

## Count and Dance: Sardana

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### Abstract

The Sardana is a dance from Catalunya, in the northeastern part of Spain. The dancers hold hands, forming a ring called *Sardana* as well. The music has two sections, called *curts* and *llargs*. The dancers need to distribute the steps in order to finish the dance all together at the same time and with the correct foot. To do this, they use Sardana counting and distribution rules.

### Introduction

The Sardana is a dance from Catalunya, in the northeastern part of Spain. The dancers hold hands, forming a ring called a *Sardana*, as well. The music band that plays sardanas is the *Cobla*. They normally play in open spaces like parks or public squares during the main Catalan festivals. The instruments of the Cobla are nine wind instruments, one bass, and a little drum called a tamborí.

### Dancing

Anyone can be a Sardana dancer, as long as they know the two basic steps. They can join the Sardana ring at any moment, but they must know that, in a sardana couple, the man on a woman's left side is considered her partner. A new person can only join on the right side of a woman, or on the left side of a man. In every Sardana ring there is always one dancer in charge. Their task is the following: they must know the number of musical measures of the *curts* section and the *llargs* section of the specific sardana (to do that, they can ask the Cobla—the music band that plays Sardanas—ahead of time). During the Sardana, he or she is going to announce it when it is time for the *llargs*. Also towards the end, he or she is going to give instructions aloud and tell everybody the steps to play in order to finish the dance correctly.

### The Steps

The Sardana has two different sections: *curts* and *llargs*.

**Curts.** We dance holding hands, with the arms down. There are two steps, corresponding to two musical measures, each having two beats. The dancer starts with both feet together. To explain the steps, it is helpful to count them.

- Step 1: Move the left foot forward briefly pointing it toward the ground, with weight on the right foot and no weight on the left foot. Take it back next to the right, placing weight on the left.

- Step 2 or Change: Move the right foot slightly back placing weight on the right. Cross the left foot in front of the right taking the weight onto the left. Afterwards, this the steps are reversed, in step 1 the right foot is moved forward, and so on. Every 4 measures, we repeat exactly the same steps.

**Llarg.** We dance holding hands, raising the arms up to the shoulders. There are four steps, corresponding to four musical measures, each having two beats. The *llargs* are an expansion of the *curts*, as follows.

- Step 1: Move the left foot forward, then take it back next to the right (as in Step 1 above).
- Step 2: Move the right foot forward, then take it back next to the left.
- Step 3: Move the left foot forward, then take it back next to the right (again, as in Step 1 above).
- Step 4 or Change: Move the right foot slightly back, then cross the left foot in front of the right foot (as in Step 2 or Change above).

Following Steps 1-4, the steps are reversed to give Steps 5-8; for instance, in Step 5 the right foot is moved forward, and so on. Every 8 measures, the same steps are repeated.

### Counting and distributing the *llargs*

The *llargs* section traditionally has an odd number of measures between 63 and 95, inclusive. To determine how to end the *llargs* section, we divide the number of measures by 8, because, as just seen, this is the number of measures that takes a whole round starting with the left and then with the right. We obtain a residue that can be either 1, 3, 5 or 7. The number of measures that have residue 1 are: 65, 73, 81 and 89. With residue 3 are: 67, 75, 83 and 91. With residue 5 are: 69, 77, 85 and 93. With residue 7 are: 63, 71, 79, 87 and 95.

There are two types of ending steps, a *dos* and a *tres*, that are used to end a *Sardana*; these steps last two and three measures, respectively. Whenever we have residue 1 or 5, we do a *dos* and a *tres* at the end (for a total of 5 measures); in the case of residue 1, the last *llarg* is eliminated. Whenever the residue is 3 or 7, we do two *dosos* and one *tres* (for a total of 7 measures) at the end; in the case of residue 3, the last *llarg* is eliminated.

The ending steps involve the following.

- A *dos*: move foot forward and back in the first measure, and then join the feet together by moving the other foot. In the case we have to link two or more *dosos*, we need a Change step in between.
- A *tres*: move foot forward and back in the first measure, move the other foot forward and back in the second measures, and then join the feet.

### References

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