

TARANTELLA MONTEVERGINE

(Mon-teh-VER-gee-neh)

Reprinted by permission of Rod La Farge - Originally published in ROSIN the BOW, Vol. 3, No. 8 in 1950. Description by Mr. La Farge with minor changes of wording.

MUSIC - RCA Record: Cindrella Tarantella No. 25-0127
 VERY FAST Special - Montevergine Tarantella (other side, Graziella Mazurka)

"We collected the steps for this dance by attending an endless procession of festas held by various Montevergine societies in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Connecticut. I would like to extend special thanks to members of these societies who were so helpful in persuading 'old time' festa dancers to demonstrate their favorite steps and figures, and who helped me through the difficulties of the dialect.

The festa celebrants dance many steps and figures to almost any tarantella music, but the recording we recommend fits the following set routine.

POSITION: Two couple facing, lady on the right of the man (own partner).

STEPS: A light running step on the ball of the foot except where otherwise specified.

FIGURE 1 - Join hands, shoulder level, and circle to the right with a shuffle (2 step - (16 counts). Repeat going left.

CHORUS Face own partner and perform 4 (leaping) pas-de-basque steps starting with a leap on the left foot swinging right over left (3) and snapping fingers with upraised arms swaying from side to side. (Castanets are often used instead of the finger snapping.) Now, without actually touching partners enclose each other with outstretched encircling arms; in this position they turn together (clockwise) with four fast walking (4) steps. This "don't touch them" embrace is called "sorellina" (little sister). Turn single (clockwise) out of each other's embrace, raising arms overhead. Repeat all with opposite partner. Total 32 counts.

FIGURE 2 - Right hand moulinet; 16 counts. Repeat left handed,

CHORUS

FIGURE 3 - Link right elbow with own partner, turn once around together clockwise. Reach behind the other man's back, and linking left elbow with opposite partner turn counterclockwise. Repeat all. Now turn own partner with right elbow once more, then all turn single, clockwise. Total 32 counts.

CHORUS

FIGURE 4 - Facing opposite partners, the men back the ladies until the men can pass back to back (as in dos-a-dos). The ladies then walk forward, the men backwards, the couples thus exchanging places. 8 counts. Face own partner and repeat manoeuvre. Repeat all. Total 32 counts. The polka step is used in this figure and the arms are raised overhead, swaying from side to side to side with much finger snapping.

CHORUS

Continued..

FIGURE 5 - Join inside hands with partner. Couple 2 (the couple facing the music) raise joined hands to form an arch, both couples walk forward, exchanging places, couple one passing under the arch. Retainig hand holds, turn around, man walks backwards, lady forward, facing other couple again, 8 counts. Repeat with couple 1 raising the arch. Repeat all. Total 32 counts.

CHORUS

FIGURE 6 - The two men, who are in a diagonal position, join right hands and exchange places with three steps and a pull and stop, then without releasing hands exchange places three more times, 16 counts. ending with right hands joined. The ladies join right hand under the arch exchange places twice without releasing hands. Still with right hands joined, the ladies reach over the men's right hands and join left hands with partner and the whole formations revolves clockwische with four chasse' steps. Release hands and turn single."

CHORUS

R. La Farge

FIGURES AT A GLANCE

FIG. 1 - All four circle R (16) and L (16)

CHORUS

FIG. 2 - Moulinet moving CCW 16
CC 16

CHORUS

FIG. 3 - Elbow Swing right and left.

CHORUS

FIG. 4 - Shuttle Dod-a-dos starting with opposite partner

CHORUS

FIG. 5 - Couples arches

CHORUS

FIG. 6 - Exchange places and chasse'

CHORUS

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- (1) Montevergine, which means Mount of the Virgin, is a tiny village with a breathtaking view which can be reached by the famous Amalfi Drive going South-east from Naples. It has a sanctuary build in the year 1119.
 - (2) La Farge describes a grapevine step, but I think a light running step more Italian.
 - (3) It is more of a leap, on one description it was called "Calcio di cavallo" which means horse kick.
 - (4) A bouncing chasse' step is often used, says Rod La farge.

EFG