

Name of dance: Espan

Pronunciation: ess-pahn

Place of origin: 19th century Russian ballrooms

Source of music: Folk Dancer CD #9, track 3 (*Kentucky Dance Foundation, archive of the Michael Herman's Folk Dancer record series*): 'Espan'

Learned from: Hendrik de Leeuw, 1965

About the dance: This is a couple dance from the repertoire of 19th century ballroom dances created in Russia by dancing masters of the time. These dances took on a popular life of their own as they spread through Russia, among Russian and Ukrainian immigrant populations, and among Ashkenazic Jews hailing from what was then Russian Empire. In catering to popular tastes, these dance masters created many dances 'in the style of' various countries and ethnicities. This particular dance was intended to be 'in the Spanish style', although it remains a Russian 19th century idea of what that style was.

Rhythm: 3/4

Formation: Couples stand initially facing each other in a large circle, men on the inside facing out, women on the outside facing in, man's R hand holding woman's L, with free hands held out toward the direction of dance (CCW in the large circle).

Direction	Measure	Step
		<u>Introduction:</u>
	4.	Wait.
		<u>Figure I:</u>
♂→	1	Man: turning CCW to face away from partner and swinging held hands forward to lead toward direction of travel, step on L in LOD (ct. 1), hop on L in LOD while clicking R foot to L in the air (ct. 2), land from the hop on L (ct. 3).
	2	Repeat Measure 1 with reverse footwork, turning CW to face partner and continuing to travel LOD. Held hands swing back away from direction of travel, while free hand remains extended to one's L.
♀→		Woman: Repeat man's steps in mirror image, traveling in the same LOD, and turning first CW to face away from him, then CCW to face him.
	3	Man: Still facing partner and holding her L hand with your R with arms extended to the sides, step on L to L side in LOD (cts. 1,2), step on R next to L (ct. 3). Woman: Repeat man's steps with reverse footwork, moving in LOD.
	4.	Repeat Measure 3.
	8.	Repeat Measures 1-4. On the last count 3 of Measure 8, man does

not put weight on his R foot, but the woman does put weight on her L. As a result, both enter the next figure with R feet free, and dance it with the **same** footwork, rather than with opposite footwork as in this Figure I.

Direction	Measure	Step
<u>Figure II (Trading Places):</u>		
♂↓↑	1-2	Man: Facing partner and taking her other hand (with hands still held apart), pause, rocking a bit back on standing L (cts. 1,2), step toward partner on R while bringing held hands together and up between you (ct. 3), pause, beginning to rock back away from partner (cts. 1,2), step back away from partner, bringing held hands back down and apart (ct. 3).
♀↑↓		Woman: Repeat man's steps for Measures 1-2. (Note: Woman is now using the same footwork as the man, not reverse footwork)
♂↓ ↓	3-4	Man: Repeat Measures 1-2, but on ct. 3 step toward partner on R and pivot 180° CW on ball of R foot to face the other way (men now face center). The rest of the step remains the same.
♀↑ ↑		Woman: Repeat man's steps for Measures 3-4, using ct. 3 to also pivot 180° CW on ball of R foot to face away from center.
	5-8	Repeat Measures 1-4 to return to original places.
<u>Figure III (Solo Turns and Sashay):</u>		
♂←	1-2	Man: Releasing partners hands and taking hold of one's own hands behind one's back, take 6 waltzing steps to turn one full turn CW while traveling in RLOD (CW in the big circle), stepping R (ct. 1), L (ct. 2), R (ct. 3), L (ct. 1), R (ct. 2), L (ct. 3). End facing out toward the circle of woman.
♀→		Woman: Repeat man's footwork, but because you begin facing in, you travel in LOD (CCW in the big circle). You still pivot CW as you go, since you have also started on your R foot, and the pivot is toward the first stepping foot. You will end facing in toward the circle of men. Unlike the man, you do not place your hands behind your back while dancing solo. Instead, you use them to hold up your 19 th century skirts.
		<i>Note: This step takes partners far away from each other; since the men's circle rotates CW and the women's circle rotates CCW.</i>
♂←	3-4	Man: Step on R to R side (cts. 1,2), step on L next to R (ct. 3), step on R to R side (cts. 1,2), pause (ct. 3).

♀→

5-6

Woman: Repeat Measures 3-4 of the man's footwork.
Repeat Measures 1-4 with reverse footwork and direction, ending facing original partner.

Figure IV:
Repeat Figure II.

From here, the dance returns to the beginning.

dance notes by Erik Bendix