

LOS VIEJITOS
Dance of the Little Old Men
A Mexican dance from Michoacan
Record FOLK DANCER MH 1103

Los Viejitos

Record available from
FOLK DANCE HOUSE
Box 2305
No. Babylon, NY 11703

Dance introduced at Maine Folk Dance Camp by noted Mexican dance authority Nelda Drury.

This dance can be done by any number of people. It is usually done by youngsters wearing old men's masks in which they make fun of old men. Sometimes the dance is done by old men. The masks can be bought in Mexican gift shops, or dancers can make them from paper mache. A straw hat, and a serape complete the costume... diagram at end shows how to cut the serape which can be made from ordinary cloth and ornamented with embroidery "Magic Markers", crayons, paints, to simulate a real serape. Oh yes, a cane or stick is required for the dance.



PART I: Dancers totter out onto the stage, leaning on sticks as they were all 90 years and over old. There are 8 long notes for this entrance. On the 9th long long note all should be in a semi-circle facing the audience. The next part is done with a great deal of pantomiming, acting, as dancers gather into small clumps of twos or threes or more and pretend to gossip about each other or members of the audience. The pattern is very flexible, as dancers move about at will. The basic formation is given here, as well as the basic steps. While the correct word is "Zapatando" for the stamping, we will use the word "stamp" to make it easier for Americans to follow directions.

STEPS FOR PART I: Stamp in Place R,L,R,L Hold: R, L,R,L, Hold
Move forward 10 stamping steps, R,L,R,L,R,L,R,L,R,L.
Stamp 4 RLRL hold; RLRL hold; then move backwards 10 steps.
Stamp 4 RLRL hold; RLRL hold; turn to Right 10 steps
Stamp 4 RLRL hold; RLRL hold; turn to Left 10 steps.

The above is done very flexibly with dancers moving at will all over the stage with greatly exaggerated gestures.

PART II " LEANING ON STICK, which is held to the floor with both hands right in front of dancer, jump up and come down with feet apart. Then spring lightly and land with feet still further apart. Then another light spring and land with both feet together. Do this again:...apart, apart, together.

Leap onto the Rft and tap Ltoe slightly behind Rft.
Leap onto the Lft and tap Ltoe slightly behind Lft.
Stamp 5 times RLRLR.

Repeat the above combination of steps of Part II three more times for a total of four times all told.

THE BREAK: Stamp R..slight pause, take 3 quick steps LRL and stamp Rheel without weight on R heel. Do this sequence two more times, or 3 times all told: always the same foot work: R-LRL-R. Now jump up and land in a semi-lunge position with Rft fwd, knee bent and Lft back.

The music now plays 4 long "plinks" during which dancers wipe their brows or mimic great fatigue and totter around to position themselves in preparation for the next figure:

PART III With weight on Lft, point Rtoe fwd, then touch Rtoe by instep of Lft. Then touch Rtoe out to Rside and bring it back to Lft all with greatly exaggerated steps.

Now stamp 6 RLRLRL and put weight on Rft and point Ltoe fwd, then down beside Rft, then to L, and then bring it down beside Rft.
Now stamp 6 LRLRLR.

Still leaning on stick with both hands, jump up four times into the air, each time clicking heels together. Start from a position of feet apart, and land with feet apart. Stamp RLRLRL. Repeat the 4 jumps and the 6 stamps.

REPEAT all of PART III again.

NOW DO THE BREAK AS DESCRIBED ON REVERSE SIDE OF THIS SHEET followed by the four "plinks" to prepare you for the next figure.

PART IV(A) With Lft on the floor, raise Rft and dig Rheel into floor in front and slightly to the R fwd, at the same time raise Lheel without taking Ltoe of floor. Then sink down on L heel as you raise Rknee. Do this 4 times, that is dig Rheel into floor 4 times, as you raise and lower Lheel. (This should be done almost clumsily). Then stamp 5 times, RLRLR, do not put weight on 5th stamp, and repeat the 5 stamps RLRLR.
REPEAT all of PART 4 A

IV(B) "SPREADING STEP". Move forward, inching along as you take 8 steps, spreading feet further and further apart RLRLRL...the "backbone" (derriere) protrudes in the rear as you do steps with knees bent.

Stamp 5, RLRLR, no weight on 5th stamp, RLRLR.

Repeat Part 4 B

REPEAT ALL OF PART 4 A and 4 B.

DO THE BREAK AS DESCRIBED ON REVERSE SIDE FOLLOWED BY THE FOUR "Plinks" as you prepare for the next figure.

PART V Is the same as Part I, the "gossiping" figure. This is followed by 12 "plinks" during which dancers totter off stage really tired. Sometimes one dancer pretends to collapse to be dragged out by others. A "senorita" may cross stage at this point and the collapsed dancer quickly revives to follow her... again this is a good opportunity for improvised play-acting.

⑥

The dance is liked by youngsters. Since the stamping sounds alike it doesn't matter if someone stamps with R or Lft. It will all sound the same and therefore mistakes are not important. The masks hide faces so even the most shy will venture into the dance.

⑦

The Serape can be made from any length of cloth, just slit down the middle as in diagram, then fold in half and slip over the head so it hangs down in front and back. Cut ends into strips to resemble fringe.

