

Tarantella Montevergine

Music: Victor 25-0050 (Cinderella Tarantella)

We collected the steps for this dance by attending an endless procession of festi 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. It may be of interest to note here that these people, although from the central part of Italy, seem to be more of the physical type associated with the South; also that these dance steps are "loosely" traditional, that is, there are no strict rules for starting on the right or left foot, etc. (Group leaders should specify, however, to keep large groups dancing uniformly . . . a problem not found at the actual festa performance as this dance is usually performed by one or two pair of couples at a time as a sort of exhibition.)

The people are of a very "earthy" type; their everyday language in literal translation we would find very vulgar as are many of the gestures, remarks and postures that the dancers indulge in.

The correct regional pronunciation of "Montevergine" is mahn-tay-vair-jeen-ay with the accent on the "vair." (Sorry my linotyper doesn't have the phonetic symbols!)

The festa celebrants dance many steps and figures to many different tarantella melodies; we have arranged the following set sequence to fit the recommended record.

Position. Two couples facing, lady on the right of her partner.

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

Figure 1. Join hands and circle four to the right with a "grapevine shuffle step"; slide right foot diagonally forward to the right; slide left foot behind right foot; slide right foot diagonally backwards to the right; slide the left foot diagonally forward in front of the right foot. Repeat 4 times. (16 counts.) Repeat all to the left. (16 counts.)

Chorus. (Repeated after each figure.) Face own partner and perform four pas de basque steps, starting to the left with a leap onto the left foot and passing the right foot across in front of the left with a circular motion, touching the toe lightly to the ground in front of, or to the left of, the left foot. (Do not "kick" or "swing" the leg across as in the Tarantella Sicilianella; that motion is not a pas de basque but a "calcio di cavallo"). The arms are raised somewhat above the head and swayed from side

to side with finger-snapping, or castanet work, if the latter are in use.

Now, without actually touching, partners enclose each other with outstretched, encircling arms; in this position they turn together, clockwise with four fast walking steps (a bouncing chasse step is often used instead). This "don't touch them" embrace is called *sorellina* (little sister); the man's arms are outside of the lady's so that she can repel an attempt to actually hug her . . . this would be considered really abandoned and at a real festa would be repulsed violently. Turn single (clockwise) out of each other's embrace. (16 counts). Repeat all with opposite partner. (16 counts.)

Figure 2. Right hand moulinet. (16 counts). Repeat, left handed. (16 counts).

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

Figure 4. Facing opposite partners, the men back the ladies until the men can pass back to back (as in a dos-a-dos). The ladies now walk forward, the men backwards; the couples have now exchanged places. (8 counts). Face own partners and repeat maneuver. Now repeat all. (Total: 32 counts). The polka step is used for this figure and the arms are raised overhead, swaying from side as the fingers are snapped.

Figure 5. Join inside hands with own partner. Couple two (the couple facing the music) raise their joined hands to form an arch; both couples walk forward, exchanging places, couple one passing under the arch. Hands still joined, the couples walk around (the lady forward, the man backwards) to face each other again. Repeat with the opposite couple raising the arch. Repeat all. (Total 32 counts).

Figure 6. The two men join right hands and exchange places. Without releasing hands change back. Still without releasing hands, repeat all, ending with the joined right hands raised to form an arch. (16 counts). The ladies join their right hands under the arch, exchange places, and, without releasing hands, change back. (8 counts). Still with right hands joined, the ladies reach over the men's joined hands and join left hands with partners, the entire formation revolving with a chasse step. All release hands and turn single, clockwise. Actually part of the time for this latter motion is "stolen" from the counts allotted to the ladies changing places: