

Cajun Jitterbug

Good

This newer version of the "Cajun Jitterbug" has become popular in recent years at most Cajun dance events. The older dancers often do not like it because it has many fast turns, takes up more dance space, and can be hazardous to those dancing nearby. I originally saw this dance in a Country-Western dance hall in Arizona some 15 years ago done to C-W music and called the "Pony". It is done with a simple push step (buzz step) on either foot throughout the dance, changing feet from time to time at the dancer's whim. The push is most often done on the downbeat of the music (Counts 1 and 2) and the step follows on the upbeat (Count &). The dance has many figures which are often continually executed. There is, however, a basic step to dance in place and a basic hold to use while traveling about the floor. The dance is done in the double hand-hold position.

Basic: (For dancing in place).

- Count 1 Man steps on ball of foot forward, Woman , backward.
 & Both step full foot in original place.
2 Man steps on ball of foot backward, Woman, forward.
 & Both step full foot in original place.

Continue as long as you wish. The dancers should only turn slightly in the direction of the steps, not move their center of balance back and forth.

Travel:

This figure is done in the Varsouvienne position and begins the dance as often as the "Basic" (above). If dancers begin with the "Basic", the man turns the lady into Varsouvienne position by taking the woman's right hand with his right, extending it to his right side (shoulder high) thus guiding the woman into a half turn to be at his right side facing the same direction. He maintains the hold on her right hand just above her shoulder and takes her left hand in front with his left hand. This action is done at any comfortable speed.

- Count 1 Both step in place, or slightly forward, on the ball of the foot.
 & Both step forward on the full foot.

Repeat for as long as you wish.

Arm Figures:

There are many figures done with this dance. Here are a few easy, but fancy ones. The "Arch" figures and the "Brush-Off" are done as in the "Two-Step", but the speed of execution varies as the dancers wish.

Cuddle and Exit: From the double hand-hold, the man extends his right arm to the right side while bring his left arm across his body leading the woman under it into a half-turn to end at his right side. Her left arm will be extended across the front of her body and remain connected to his right arm which is behind her, her right arm will be extended across and slightly to the front of her body above her left arm and will remain connected to his left. To exit, reverse the action. To cuddle to the man's left, do all the actions with the opposite arm.

*DAN BE DURE
ON EITHER SIDE*

Pretzel: I have divided this into five parts to make it easy to follow.

First, execute the "Cuddle and Exit" to the man's left side.

*TUTZAS LIKE
ANDREW IN
ZITZADLE*

Second, the man continues to hold his right arm up (after the woman has turned under it to exit) and guides her into an additional full turn to her left in place without stopping. She has remained at the man's left side. She will now be standing at his left side facing the opposite direction. Her right arm is extended around behind her holding the man's left (which is extended to his left side). Her left arm will be extended to to her left side, in front of the man, continuing to hold his right hand which is about chest high in front of him.

Third, the man guides the woman behind him by bring his right hand over his head. Man and woman are now back to back, still holding hands.

Fourth, the man turns the woman to her right by moving his right arm over her head as he turns slightly to his right and looks at her over his right shoulder. (Be careful, the man must watch his elbow or it will strike the woman's face.)

Fifth, the man moves his right arm over his own head as he turns to his left to face her.

You should now be facing each other in the double hand-hold position in which you started. The five parts of this figure should be executed smoothly and at a comfortable speed. With considerable practice it can be done rather fast.

If you care to vocalize while dancing try some Cajun "Yells of Joy".

The Yell

Hey! Hey!*

Hey la bas!*

Hey yi yiEEEIE!*

Yee He HEEE!*

What it Means (According to some folks)

Look at Me!

Hallelulijah!

I'm having so much fun it hurts!

I'm having even more fun!

*Raise the voice into falsetto.