

LOS MACHETEROS
(Central America)

Macheteros (mah-chay-tay'-rhos) are workers, both men and women, who use large, sharp, sword-like knives called machetes (Mah chay' tays). As Central America is largely covered with dense jungle, many macheteros slash with their machetes to cut trails and clear away brush so that land can be cultivated. Machetes are also used to harvest crops such as sugar cane, coconuts, tobacco, cacao, bananas and other tropical fruits. This dance is typical of the type performed at many fiestas throughout Central America when macheteros gather. Characteristic of this type of dance is the Jefe (hay' fay), the chief or director, who carries a small native drum and a drumstick decorated with flowers and leaves, which he uses to signal changes of action. He may signal by striking his drum, or by calling "El Paso que viene!" (Next step), or by announcing each figure by number, "Uno" (1), "Dos" (2), "Tres" (3), "Cuatro" (4). Dance arranged by Ruth White.

Music: Record: Rhythms Productions CC 619-1 Side B.

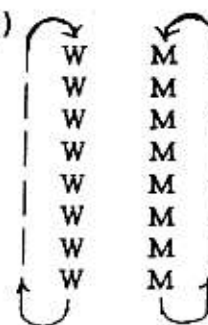
Formation: 8 cpls in a column facing head of hall and Jefe. W M
 W about 3 ft to R of ptr. 3 ft of space W M
 between cpls. W cross wrists on chest W M
 with fingers touching shoulders. M hands W M
 in back, L wrist held in R hand. W M

Step: Heel-Tap Step (used throughout dance): Step W M
 fwd on R (ct 1), tap L heel beside R, no wt W M
 (ct 2), step fwd on L (ct 3), tap R heel
 beside L, no wt (ct 4). Knees slightly bent. Jefe
 2 Heel-Tap steps per meas (R and L).

Measures Pattern

Introduction. Jefe signals start of first figure.

- 1-16 FIG I (DOWN OUTSIDE AND UP TO PLACE)
 With 32 Heel-Tap steps, leader in each line turns out (W to R, M to L) and travels down outside of formation, followed by rest of dancers, for 8 meas, then leads line up formation to starting pos. Face ptr at end. Hands remain in starting pos. Jefe signals for next figure.
- 17-20 FIG II (CHANGE PLACES AND RETURN)
 All beginning R, with 8 Heel-Tap steps exchange places with ptr, passing L shoulders. On 8th tap, all turn R on R heel to face ptr, making a slashing motion with R arm.
- 21-24 All beginning L, repeat action of meas 17-20, returning to own place, turn L on L heel to face ptr, making slashing motion as before.
- 25-32 Repeat action of meas 17-24, Fig II. End facing Jefe who signals for next figure.



Jefe



Jefe

continued...

LOS MACHETEROS (cont)

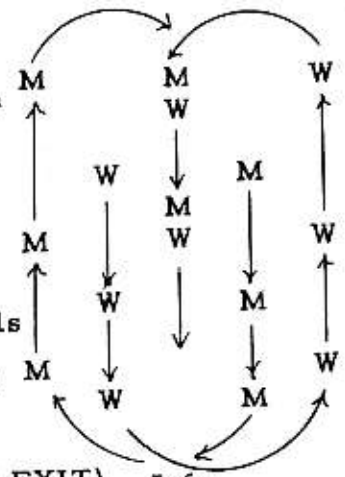
FIG III (CROSS, DOWN OUTSIDE AND SINGLE FILE FWD)

33-40

With 16 Heel-Tap steps W column follows leader as she turns L to go down opp side of formation; simultaneously the M column follows leader as he turns R to go down opp side of formation. As ptrs meet at head of formation, W crosses in front of ptr. Hands in starting pos.

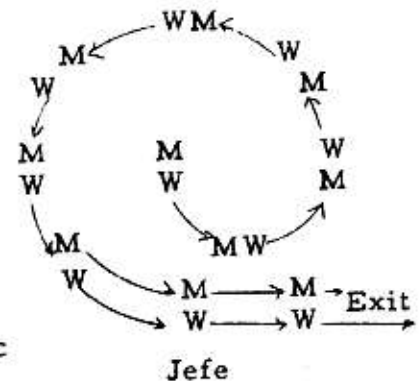
41-48

With 16 Heel-Tap steps all dance twd Jefe in single file, W in front of ptr. As lead W reaches head of formation, Jefe signals for next figure even though music for present Fig has not ended. The action of Figs III and IV is continuous.

FIG IV (CIRCLE WITH SLASHING, AND EXIT) Jefe

49-64

With 32 Heel-Tap steps, 1st W leads dancers into a large CCW circle, all making a short slashing motion with R hand on each tap. As each W reaches head of formation she dances in place while her ptr comes to her L side, then cpls exit side by side, hands in starting pos. Jefe follows last cpl off.



NOTE: If formations or pos are reached before the end of the music allotted for the fig, dancers do Heel-Tap steps in place, except at the end of Fig III.

Presented by Vyts Beliajus