

## THE VIPER TANGO (El Viborita) (Argentina/Europe/United States ca.1914)

The Tango from Argentina found fertile soil in Paris in 1911, and quickly grew into a dance craze that outshone the modest success that the dance had enjoyed in its native country. The Parisian Tangomania peaked in 1912-1914, with a basic vocabulary of steps that is preserved in the "Parisian Tango" taught by Richard and Melanie Powers at the 1989 University of the Pacific Folk Dance Camp. By 1914, the tango craze had spread throughout Europe and to the United States, expanding its step vocabulary month by month. The "Viper Tango" is a companion piece to the "Parisian Tango," to exemplify the alternate steps seen in Early Tango, many of which disappeared before 1920. The Viper Tango is a selection of some of the more sensuous early tango steps, with an emphasis on playful interplay between dancers.

MUSIC: "El Viborita" (The Viper) by Eduardo Arolas, ca. 1914. R. Powers special cassette for Laguna Folkdancers Festival 1993. "El Choclo" also works well.

FORMATION: Cpls in Semi-open, R Side, and closed ballroom positions.

STEPS: Reverse Turning Corte: In closed ballroom pos, Advancing ptrn (M or W) walk fwd 2 steps (ct 1, 2), then step fwd L (ct 3); rotate CCW (as a cpl) and step side R (ct &); rotate CCW and step bkwd L (ct 4); hold (ct &). (Retiring ptrn walks bkwd R, L; steps back R, side L, fwd R, rotating CCW.) There is a slight down-up-down undulation in the 3 turning steps.

Ebrio Grapevine: Ballroom pos, with M back to ctr but facing diag against LOD. M walks bkwd 2 steps L & R (W fwd R & L) (cts 1, 2); M turns slightly CCW and steps side L (W side R) toward LOD (ct 3); ptrns shift to R Side pos (R hip to R hip as illustrated) and M steps fwd R (W bkwd L) diag toward LOD (ct &). Based on Figura del Ebrio (Drunk Figure) by Juan Barrasa, 1914.

Molinete: Ballroom pos, M steps fwd L then rocks bkwd R (W bkwd R, fwd L) rotating as a cpl CCW in place (cts 1, 2); repeat 3 more times, for a total of 8 steps (to ct 8), rotating 360° CCW.



STYLE: The body is held firmly erect without stiffness, knees always somewhat flexed to maintain a smooth carriage of the body. Movement is precipitated from the center of the torso, not with leg extensions (i.e., body moves an instant before the feet, which stay under the torso). Movement is smooth, without undulation (except for the turning corte). Feet move with a toe-lead, and a slight degree of turnout, keeping the feet close to the ground while in motion. "Imitate the sinuous grace of the tiger."

---

METER: 4/4

PATTERN

---

Meas

4 meas INTRODUCTION

No action, other than taking partner in position.

PART I (Steps described for M; W opposite.)

I. PROMENADE 4 STEPS

- 1-2 In Semi-open pos., both facing LOD, beg outside ft (M L, W R), walk fwd 4 steps in S-S-Q-Q timing (ct 1, 2, 3, &). The M 4th step (R) should be turned out 90° to the R. The M holds his 4th (R) step then sweeps his L around in a CW circular arc, toward the W; while the W holds on her 4th (L) step then sweeps her R fwd and CW around to the R (ct 4).  
Both M and W keep toe to the floor during the circular arcs.

REVERSE TURNING CORTE

- 3-4 The M's arc swept him into closed ballroom pos, facing against LOD. Execute Reverse Turning Corte as described above, in which the M is the Advancing ptrn, traveling against LOD (ct 1,2,3,&,4).

II. BACK THE LADY 4 STEPS

- 1-2 In closed ballroom pos, M walks fwd LOD 4 steps beg R, in S-S-Q-Q timing (ct 1, 2, 3, &). The M holds his 4th (L) step and sweeps his R ft fwd under hers, in a CW arc, toe to the floor; while the W holds her 4th (R) step and flicks her L heel straight back (ct 4).

REVERSE TURNING CORTE

- 3-4 Reversing direction, back the M into Reverse Turning Corte, in which the W is the Advancing ptrn, traveling against LOD (ct 1,2,3,&,4).

PART II

- 1-4 EBRIO GRAPEVINE as described above (ct 1, 2, 3, &).  
Cpl regains ballroom pos to repeat the 4 steps (cts 4, 5, 6, &). Then repeat the first 2 steps only (cts 7, 8).  
Travels sideways to LOD in a sawtooth or zig-zag pattern.
- 5-8 MOLINETE as described above.

REPEAT PARTS I AND II to the end of the music.