

La Farandole

Music: Victor Record 21635A may be used.

ORIGIN - As the "provençal" name "Falandoulo" indicates, la Farandole, which is still danced in the northern part of Provence, originally came from Greece and uses a chain formation typical of Greek folk dances.

There are some 42 different Farandole steps, each one requiring a great deal of agility on the part of the performers. Out of these 42 steps, each locality chooses 3 or 4. La Farandole described here is known as La "TARASCAISE" because the steps are those danced in or around Tarascon.

In the past, La Farandole was only danced by men, probably because of the strenuous jumps, kicks and speed of the dance, but, at present, the more agile women of the community frequently take their place in the chain.

PRESENTATION - A minimum of 12 dancers is required, many more can take part, depending on the dancing space available.

A chain of dancers is formed with men and women alternating. The best male dancer is chosen to lead the chain. His bent left arm is held, waist high, in front of him. He takes in his R hand the L hand of the woman next to him; she takes in her right hand the L hand of the next man and so on

The last man should also be a good dancer as his part in the dance is almost as important as the leader's.

The dancers stand in such a way that the back of each dancer is slightly turned to the next one in the chain. Keeping this position is very important, especially during the execution of the "steps".

La Farandole is divided into "steps" which last the first 3 measures of the tune and "evolutions" which take up the remaining measures of the tune and a full repetition of the tune.

Starting with the left foot and walking with short, springy, rapid steps 1,2-1,2 - in time with the brisk marching tempo of the music, the chain of dancers enters onto the stage, following direction of arrows:

All arms swing together forward and up, then down, to keep time with the marching. The chain circles the stage and by the end of the tune should be placed to form a half-circle, facing the audience.

With the last note of the tune, dancers come to a stop, feet close together.

It is important that dancers should not be too far apart as straining of the arms will throw them off balance for the execution of the "steps."

These steps are somewhat like physical exercises done to music and require precision and perfect timing.

1st Steps - There is no pause in the music; immediately after the final chord, the tune is repeated from the beginning. Without moving from where they stand, counting 1-2-3-4, with each successive beat - as indicated on the score - and beginning with first note of the tune:

- 1 - Touch L toe to the ground, forward and to the L. At the same time jump on R foot.
- 2 - Bend L leg in front of R leg, about knee high. At the same time jump on R foot.
- 3 - Without touching the ground, swing L leg and bend it behind R leg. At the same time jump on R foot.
- 4 - Still without touching the ground, swing L foot outward to the side and bring together with the R foot. At the same time jump on R foot.

Repeat this whole figure 3 more times.

1st Evolution - Without any pause in the music, the 1st evolution follows the "steps".

The leader walks to the center of the stage and stands still during the "spiral evolution". Lightly holding the left hand of the woman next to him, he raises his right hand to allow her to circle behind and around him, the chain of dancers following her, and, as she continues circling around the leader, the chain is drawn into a spiral.

In forming the spiral, the dancers walk with brisk steps in time with the music and swing their arms until in the spiral.

As soon as the spiral is formed, the woman next to the leader turns to her left and circles in the reverse direction, permitting the chain of dancers to pass in succession between the leader and herself, under their upraised arms, until the spiral is unfolded.

The spiral unfolded, the leader moves once more to place chain in half-circle, facing audience as at the beginning of the dance.

With the last note of the tune dancers come to a stop, feet close together.

NOTE - The division of the time taken in forming the spiral, unwinding the spiral and regaining the half-circle position is rather flexible, depending on the size of the chain. By practicing, the whole evolution can be carried out smoothly during the length of music allotted for it, as explained at the beginning.

2nd STEPS - Without any pause, the tune is repeated from the beginning. Proceeding as for the 1st steps, the 2nd steps follow:

- 1 - Kick R leg forward and up, waist high. At the same time jump on L foot.
- 2 - Bring R foot back of the L, instep of R foot in line with heel of L foot. At the same time jump on L foot.
- 3 - Kick left leg sidewise, waist high. At the same time jump on R foot.
- 4 - Bring L foot beside R foot. At the same time jump on R foot.

Repeat this whole figure 3 more times.

2nd Evolution - Without any pause, the chain, starting with left foot, resumes walking, arms swinging. The leader moves to the center of the stage and stands still, lifting his R hand and the L hand of the woman next to him very high to form an arch.

The end man leads the chain under the arch and, turning to the left after passing under the arch, continues in a circle so that, when everyone but the leader has followed through, he again leads the chain under the arch.

When everyone has passed through for the second time, the leader resumes the lead and, moving in a circle, clockwise, again brings the chain to form a half-circle facing the audience.

With the last note of the tune, dancers come to a stop, feet together.

3rd STEPS - Without any pause, the tune is repeated from the beginning. Proceeding as for the 1st and 2nd steps, the 3rd steps follow:

- 1 - Place L heel on the ground, forward and to the L, toes up.
At the same time jump on right foot.
- 2 - Bring L leg in front of R leg so that the heel of L foot is touching toe of R foot. Knees are slightly bent. At the same time jump on R foot.
- 3 - Scissor fashion, move both legs sidewise in a jump to exchange position so that now the R leg is in front of the L leg with heel of R foot touching toe of L foot. Knees are slightly bent.
- 4 - Move both legs sidewise in a jump and bring feet back together in starting position.

Repeat this whole figure 3 more times.

3rd Evolution - Without any pause, the chain, starting with L foot, resumes walking, arms swinging.

The end man moves to the center of the stage, stands still, lifting his L hand and his companion's R hand very high to form an arch.

The leader leads the chain under the arch, and, turning to the right after passing under the arch, continues in a circle so that when everyone but the end man has followed through, he again leads the chain under the arch. This time he can turn to the left, and, starting skipping first on one foot, then the other, arms swinging, he leads the chain in a series of turns, snake-fashion, up and down the stage, the tempo of the music accelerating faster and faster till the dancers exit from the stage. The music is played as long as necessary during this final evolution since it is up to the leader to decide how many turns he will make.

IMPORTANT - For this dance it is essential to wear very low-heeled shoes. In completing the jumps forming part of the steps, the knee of the leg bearing the full weight of the body should be permitted to bend slightly in order to cushion the shock and preserve the balance.

Directions for playing the "Farandole"

The music must be played through 7 times altogether, without any pause between repetitions.

This is the way the music fits the dancing:

1st playing of the tune	-	entrance of the dancers
2nd & 3rd playing of the tune	-	1st "steps" and 1st evolution
4th & 5th playing of the tune	-	2nd "steps" and 2nd evolution
6th & 7th playing of the tune	-	3rd "steps" and 3rd evolution

It may be necessary to play the music an 8th time to insure ample time for the 3rd evolution and the exit of the dancers.

The same brisk march tempo, without any slowing or hurrying, must be observed throughout the dance.

Native instruments - The dancers are usually preceded by the musicians, each playing the "galoubet" and the "tambourin".

"The tambourin" is a drum with a small head and a very elongated body; it is carried suspended from the left arm of the player. The "galoubet" is somewhat similar to an oboe and is held in the left hand, leaving the right hand free for beating the "tambourin".