy Deane Show, showing the lines, one line in front of another. In the



1959 Ray Bryant recording Madison Time, he calls, "You're looking good. A big strong line." A few years later the Hully-Gully introduced the four-wall concept, which made these lines harder to maintain, and eventually the lines dissolved into an amorphous floor of individual dancers. But the name Line Dance remained, as a vestige of the original lines facing one wall.

## The Line Dance Through Time — continued

<u>Meas</u>	<u>2/4 meter</u>	<u>Pattern</u>
	<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	
	Begin the Basic Step when the caller says, “Hit it!” Repeat the Basic Step until the caller prompts a variation. After completing the variation, return to the repeating Basic Step.	
	<u>I. THE BASIC STEP</u>	
1	Step fwd L (ct 1); tap R toe behind L heel, clapping hands (ct 2).	
2	Step back R (ct 1); tap L crossing over R, fwd diag R (ct 2).	
3	Tap L fwd diag L (ct 1); tap L fwd diag R (ct 2).	
	<u>II. TWO UP AND TWO BACK, AND A BIG STRONG TURN</u>	
1	Step L fwd (ct 1); step R next to L (ct 2).	
2	Step L fwd (ct 1); tap R toe behind L (ct 2).	
3	Step back R (ct 1); step L in front of R (ct 2).	
4	Step back R (ct 1); tap L toe in front of R (ct 2).	
5	Step fwd L swinging R leg fwd while turning halfway CCW (ct 1); step back R, facing back home (ct 2).	
6	Repeat meas 5.	
	<u>III. TWO UP AND TWO BACK, DOUBLE CROSS AND THE RIFLEMAN</u>	
1-4	Repeat Fig II meas 1-4.	
5	Step L fwd (ct 1); cross R over L with wt (ct 2).	
6	Step L crossing in front of R (ct 1); step R crossing in front of L (ct 2).	
7	Step L crossing in front of R (ct 1); holding the cross-step, raise arms to aim and fire a “rifle” fwd (ct 2).	
8	Step back R (possibly ducking an oncoming bullet) (ct 1). This is just one count, a half-measure.	
	<u>IV. THE BIG STRONG M, AND ERASE IT</u>	
1	Traveling fwd diag R, step L fwd (ct 1); step R next to L (ct 2).	
2	Step L fwd (ct 1); tap R toe behind L (ct 2).	
3	Traveling bkwd diag R, step R bkwd (ct 1); step L in front of R (ct 2).	
4	Step R bkwd (ct 1); tap L toe in front of R (ct 2).	
5-8	Repeat meas 1-4.	
9	Traveling fwd diag L, step L fwd (ct 1); step R next to L (ct 2).	
10	Step L fwd (ct 1); tap R toe behind L (ct 2).	
11	Traveling bkwd diag L, step back R (ct 1); step L in front of R (ct 2).	

## The Line Dance Through Time — continued

- 12 Step R back (ct 1); tap L toe in front of R (ct 2).  
 13-16 Repeat meas 9-12

Other variations: T-Time, the Basketball with the Wilt Chamberlin Hook, the Jackie Gleason, the Cleveland Box, Birdland, Double Cross and Freeze, plus many regional variations. The Madison was a rather complex dance, which brings us to the Hully-Gully.

## The Hully-Gully

(U.S.A. circa 1962)



This was a line dance with three new innovations. First, it's believed to be the first line dance to turn one quarter, then repeat facing a different wall. Secondly, it was the first *short* pattern of steps, instead of the very long sequences of step combinations in the Shim Sham and Madison. Finally, an innovation that was retained by many later line dances is that it contained an odd number of dance phrases. The five parts of the dance, done against the four phrases of music, kept the simplified repeating pattern more interesting than if it aligned squarely with the music. *Richard Powers 2011 CD, Track 3*

<u>Meas</u>	<u>4/4 meter</u>	<u>Pattern</u>
1	Step R to R (ct 1); step L behind R (ct 2); step R to R (ct 3); swing L across R to R (optional clap) (ct 4).	
2	Repeat meas 1 with opp ftwk and direction.	
3	Step R bkwd (ct 1); step L back next to R (ct 2); step R fwd (ct 3); lift L knee fwd while swinging L hip fwd (ct 4).	
4	Step L fwd (ct 1); lift R knee fwd (same hip-swing style in meas 3) (ct 2); step R fwd (ct 3); lift L knee fwd (ct 4).	
5	Turn 90° CW to face the wall twd the R and step L to L (ct 1); step R behind L (ct 2); step L to L (ct 3); swing R in front of L to diag L (optional clap).	

### Hully-Gully style variations

There were different stylistic versions right from the beginning, in the early 1960s. The side-steps could be side-close-side, tap closed, without crossing behind or swinging the ft over. Also, some dancers scooted the supporting ft fwd, without hitching the hip, on meas 3 and 4.

## Evolution of a Dance

The original Madison made its way to France in the late 1950s, where young dancers enjoyed trying the latest American fads. But it was no more than a brief novelty in France because most dancers found the long series of steps too difficult to memorize.

## The Line Dance Through Time — continued

Harold Nicholas (1921-2000) took the new American Hully-Gully to Paris and demonstrated it on a Paris pop music television program “Age tendre et tête de bois” on February 16, 1963. The next year filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard made *Bande à Part* and featured a slightly modified version of the Hully Gully. The dancers retained the original five-part phrasing, but replaced the Part 5 side step with stopping in place. (Then they invented a second part for the film, to make it more interesting).



More young French dancers saw *Bande à Part* than the television show, but the film didn't say what the new dance was called. So moviegoers just assumed it was another Madison, and called it that. This version has been danced in France ever since, often at weddings and parties. In France the stop in place on part 5, from *Bande à Part*, was morphed into the final step of Part 4, squaring four parts of the dance to the four phrases of the music. French still call it Le Madison instead of the Hully-Gully. Italians use the name Hully-Gully and still dance the original American version today.

## The French Madison of Today

<u>Meas</u>	<u>4/4 meter</u>	<u>Pattern</u>
1		Step R to R (ct 1); step L behind R (ct 2); step R to R (ct 3); swing L across R to R (optional clap) (ct 4).
2		Repeat meas 1 with opp ftwk and direction.
3		Step R bkwd (ct 1); step L back next to R (ct 2); step R fwd (ct 3); lift L knee fwd while swinging L hip fwd (ct 4).
4		Step L fwd (ct 1); lift R knee fwd (ct 2); step R fwd (ct 3); turn 90° CW to face the wall twd the R and step L to L (ct 4).

## The Hot Chocolate

(U.S.A. 1978)

This disco line dance is very similar to the Hully-Gully, 15 years later. Its primary feature was that it simplified or eliminated every aspect of the Hully-Gully that a beginner or non-dancer might find difficult: the step-ball-change, the hip-hitch walking forward, and odd number of phrases danced against the music. With all of the drinking done in discos (45,000 new disco clubs sprouted up in 1978, partially because liquor sales were so profitable), this was probably a smart adaptation.

The Hot Chocolate was published in LET'S DISCO, by K-tel Books, in 1978. Hundreds of thousands of copies of this book were purchased, spreading this disco line dance widely.

<u>Meas</u>	<u>4/4 meter</u>	<u>Pattern</u>
1		Step R to R (ct 1); step L behind R (ct 2); step R to R (ct 3); swing L across R to R (optional clap) (ct 4).



### The Line Dance Through Time — continued

- 2 Repeat meas 1 with opp ftwk and direction.
- 3 Walk 3 steps bkwd beg with R (cts 1-3); tap L closed in front of R (ct 4).
- 4 Step L fwd while leaning fwd (ct 1); rock back on R while leaning bkwd (ct 2); rock fwd on L (ct 3); kick R fwd while turning one quarter CCW (ct 4).

#### Style variations

In both the French Madison and Hot Chocolate, some dancers crossed over in front instead of crossing behind on the second step of the beginning side patterns.

## **The Texas Freeze and Elvira**

(U.S.A. 1980 and 1981)

In 1980, Kenneth Engle ("Kentucky Ken") created The Texas Freeze (also known today as The Freeze) which is considered to be a defining Country Western line dance. However The Texas Freeze was step-for-step identical to the disco line dance Hot Chocolate, widely published two years earlier.

In May 1981, The Oak Ridge Boys released "Elvira" which became an instant hit. Many folk dancers choreographed routines to this tune, and one of the most popular choices was The Texas Freeze (The Freeze), unchanged. So after 1981 The Hot Chocolate picked up a third name, Elvira.

One minor variation of The Texas Freeze/Elvira is to advance forward on the final three counts, L-R-L. i.e., instead of swaying fwd-back-fwd, L-R-L, you advance fwd L, close R to L, fwd L. It's not a significant modification.

## **The Electric Slide**

(U.S.A. circa 1989)

The Electric Slide was literally nothing new. All 12 steps are *identical* to the earlier Hot Chocolate. The only difference in the Electric Slide is in the timing of two of the steps. In the Electric Slide, the forward-and-back rocking steps (Meas 4) are slow instead of quick.

Presented by Richard Powers