

VALS JOTA

(Mexican California)

Set dance for couples from the Los Angeles area of Mexican California. Danced with restrained elegance and dignity. Properly danced by the elders, but was danced by younger dancers.

Formation: Parallel lines of three or four couples facing three couples, W on M R; hands joined R to R, L to L with L arm on top. If more than one set, at least two sets should be placed end-to-end.

Rhythm: Quick 3/4, almost a 3/8 or 6/8

Basic step: A two-step waltz: step fwd L ft with accent (ct 1); step on R ft beside L ft (ct 2); step fwd on L ft (ct 3). Rpt step on opp ftwk. *HINT:* It matters not which foot begins.

Meas	Figure
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INTRODUCTION – Bows (8 meas-performed only at beginning of dance)

Couples in place without hands joined.

- 1 No movement.
- 2 W step twd ctr on R ft & turn ¼ turn L; M turn ¼ turn R to face partner.
- 3 All step bkwd from ptr on L ft.
- 4 All bend L knee in formal bow.
- 5 Shift weight fwd to R ft & join L hands.
- 6 M leads W to him; W steps fwd on L ft beside M, turning ¼ turn R to face center.
- 7 Close R ft to L ft & join R hands under L hands.
- 8 No movement.

Interlude (4 meas – precedes every figure)

- 1-4 4 Rocking Steps fwd L, back R, fwd L, back R. (NOTE: Interlude proceeds every figure)

FIGURE 1 - Cradle

A - Advance and Retire

- 1-4 Cpls move fwd twd opp cpl with 3 basic steps; turn ½ turn twd ptr to face out, W on L.
- 5-8 Cpls move fwd away from opp cpl & turn ½ twd ptr to face in.
- 9-16 Cpls rpt figure of meas 1-8.

B - Woman Around / Cpls Wheel

- 1-6 M in place with 6 basic steps; lead W CCW fwd around M & spin CCW in place on Meas 3 & 4; continue to M R side, (Meas 5,6), L arms arched overhead.
- 7,8 Cpls advance to opp cpl.

C - Cradle.

- 1-4 Release R hands & join with opp person; raise arms high & W move under arms face-to-face to opp W position; lower arms to center of “cradle”.
- 5-8 Circle CW 6 basic steps.
- 9-12 Circle CCW 4 basic steps.
- 13-16 Raise arms; W return to orig position, facing ptr with L hands joined, W face CW, M face CCW in preparation for Grand Chain.

D - Grand Chain

- 1-24 Cpls chain around set begin L hand to return to home position. Each hand change will require two measures.

NOTE: The selected recording has three phrases of 8 meas each for the Grand Chain. If a set has 4 couples, home position will be reached after two phrases; join L hands with partner and repeat “Woman Around” figure, ending in Home position.

If the set has 6 couples, home position will be reached at the end of the three phrases.

Repeat Interlude

FIGURE 2 – Link Arms

- 1-24 Rpt Fig 1, *Part A&B*: Advance & Retire, W around M, couples approach opp cpl. All release hands & M turn back-to-back.; link arms in circle, M facing out; W facing in.
- 1-4 *Part C* - Turn circle CW.
- 5-8 Release R elbow & all turn ½ turn CCW in place to reform circle, W facing out; link arms.
- 9-12 Turn circle CCW.
- 13-16 Release R elbows; M turn W CCW in varsouviana position to begin Chain.
- 1-24 *Part D* - Repeat Chain as in Figure 1.

FIGURE 3 – Basket

- 1-24 Rpt Fig 1, *Part A&B*: Advance & Retire, W around M; couples approach opp cpl. All release hands.
- 1-4 *Part C* - M face & join hands across, raise joined hands over W heads and down behind W back; W join hands across and raise joined hands over M heads and down behind M back. This figure should be completed quickly.
- 5-8 Turn circle CW.
- 9-12 Couples release hands and reform the basket.
- 13-16 Turn circle CCW to home position; release Basket and join partners' L hand in position to begin Grand Chain.
- 1-24 *Part D* - Grand Chain

Repeat Interlude

FIGURE 3 – SERPENTINE (Number of measures will vary)

- 1 First M leads across circle to pass under opposite couple's joined hands; release partner's hand & separate around circle to rejoin hands in original position; all follow to reform circle.
- 2 Second M leads across circle to pass under opp cpl joined hands; raise hand joined with ptr, turn away from ptr to create arch and lead circle under arch to reform circle.
- 3 Third M leads across circle to pass under opp cpl joined hands, continues moving fwd until circle has reformed, all facing out; raise L arm & turn ½ turn R to face into circle & lead circle in single file under arch until circle reforms.
- 4 Fourth M release hands with partner & begins to lead circle CCW, W turn R and lead circle a series of 4 passes under couples' joined hands (thread the needle), progressing around the circle always moving CW until circle reforms. Waltz with partner until music ends.

NOTE: The leader (el tecolero) may call the figures for Part C: Cradle, Basket or Link Arms. He may also delete one of the Serpentine figures, depending on the size of the circle and the abilities of the dancers.

Notated by Richard Duree, 4/05

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