

Tarantella Villaggio

Music: Tarantella Barese

Columbia 14675-F

Spiro S 7102a

The Spiro record is much the gayer of the two, but contains irregular repeat.

This dance, particularly interesting as the only Italian 'mixer' that I have ever seen, I found being danced by a family group at a small New Jersey festa. Signor Relli, who played an accordion for the dancing, explained that this group came from near the town of Grottaglie, south of Bari, in Puglia province. Of course they are Barese (Italians usually count themselves citizens of the chief city of their province) but my informant tells me that in Bari proper it is a straight couple dance, so to avoid confusion I have tagged this nameless version as a 'village' tarantella.

Position. Circle of couples, all facing center, lady on the right of partner.

Steps. Polka, walking, pas de basque.

The dance. Starting with a leap on the right foot, the ladies take four walking steps toward the center of the ring, bending forward as they do so. The arms are swung backwards, upwards, forwards, then downwards in a sweeping windmill motion, as the fingers are snapped in time to the music. Ladies take four steps backwards to place, gradually straightening up and raising arms over the head, still snapping fingers. Men now perform the same figure. All face partners with hands on hips and take two polka steps forward, passing right shoulders. Facing the next person in line, all raising arms overhead and perform two pas de basque steps, starting with the left foot, swinging the right over; the upraised arms are swayed from side to side while the fingers snap in rhythm. Still with arms raised and fingers snapping, partners look back over their right shoulders at each other, and dance four small, mincing polka steps in a clockwise semicircle around each other (returning to place), at the same time gradually turning (clockwise) to face partner. This maneuver should be accompanied by as much exaggerated flirtation as possible. All now give right hands to partners and starting with the right foot, execute a 'grand chain' (same as the American square dance 'grand right and left, except that the hands are kept shoulder high and the polka step used) for eight polka steps; the persons facing on the eighth step become partners, and all polka around the room in closed social dance position for eight polka steps. Repeat from the beginning, ad libitum.