

# CONGO

(Haitian)

One of the few couple dances known in the island of Haiti, Congo was originally a part of the Voodoo cults and ritual dances based primarily upon African tradition. However, in more recent times, Congo has lost its religious significance and has been taken over as a country folk dance, regularly seen at local parties or *bambouches*. It is interesting to note that Haitian folk or ethnic dance, although uninhibited in body movement, is rarely performed in the regular ballroom position used in the United States and Europe, as it is regarded as immoral to dance too close to one's partner! Arranged and presented by Lisa and Walter Lekis, who learned the dance during their residence and study in the Caribbean area.

MUSIC: Record: Monogram M 880 "Panama 'M Tombe" — Supertone MLP-810.

FORMATION: Couplpes in single single, both facing LOD, M three or four ft. behind W. W holds handkerchief in R and twirls it twd. M as she looks at him over her L shoulder; her free hand holds skirt. M follows, arms slightly oustretched, elbows curved.

STEPS: *Position:* R ft. is crossed in front of L, toes pointing outward; L toe (pointing outward) behind R heel. The step may be done with either ft. moving fwd., bwd., or sdwd. Relative position of ft. does not change unless the step is done to the L, in which case L ft. is placed in front of R with wt. on L.  
*Basic step:* Step (flat) in indicated direction on fwd. ft. (taking wt.) (ct. 1), step rear ft. to position and momentarily take wt. on toe of rear ft. (ct. &). This is a smooth gliding movement. There are two basic steps to each meas. The basic step is used throughout entire dance with changes from R to L as noted.

MUSIC 2/4	PATTERN
Measures	
12	<b>INTRODUCTION</b> M and W flirt with each other.
1-8	<b>I. PURSUIT, TURNS AND BACK AWAY</b> a. Beginning R. M and W move fwd. CCW with 16 basic steps. W twirls handkerchief twd. M as she looks at him over her L shoulder. M follows her with arms slightly outstretched (elbows rounded). On step 12 M begins to move closer to W very slowly so that at the end of step 16 they have assumed bwd. skating position <sup>†</sup> .
1-8	b. Beginning L, in bwd. skating position, describe one full turn L (CCW) with 8 basic steps. Shift W to M L side and beginning R dance one full turn R (CW) with 8 basic steps.
1-4	c. With R ft. in front, move bwd. away from partner (W facing center, M back to center) with 8 basic steps. Finish about 3 ft. apart.
1-2	<b>II. INDIVIDUAL TURNS</b> Beginning R (R in front) each turn R (CW) with 3 basic steps and bow (with L ft. extended fwd.), body bent over while hands come together and sweep around.
3-4	Beginning L. each turn L with 3 basic steps and bow (with R extended).
5-8	Repeat action of Fig. II, meas. 1-4.
1-8	<b>III. DIAMONDS</b> Both face LOD during entire diamond pattern. a. Beginning M L, W R, move diagonally fwd. away from partner with 16 basic steps. At the same time both arms are raised straight out to sides, to straight overhead position on cts. 1, 2, 3, 4, and come down to sides on next four cts. Arms move up and down twice on the 16 steps. Continuing M L, W R, move diagonally fwd. twd. partner with 16 basic steps (making a diamond formation).
(repeated) 1-8	b. Repeat diamond formation moving away from partner with 8 basic steps, and twd. partner with 8 basic steps. Arms move up and down once on each group of 8 basic steps.
1-8	<b>IV. CROSSED-HANDS TURN</b> Face partner, hands crossed and joined. Beginning M L, D R, lean away from partner and turn one complete circle CCW with 16 basic steps.
1-8 (repeated)	Reverse, turning once CW, with 16 steps.

## V. AWAY AND TOGETHER

- 1-4 Beginning M L, W R, facing LOD, move directly sdwd. away from partner (M twd. center, W away) with 8 basic steps. Arms are extended outwd. to sides. M and W rise on toes on steps 2, 4, 6 and 8.
- 5-8 Continuing with M L, W R in front, move directly sdwd. twd. partner with W crossing slightly in front of M.
- 1-8 Repeat action of Fig. V, meas. 1-8. Finish facing partner, M back to center.
- (repeated)

## VI. CROSS OVER

- 1-2 M and W both beginning R, dance 2 short balance steps (stepping R over L, L over R.)
- 3-4 Join R elbows and describe a half circle (CW) to exchange places with 4 basic steps.
- 5-6 Beginning L repeat action of Fig. VI, meas. 1-2.
- 7-8 Hook L elbows and return CCW to original place with 4 basic steps.
- 1-8 Repeat action of Fig. VI, meas. 1-8.
- (repeated)

## VII. DISHRAG

- Join both hands straight across and move LOD during this *entire* fig.
- 1-2 Beginning M L, W R, (M back to center) move LOD with 4 basic steps. Arms are slowly swung LOD (to almost overhead) with heads following arm motion.
- 3-4 Continue LOD with 4 basic steps, swinging arms RLOD.
- 5-8 With 8 basic steps, swing arms LOD and make a full dishrag turn, both hands joined.
- 1-8 Repeat action of Fig. VII, meas. 1-8.
- (repeated)

## VIII. TURNS

- M face LOD, W back to LOD; M and W join R. Handkerchief is in W R and falls between the partners. (Keep R joined throughout this fig.)
- 1-2 Beginning R, W turns R and bows with 4 basic steps. M free arm outstretched. As W bows to M over their joined R, he brings L arm down in front of body in a bow to her. Still beginning on R ft. W turns L and bows with 4 basic steps.
- 3-4 Repeat action of Fig. VIII, meas. 1-4.
- 5-8 Repeat action of Fig. II, meas. 1-8.
- 1-8 Repeat action of Fig. II, meas. 1-8.
- (repeated) Hold bow to end of music.