

## El Bale

(Guam)

**Comment:** Unfortunately, the historic significance and origin of El Bale has been lost, but this dance enjoys great popularity in Guam to this day. It is especially popular in this island's public schools. The dancers of El Bale use sticks, usually round and about 2 feet long, with which they strike the floor and the sticks of their partner. Because the dancers must strike the sticks on every beat of the music, it is a real challenge to their dexterity and sense of rhythm. Our interpretation of El Bale has been adapted from a similar dance in Harris, Pittman, and Waller's book, *Dance Awhile*. It will be describe as performed by the Lariats.

**Formation:** Any number of couples facing the audience.

**Basic Step:** Walking two-step.

**Measure**      **Pattern**

### Part I

1-8      **Entrance:** Dancers walk on stage from opposite sides, taking each step on every beat of the music starting with the R foot. Dancers strike their sticks on the floor on every odd beat of the music, and cross and strike their own sticks on every even beat of the music. Dancers should end side by side, facing the audience.

### Part II

1      1      Kick R leg forward, cross and strike own sticks under the leg.  
2      Straighten, cross and strike own sticks below the waist.  
3-4      Repeat action counts 1-2, using the left leg.  
5      Straighten, cross and strike sticks behind hips.  
6      Cross and strike sticks in front of body.  
7      Partners strike inside sticks, one dancer making a half-turn away as if in fear of the other dancer.  
8      Hold this count.  
2-4      Repeat action of counts 1-8 three times.

### Part III

1      1      Partner's left shoulders together - step on L, swing R leg fwd, strike sticks together under lifted leg.  
2      Step on R foot, cross and strike own sticks.  
3      Partner's strike inside sticks.  
4      Cross and strike own sticks.  
2      1      Step L, partners should be Back to Back. Partners strike each other's sticks out to the side.  
2      Close right foot to L, cross and strike own sticks.  
3      Step L. pass partner, strike inside stick of partner.  
4      Close R to L, cross and strike own sticks.  
3-4      Repeat Measures 1-2, beginning with right shoulders together, and using opposite footwork.  
5-8      Repeat Measures 1-4, of Part III.

Part IV

Walk-Strike Circle. Dancers circle CCW in a semicrouched position, using soft steps following the natural rhythm of the beats. 16 counts should return them to the original positions.

- 1 Strike sticks to the ground, begin a slow pivot to the R.
- 2 Cross and strike own sticks.
- 3 Partners should have pivoted one-quarter turn; facing the partner, cross and strike right sticks while continuing to pivot to the R.
- 4 Partners should have completed  $\frac{1}{2}$  turn now, and cross and strike own sticks.
- 2 Repeat measure 1, pivoting to the L.
- 3-8 Repeat measures 1-2, Part IV, three times.

Part V

- 1 1 Kneel strike. Partner on the R kneels. (Partner kneeling called A, partner standing called B). B swings L stick behind A's legs as A steps slightly to the left and swings R stick between legs to contact B's stick.
- 2 Cross and strike own sticks.
- 3 Partners strike inside sticks.
- 4 Cross and strike own sticks.
- 2 1 A crosses and strikes own sticks, B pretends to strike A on the head.
- 2 A strikes own sticks on the ground, B crosses and strikes own sticks.
- 3 A pretends to strike B in the back, B crosses and strikes own sticks.
- 4 A crosses and strikes own sticks, B bends and strikes own sticks on the ground.
- 3-4 Repeat Measures 1-2, Part V.
- 5-8 Repeat Measures 1-4, Part V, with A standing and B kneeling.
- 9-16 Repeat Measures 1-8, Part III.
- 17-24 Repeat Measures 1-8, Part IV.

Part VI

- 1 Cross sticks without striking.
- 2 Bow from the waist, keeping the sticks crossed and facing the audience.