



# The United States Army Field Band



## MI ALMA LATINA THE TANGO: AN INTRODUCTION TO BASIC STEPS

When teaching the tango to students, it is not immediately necessary that they dance with partners—it is more important that they grasp the concept of moving to the music, and then that they add the character of the music to their movements.

1. Begin by walking around the room, stepping only on the strong beats. If it helps students for you to clap on 1 and 3, do so.
2. Divide students into two circles and continue walking on strong beats. Inner circle should walk clockwise, outer circle should walk counter-clockwise.
3. Now, on beat 4 of each measure, bring feet together, and skip a measure before moving again. Count several measures worth so students can get the hang of it.

BEAT	MOVEMENT
1	STEP
2	REST
3	STEP
4	STEP
1	REST
2	REST
3	REST
4	REST

4. Cue music to 1:00 of *La Cumparsita/Por Una Cabeza*; have students do the new pattern for about 30 seconds.
5. Try it again—this time, have one circle do the pattern while moving forwards and the other do it while moving backwards. If there is time, switch!
6. There are several ways to vary the pattern if students catch on quickly:
  - Skip the measure of rest and move continuously.
  - Make beats 3 and 4 more like a “ball-change” or rocking step.
  - If students are brave enough (and did well moving backwards), let them try the dance as partners! They can use traditional “tango arms” for this.
7. At some point, make sure to ask the students about the music’s character. How can their movements reflect this character? Encourage them to be creative (while still being appropriate!)