

Courenta

(Italy - Piedmont)

From Piedmont, Val Varaita, it is also known as *Courento*. The name refers simply to a category of dance. This is one of the valley dances from the former Occitania region which ranged from the Alps to the Pyrenees, from the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. Its antecedents are in doubt, most likely deriving from Renaissance dances. Like other dances from the same valley, it is followed by another sequence of figures, called "*Balet*."

Pronunciation: coor-EHN-tah

Music: CD: *Danze Italiane* Vol 1, Band 4 6/8 (counted as 1, 2) + 2/4 meter

Formation: Couples in large circle facing CCW, W to R of M. M has R arm around W waist; W has L hand on M R shoulder. Outside hands are free or on hips.

Steps: Balà: Face ptr, both hands joined, arms straightened, M hands inside, palms facing out and applying outward pressure, W hands outside palms facing in and applying inward pressure.
 M: Step on R to R (ct 1); step on L heel next to R (ct 2); step on R to R, with a small flick sdwd of L ft with bent ankle only (ct 2). Repeat pattern with opp ftwk (starting L).
 W: Step on R to R (ct 1); step on the ball of L next to R (ct 2); step on R to R (ct 2).

Virà: Face partner both hands joined, L hand on own L hip, and R hand on ptr's L hip with arm across ptr in front. Step on R in front (ct 1); hop on R lifting L knee (&); step on L (2). The 2 dancers rotate in place about a vertical axis located between them.

Meas

Pattern

2 meas INTRODUCTION. No action.

I. MEIRO 6/8 meter

1-8 Starting with R, walk 16 steps CCW, ending turning 1/4 twd ptr, M's back to ctr.

II. BALAR & VIRAR 2/4 meter

1-4 Facing ptr, dance 4 Balà steps (R,L,R,L), M pushing hands out and in, W pushing hands in and out, rhythmically with each step.

5 Step back on R stretching arms (ct 1); step on L in place (ct 2).

6-8 Turn CW with ptr with 3 Virà steps.

9-16 Repeat meas 1-8.

17-18 Release handhold and resume beg pos facing CCW. Stamp R next to L without wt.

Repeat dance from beg until the music stops briefly. Then cpls open into a single circle facing ctr, W to R of M, hands free at sides.

Courenta—continued

III. BALET 2/4 meter

- 1-8 W: Starting with R, dance 8 Balà steps in place.
M: Starting with R, dance 4 Balà steps going twd ctr, ending with half turn to L facing outside; 4 more Balà steps going twd W to L of previous ptr.
- 9 Joining both hands with the new ptr, step back on R stretching arms (ct 1); step on L in place (ct 2).
- 10-16 Turn CW with ptr with 7 Virà steps, ending facing ctr, W to R of M.

Repeat Fig III from beg until the end of music, continuing the progression.

Presented by Roberto Bagnoli