

PANDOGO

Ghanaian

PRONUNCIATION: PAHN-doh-goh

TRANSLATION: Highlife

SOURCE: Dick Oakes learned this dance from members of the AMAN Folk Ensemble (aka, AMAN International Music and Dance Company) of Los Angeles, California, and subsequently taught the dance to folk dancers around the United States. The Ashante drum specialist, Kwasi Badu, formerly of the University of Ghana dance performance group and instructor at the UCLA Music Department from the late 1960s to the early 1970s, taught motifs of the dance to AMAN for one of their performances.

BACKGROUND: During the colonial period from the latter part of the 19th Century to the mid-20th Century, the West African local cultures were strongly influenced by the European colonizers. The amalgam of European social dance and the indigenous folk dance inevitably arose and is called by the general term "Highlife." Dances of this genre occur in a variety of tempos and rhythms – the common denominator is that Western instruments are combined with African instruments to get a new hybrid music not much different in many cases from types evolved under similar circumstances in the West Indies.

"Pandogo," the version described below, is a village form of Highlife from southern Ghana that is composed principally of elements from the folk dances of Ewe, Ga, and Ashanti tribes, with an admixture of Yoruba elements. Highlife is a musical genre that originated in Ghana in the 1900s and spread to Sierra Leone, Nigeria, and other West African countries by 1920. It is very popular in Liberia and all of English-speaking West Africa, although little has been produced in other countries due to economic challenges brought on by war and instability. Highlife is characterized by jazzy horns and multiple guitars which lead the band.

The music on the recommended record is played by the AMAN Folk Ensemble and was learned from Kwasi Badu. The stress on drums and absence of European instruments is characteristic of the village situation in Ghana.

MUSIC: Festival Records (45 rpm) FR-4113

FORMATION: Individuals in a cir facing ctr, bent elbows about one hand's width fwd of ctr of sides, forearms approximately parallel to floor, index fingers loosely pointed fwd and down at floor.

METER/RHYTHM: 8/16. The rhythm is accented in a "bell pattern" of 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8 cts. The actions of the dance, however, occur principally on cts 1,3,5,7.

STEPS/STYLE:

BASIC STEP

LEGS: On straight L leg, touch R heel fwd, toe up (ct 1); step R next to L in place bending knees (ct 3); straighten R leg, touch L heel fwd, toe up (ct 5); step L next to R in place bending knees (ct 7).

ARMS: Hold hands loosely with forefingers extended, bent elbows about one hand's width fwd of ctr of sides of body, forearms approximately parallel to floor, forefingers pointing fwd and down: Bring L elbow bwd to ctr of side and point R forefinger approximately three feet in front of extended R ft (ct 1); return to neutral starting pos (ct 3); bring R elbow bwd to ctr of side and point L forefinger approximately three feet in front of extended L ft (ct 5); return to neutral starting pos (ct 7).

HEAD: Keeping head vertical, jut chin lightly fwd (ct 1); return to neutral pos (ct 2); repeat action of cts 1-2 three more times (cts 3-4, 5-6, 7-8).

TORSO: Drop R shldr while raising L shldr and thrust chest fwd while pulling shldrs bwd (ct 1); relax chest and shldrs while beginning to square shldrs (ct 2); square shldrs, thrust chest fwd while pulling shldrs bwd (ct 3); relax chest and shldrs while beginning to drop L shldr and raise R shldr (ct 4); drop L shldr while raising R shldr and thrust chest fwd while pulling shldrs bwd (ct 5); relax chest and shldrs while beg to square shldrs (ct 6); square shldrs, thrust chest fwd while pulling shldrs bwd (ct 7); relax chest and shldrs (ct 8).

SAWING

With ft together, place hands slightly in front of chest, palms flat and down, L hand directly over R but not touching: Drop R shldr, stretch arms fwd and down to R keeping L hand over R, and bend both knees (ct 1); return hands to original pos at start of Sawing, straighten knees but continue to keep shldr dropped (ct 2); repeat action of cts 1-2 three more times (cts 3-4, 5-6, 7-8). Repeat action of cts 1-8 but with L shldr dropped and sawing fwd and down to L for second "bell pattern."

PRAYING

With hands in prayer pos and making slight cycle motion fwd and bwd, do same body action as in Sawing (either going down to squat pos or back up to standing pos).

MIXING

With knees bent in squat pos, and with R elbow diag out to R and R hand held loosely straight up with R elbow bent, do a circular "mixing" motion under R elbow with L hand. Repeat to L with opp armwork for second "bell pattern."

DRUM BEATING - SMALL

LEGS: Step R,L,R in place (cts 1,3,5); raise L beside R ankle (ct 7). Repeat to L with opp ftwk for second "bell pattern."

ARMS: Place hands slightly in front of chest, palms flat and down but separated on same plane: Lower L hand while raising R hand (ct 1); reverse hand pos (ct 3); repeat action of cts 1-3 (cts 5-7).

HEAD: Same as Basic Step but somewhat subdued.

TORSO: Same as Basic Step but somewhat subdued.

DRUM BEATING - LARGE

LEGS: Step R swd (ct 1); step L across in front of R (ct 3); step R swd (ct 5); kick L across R (ct 7). Repeat to L with opp ftwk for second "bell pattern."

ARMS: Continue as in Drum Beating - Small except that L hand crosses straight over front of body in line with the kicking L ft on ct 7 of first "bell pattern" and the L hand ALSO stretches out to the L when R ft crosses at end of second "bell pattern."

BIG CHICKEN

Feet apart, R shldr twd ctr, knees bent, torso leaning fwd, hands on thighs, elbows out: Thrust chest far fwd, shldrs and elbows bwd (ct 1); thrust upper back bwd, caving in chest, shldrs and elbows fwd (ct 2); repeat cts 1-2 three more times (cts 3-4, 5-6, 7-8). For second "bell pattern" pivot CW 1/2 turn on R ft and repeat action of the first "bell pattern." For third "bell pattern" povot CCW 1/2 turn on L ft and repeat action of the first "bell pattern."

FLYING CHICKEN

In same body pos as Big Chicken simply raise elbows out to side with hands straight fwd and parallel to floor, palms down, and do same torso action as Big Chicken.

SWIMMING

With ft together again and facing ctr, bend knees on cts 1,3,5,7 while arms alternate high overhead in a fwd-down-back-up motion (thus alternating first one "bell pattern" with R hand and one with L hand in exaggerated overhead swim stroke with hands fluttering slowly). (When scooting twd ctr, keep ft together and travel only small distance on each of cts 1,3,5,7).

WAVING CHICKEN

In same body pos as Big Chicken except that R hand is held up, palm twd ctr, wave hand slightly to R and back from wrist on cts 1,3,5,7. Pivoting as in Big Chicken, reverse armwork.

NOTE: Waving Chicken is done ONLY twd ctr!

POSE

Stop action in WAVING CHICKEN pose and stamp R on what would be ct 1 of the fourth "bell pattern."

NOTE: These figures as described may vary from individual to individual and should only be taken as approximations of actual movements and as refresher notes when learned from a qualified instructor. The following sequence should not be considered definitive in any way; rather, it was arranged for ease in learning and performing by large groups of people. The movements and steps have been culled from a reservoir of many possible combinations available to the native dancer.

MEAS	MOVEMENT DESCRIPTION
1-2	INTRODUCTION - 2 "bell patterns" (no action).
	I. FIGURE ONE
1-10	Basic Steps.
	II. FIGURE TWO
1-4	Sawing in place.
5-8	Praying going down.
9-12	Mixing staying down.
13-16	Praying coming up.
17-20	Basic Steps in place.
	III. FIGURE THREE
1-4	Drum Beating - Small in place.
5-8	Drum Beating - Large moving swd.
9-12	Drum Beating - Small in place.
13-16	Basic Steps in place.
	IV. FIGURE FOUR
1-4	Big Chicken moving in.
5-8	Big Chicken moving in for 2 and out for 2.
9-12	Big Chicken moving out.
13-16	Basic Steps in place.
	V. FIGURE FIVE
1-4	Swimming in place.

5-8	Swimming scooting fwd.
9-12	Swimming in place.
13-16	Basic Steps moving bwd.

VI. FIGURE SIX

1-4	Waving Chicken moving in only.
5-7	Basic Steps moving bwd.
8	Pose with wave and stamp R (R side twd ctr) ending dance.