

# Notes on Boyd's 'New Vogue Sequence Dancing and The Viennese Waltz'

Version 1.1

13 August 2006

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## 1 Introduction

This document is a collection of miscellaneous observations about Neville Boyd's book 'New Vogue Sequence Dancing and The Viennese Waltz', hereafter abbreviated to NVSD.

'Reading Ballroom Dance Scripts', hereafter called the Scripting Guide, used to contain considerable discussion of issues arising from NVSD. However, so far, the only feedback I've received on the Scripting Guide has been from readers outside Australia who have no knowledge of Australian New Vogue Sequence Dances or of NVSD. Several of these readers reported that the lengthy discussions of a book they were not familiar with were, not surprisingly, unhelpful and distracting. Thus I removed these comments and transferred them to this new document.

This document is very much miscellaneous observations in a random order. Given that it seems this topic will never generate a large readership, I am unlikely to spend any time refining its structure.

## 2 Hold vs Position

Briefly, 'Hold' refers to hand placement while 'Position' refers to the relative position of the man's and lady's bodies. (See the Scripting Guide for a more complete description.) Not all dancers use these words consistently and some use them interchangeably.

I am confused as to precisely what Boyd intends the terms Hold and Position to mean. The words do not seem to be used consistently. Some of the hold definitions seem to conform to the normal meanings of hold, and allow a variety of positions, which need to be explicitly stated in the scripts. But in other cases the definition of a hold explicitly includes information about the position. In some cases the definition of a hold seems to say more about position than hold. (This is the reverse of the scenario in the ISTD publications, where the definition of a position may mandate a particular hold.)

This approach can be confusing since some of the different holds defined use the same hand hold. For example, under this approach a script may indicate a series of changes from 'closed hold' to 'promenade hold' to 'counter promenade hold' to 'closed extended hold'. The beginner naturally wonders how their hand positions change. They don't – the positions do. These 4 holds all use the same hand holds, but they implicitly specify different positions.

The glossary (Section 1, p9-13) does not define Position, other than 'Position of feet' which is a different concept. The glossary entry for 'Holds' reads 'There is a wide variety of the manner in

which the Man & Lady hold each other in New Vogue dancing.’ Unfortunately this is more an observation than a clear definition.

The most relevant sections are:

- Section 1, p15-18, ‘Holds use in New Vogue Sequence Dancing’, which provides definitions of the holds.
- The drawings scattered through the book. See Section 1, p18, p24; Section 3, p17; Section 4, p40, p60.

Here are some of the ‘holds’ with comments about whether they are just holds or also say something about position.

## **2.1 Closed hold**

The definition (Section 1, p15) includes a particular position. The diagram (Section 4, p60) is consistent.

## **2.2 Closed extended hold**

The definition (Section 1, p15) includes a particular position. The diagram (Section 4, p60) is consistent.

## **2.3 Double hold**

The definition (Section 1, p15) refers only to hold. It can occur in three positions: facing each other, promenade position and counter promenade position. The diagram (Section 4, p40) is consistent in that it recognises the need for the label to state both the hold and position, the hold by itself being incomplete data.

## **2.4 Single hold**

The definition (Section 1, p16) refers only to hold. It allows a large variety of position.

## **2.5 Open Extended Hold**

The definition (Section 1, p16) says more about position than hold. In fact it does not even uniquely define the hold, since it still needs to be clarified whether left to right or right to left hold is used. The diagrams (Section 4, p60) are consistent.

It is not clear to me what is achieved by introducing the term Open Extended Hold rather than using terms already available in the ISTD books, such as Right to Left Hold, Right Side Position.

## **2.6 Shadow hold**

The definition (Section 1, p16) refers only to hold.

It can occur in two positions: right shadow position and left shadow position. These terms are also defined in this section, and the definitions refer only to position. These two positions are also defined consistently in the glossary (Section 1, p12), though note that the abbreviations suggested there, RSP and LSP, don’t appear to be used in any of the scripts in NVSD. Most authors seem to use these abbreviations to denote Right Side Position and Left Side Position.

However, the drawings provided (Section 4, p60) are inconsistent. They are labelled ‘right shadow hold’ and ‘left shadow hold’, terms which have not been defined. To be consistent with the definitions they should probably be labelled ‘shadow hold, right shadow position’ and ‘shadow hold, left shadow position’.

Some scripts also use the undefined ‘right shadow hold’ and ‘left shadow hold. For example, Canadian Three Step, Bars 1-8; Tangoette, bars 9, 11, 13; Excelsior Schottische, Bars 5, 9; Charmaine, Bars 1-9; Pride of Erin, bars 1-16; Empress Waltz, bars 1-16; Parma Waltz, bars 1-20.

## **2.7 Semi-shadow hold**

The definition (Section 1, p17) refers only to hold. Both right and left semi-shadow hold are defined. There are several variations described, but in the most basic form of right semi-shadow hold, the man’s left hand holds the lady’s left and his right hand is on her right hip. Left semi-shadow hold reverses this.

The note in the heading indicates these 2 holds can occur in right shadow position and left shadow position, with no restriction mentioned, so presumably both holds can occur in both positions.

However, the curious thing is that while left semi-shadow hold is defined, it does not appear to be used in any of the scripts. It appears that in the original printing bar 3 of Tangoette was alleged to be ‘LEFT SEMI-SHADOW (Tango) HOLD’, but a hand-written amendment corrects ‘left’ to ‘right’. The effect of inserting ‘(Tango)’ in the hold name does not appear to be defined.

In fact, I’ve never encountered any sequence dances using left semi-shadow hold, which probably explains why many authors just refer to ‘right semi-shadow hold’ as ‘semi-shadow hold’.

## **2.8 Promenade Hold**

The definition (Section 1, p17) says more about position than hold. The hold is effectively the same hold as closed hold, but in promenade position, which is also defined here.

Promenade position is defined consistently in the glossary, (Section 1, p12).

The diagram (Section 1, p18) is consistent.

However, the scripts use other related by undefined terms.

Cassius Quickstep and Barn Dance start in ‘PROMENADE POSITION HOLD’ and Tango Terrific starts in ‘PROMENADE POSITION (Tango) HOLD’. Gypsy Tap uses ‘Promenade Hold (Prom. Position)’.

Since promenade hold was defined to require promenade position, terms like ‘promenade position hold’ and ‘Promenade Hold (Prom. Position)’ seems to be tautologies. Or should the reference to ‘Promenade position hold’ be taken to mean that promenade hold can occur in other positions too, contradicting the definition? This seems unlikely. If we remove the requirement for promenade position from the definition of promenade hold there isn’t enough left to make the hold worth defining!

## **3 Foot Position Diagram**

This diagram appears at Section 1, p8. The shows, on a single diagram, foot positions arising from movement of either foot. The position lines emanate from the point midway between the feet. This gives the impression that if you start with feet closed together and step ‘left foot forward’ the foot must travel slightly to the right.

All other attempts at foot position diagrams that I have found only show the positions for one foot and the position lines start from the closed position of that foot. That is, if the diagram was showing position for the left foot the position lines would emanate from the left foot in its closed position. Such diagrams indicate that if you start with feet closed together and step ‘left foot forward’ the foot will travel directly forward.

The other advantage of only showing movements for one foot on the diagram is that it allows the diagram to also clearly show the position of moves like ‘left foot forward and across’. NVSD does

not include this movement on the diagram, so it never clearly explains how far across it intends this movement to be.

## 4 Alignments vs Directions

On Section 1 page 44, there is a sample exam question asking: “What is meant by alignments and directions?”

The answer supplied ends:

‘DIRECTION Terms are used when the Body is held obliquely to Feet, as for Promenade and Counter Promenade Steps. See also Tangoette, La Bamba.’

Promenade and Counter Promenade *steps*, don’t seem to be defined. Could this mean any steps taken in Promenade or Counter Promenade *hold*?

No. On Section 1 p17 it is stated that in promenade hold ‘the feet and body are normally held in the same line’, not oblique to each other.

Might it refer to forward walks when in one of these positions?

I don’t think so. If the dancers are in promenade position, the man aligned Diagonal to Wall, the lady Diagonal to Centre and they are walking along Line of Dance, the body alignment is usually the same as the feet, not oblique to it.

The glossary definition of ‘Promenade Position’ on Section 1, p12 notes that:

‘in the maximum “Loosely Held” Promenade Position the Feet face the Line of Dance whilst the Bodies are turned slightly inwards towards each other.’ The definition of “Loosely Held” Promenade Position on Section 1 p17 is consistent.

So perhaps Promenade Steps was meant to refer to Loosely Held Promenade Position. But if that was what is meant, why refer to Tangoette and La Bamba, neither of which seem to use a Promenade Position, Loosely Held or otherwise?

The distinguishing feature of Tangoette and La Bamba presumably referred to is that the ‘Alignment/Direction’ column contains many references of the form ‘Face LOD: Move to Wall’. However, these descriptions seem to occur when the body is in the same alignment as the feet, not when they are oblique to each other.

## 5 Canadian Three Step

Section 2, pp53-55

In Australia, Canadian Three Step is a social dance rather than an examination dance. Social dances tend to exhibit significantly more variation in practice than do examination dances. But even for a social dance, the amount of variety seen in this dance is quite high.

### 5.1 Bars 9-12

The NVSD script has bars 9-12 in promenade position. I’ve yet to see this version performed. At social dances, it is more common for Shadow Hold to be retained throughout bars 1 to 10, bars 7 to 10 being in Right Shadow Position. Bars 11 and 12 are used for a smooth transition to Closed Hold. The other oddity here is that the three steps forward starting at bar 9 are usually all done with footwork ‘H’. Technically, this means that Canadian Three Step as usually performed does not contain a legal three step!

## 5.2 Bars 13-14

In the most common variation the man walks directly backwards on bars 11 and 12, the lady turning  $\frac{1}{2}L$ , so that at the end of bar 12 the man faces LOD. Bars 13 and 14 consist of 4 slow steps, forward for man, back for lady. Bars 15 and 16 are then similar to the NVSD script, with some extra turn at the start of bar 15 to 'catch up' to this script.

The less common variation has bars 13 to 16 as for the NVSD script. To achieve the correct starting position for this, over bars 11 and 12 the man turns  $\frac{1}{4}R$  and the lady  $\frac{1}{4}L$ .

## 5.3 Other minor variations

There is variation in how the turn required over bars 11 and 12 is achieved, the extremes being a gradual turn over the whole 2 bars, and a very sudden turn very near the end of bar 12.

There is also some variety in the starting foot for both the man and lady at the start of bar 5, and for the lady at the start of bar 9.

## 6 Barclay Blues

Section 3, pp22-25.

On the DanceSport web site, there is a document called "Standardised General Competition Technique For The Newvogue Championship Dances" date November 1999, available at:

<http://www.dancesport.org.au/competition/newvogue.pdf>

It seems to be attempting to define the correct practice for DanceSport competitions for various parts of sequence dances where there is variety in practice. It includes a reference to the timing used in a section of Barclay Blues starting at bar 12. DanceSport's preferred timing matches NVSD.

So, given that the document mentions many dances, why am I bothering to single out Barclay Blues for mention here? Essentially because at social dances in the Sydney region, bars 12 to 14 are *consistently* performed with a timing different to that in the NVSD script. Occasionally at social dances a couple can be seen attempting the NVSD timing, and not only do they appear totally out of synch with everyone else on the floor, they also risk causing collisions! The differences are significant and very noticeable. So, if you are going to attend to social dances you might want to know the common practice as well as the official version.

Here is what I think is happening.

NVSD		Step Number	Common practice	
Bar	Count/Rhythm		Count/Rhythm	Bar
12	1 Q	31	1 Q	12
	& &	32	2 Q	
	2 Q	33	34 S	
	34 S	34	1 Q	
13	12 S	35	2 Q	13
	3 Q	36	3 Q	
	& &	37	4 Q	
	4 Q	38	12 S	
14	12 S	39	3 Q	14
	34 S	40	4 Q	

The common practice seems to be a simplification of the NVSD version, all the steps being placed on whole beats, eliminating the '&' timings.

## 7 Lucille Waltz

Section 4, pp1-7.

The 'Positions of Feet' column uses some undefined terms.

Man Bar 29, Step 41: 'LF back and leftwards', should probably be 'LF diagonally back'.

Man Bar 31, step 47: 'LF back & slightly to left' should probably be 'LF back & slightly to side'.

At social dances it is common for the man's turn on bar 28 to be increased to  $\frac{3}{8}R$ , the Lady's reduced to  $\frac{1}{8}L$ . That is, the man ends Diagonal to Wall Against LOD and the lady ends Diagonal to Centre, which are the normal positions for commencing the Viennese Waltz Natural Turn.

## 8 References

Boyd (1994)	Boyd, Neville. 'New Vogue Sequence Dancing & the Viennese Waltz' 1994. ISBN 0 9591272 6 7
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## 9 History

Version 1.0	14 May 2005	Initial Release.
Version 1.1	13 Aug 2006	Minor wording clarifications and fixed outdated cross-references.

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