

LOS MATLACHINES DE SAN LUIS POTOSÍ
Mexico

Source: Taught to Susan Cashion by Artemio Posadas of San Luis Potosí. Danza traditionally danced in village of Tancanhitz in the Huasteca Potosina.

Pronunciation:

Record:

4/4 meter

The dance of the Matlachines of San Luis Potosí has its roots in the Huasteco Indian dances of thanksgiving to the earth and the statement of communal union within the village. Presently, the dance is more closely associated with the secular mestizo forms of bailes populares rather than maintaining its traditional status as a danza religiosa. It is possible that the partner relationships and pattern formations are imitations by the indigenous people of the Huasteca of the European contra dances and cuadrillas brought by the Spanish to the new world.

The dance brings the men and women in from opposing directions. They complete a series of formations together, and then separate once more to exit. The formations are called by a dance leader known as the cuatilde. He carries a stick in his left hand which is decorated with flowers and leaves (most likely a vegetation symbol). In his right hand he carries a machete (knife). The cuatilde signals the change of formations with tiny yells (gritos) which are answered by the male dancers. The men and women keep their focus down through the duration of the dance which creates the illusion of humility and earth reverence. When the women are not holding their partner's hand, they hold their arms across their waist.

The musical accompaniment is supplied by a violin and guitar called a huapanguera or guitarra quinta. It is played in 4/4 meter.

The men wear a camis and calzón blanco, white muslin shirt and pants. They may also wear one or two handkerchiefs, one around their neck, and the other around their head. The women wear a black, wrap-around skirt with seven pleats. At one time the skirt was ankle length, but in modern times it is worn mid-calf. The blouse is European in styling with a high neck and puffy sleeves. It is made of a shockingly bright color as orange or pink. She will wear a purse (bolsa) over one shoulder which is of white muslin (manta) and embroidered with brightly colored yarn. She also wears a quechquemitl of the same material as the purse. This poncho-like garment is embroidered with animal and flower motifs and with the star of quetzalcoatl, one of Mexico's ancient gods who is associated with the evening star (Venus). The women's hair is wound around a rodete, or hairpiece made of yarn. Both men and women go barefoot or wear huaraches (sandals).

LOS MATLACHINES DE SAN LUIS POTOSI (Continued)

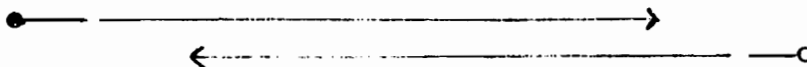
<u>Meas</u>	<u>Ct</u>	<u>BASIC STEP</u>
1	1-2	Hold
	3	Touch R ft in place.
	4	Step to R on R ft.
2	1	Step together or tiny cross over on L ft.
	2	Step to R on R ft.
	3	Touch L ft in place.
	4	Step to L on L ft.

Step alternates throughout the dance.

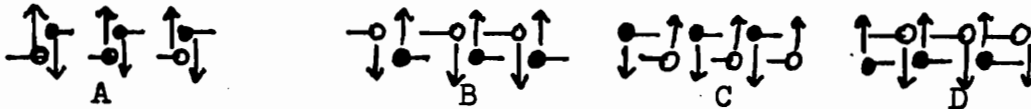
Spatial patterns: ♣ = Men ♡ = Women
Cuatilde dances freely in space and calls changes.

I. La Entrada (entrance)

Lines of women and men enter from opposite sides of the space. Both start the Basic Step on the R ft. When the leader of the M line is shldr to shldr with the last dancer in the W line, the fwd progression stops.

II. El Peine (comb)

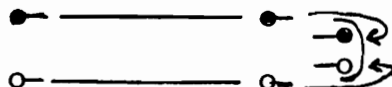
With the dancer opposite, cross back-to-back and return to place, then front-to-front and return to place. Continue this pattern until the cuatilde signals the next pattern.

III. Parejas (partners)

The W line changes direction to face the line of direction of the M line. Inside hands are joined and the double line progresses forward.

IV. El Puente (bridge)

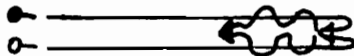
The leaders of the M and W turn twd each other to change direction, join the other hand and dance down through the column of dancers who lift their clasped hands and thus form a bridge. Each cpl follows the leader as they dance fwd in the space. When the first cpl reaches the tail of the line, they turn and join in the bridge formation.



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V. Las Olas (waves)

Basically the same formation as El Puente, except it is a passing under of the second cpls hands, and over the heads of the third cpl, under the fourth, over the fifth, etc.



VI. La Rueda (wheel)

The lead cpl creates a circle with the group. The W step to the inside to make a double circle. M and W circle join hands. M circle moves clasped hands up and over heads of W and lower hands to make front basket hold. M lift hands back over heads of W to recreate double circles. All drop hands.



VII. La Cadena (chain)

W turn R to face ptr. Ptrs take R hands and perform grand right-and-left around circle (W going CCW, M CW).



VIII. La Salida (exit)

M follow leader of M line off dancing space to side of area from which they entered. W dance a caracol (snail) pattern as the lead W winds W line around itself and then unwinds. W line exits opposite side than M.



Presented by Susan Cashion