

REGENCY ERA DANCE STEPS

Compiled by Richard Powers

Primary sources with step descriptions:

- 1760c Giovanni-Andrea Gallini A NEW COLLECTION OF FORTY-FOUR COTILLIONS London
1779 Gennaro Magri TRATTATO TEORICO-PRATTICO DI BALLO Naples (Skeaping transl)
1787 Charles Compan DICTIONNAIRE DE DANSE Paris
1802 Saltator A TREATISE ON DANCING...LESSONS, STEPS, FIGURES, &c . Boston
1811 J. H. Gourdoux-Daux PRINCIPES... SUR L'ART DE LA DANSE Paris
1817 V. Guillou ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES OF THE ART OF DANCING Philadelphia
1818 Anon. CONTRE-DANSES A PARIS (manuscript)
1822 Alexander Strathy ELEMENTS OF THE ART OF DANCING, WITH QUADRILLES Edinburgh
1823 J. H. Gourdoux-Daux DE L'ART DE LA DANSE Paris
1826 Louis Casorti DER INSTRÜCTIVE TANZMEISTER FÜR HERREN UND DAMEN
1827 E. H. Conway LE MAITRE DE DANSE New York

Temps Levé Preparation: 3rd position. Shift weight to the rear leg and plié as you raise the forefoot to its toe, closed to the ankle of the supporting foot, toe pointed down, keeping knees well turned out. (the German "6th position"). Then rise on the rear foot, keeping the forefoot closed to 6th position.

If advancing forward, extend the forefoot forward to 4th as you rise, knees straight and toes pointed low.

If traveling to the side, extend the forefoot to 2nd instead of 4th.

Do not advance the body until you have placed the leading foot cleanly in 4th or 2nd position.

JHG, Guillou, Strathy

Chassé Preparation: Temps levé. Glide the forefoot forward to 4th, bending both legs equally, placing weight evenly between both feet. Then rise up straight on the forefoot, closing the rear foot to the fore, striking it to take its place, pushing the forefoot forward to 4th again.

The chassé may also be done to either side or to the rear. The preparation for a chassé to the rear is an echappé, instead of the temps levé. *Gallini, Magri, Saltator, JHG, Guillou, Strathy, Conway.*

Jeté (to 3rd position) Preparation: 3rd or 6th. With a plié, close the rear foot to 6th, then unfold it directly to the side (2nd), leg extended straight and toe pointed to the ground, almost (but not quite) touching the floor, and then rise on the supporting foot to its toe. Close the extended side leg to 3rd above, falling softly onto this single foot and closing the other foot to 6th behind, well turned out. The jeté may also be done to 3rd behind, or forward to 4th, or to either side. *Magri, JHG, Guillou, Strathy, Conway.*

To Jeté backward, disengage the rear foot as you plié. As you rise, throw the rear leg, pointed, to 4th behind, and then, as you land softly on this foot, close the free foot to 6th behind. - *Guillou*

Note: Guillou also includes a jeté description that closes the free foot above, among his balancés.

Magri's early version throws the leg to 4th, instead of 2nd, before landing.

Saltator's sequences that use a jeté seem to close to 3rd without a bound. His Le pas Jeté, which he also calls a Scotch hop, seems to separate the hops from the step, giving a step-hop of two movements.

The *1818 Paris* jeté description begins in 3rd or 5th with the R in front, throws the R to 2nd, as above, then leaps to 5th in front again, with the L closing without weight behind. Guillou also includes this jeté in a balancé.

Strathy uses the term slide in extending the free foot to 2nd, but this does not imply giving any weight. Strathy also substitutes 5th for 3rd.

Jeté tendu Preparation: 5th. Plié as you disengage the forward foot to 6th; unfold it to 2nd, extended, as you rise, then close it back again to 5th before chasing the former supporting leg out to the other side, holding it in 2nd, pointed without weight. *Strathy*.

Assemblé Preparation: 3rd or 6th. Begin the same way as the jeté, extending the rear foot to the side, then closing it to 3rd before. But to assemblé, land on both feet equally, weight distributed evenly. Then straighten the legs. (Some sources imply that the rise is so slight that you can cushion the landing entirely with the muscles of the instep, keeping the knees straight through the landing.) The assemblé may also be done to the rear. *Gallini, Magri, Saltator, JHG, Guillou, Strathy, Conway*.

Gallini says that the hind foot is advanced "in a circular manner," implying a ronde de jambe motion. Guillou also suggests that the free foot may move "around" when passing from a sissone to an assemblé.

Magri's early version throws the leg to 4th, instead of 2nd, before landing.

Strathy uses the term slide in extending the free foot to 2nd, but this does not imply giving any weight. Strathy also substitutes 5th for 3rd.

Sissone (simple) Preparation: 3rd. Plié equally on both legs (i.e. not 6th position) then spring straight up and land on just one foot, extending the other to the side, holding it in 2nd, pointed without touching the floor. The simple sissone can also be performed in 4th position. *Compan, JHG, Guillou, Strathy, Conway*. Magri is slightly different.

Saltator spells it Le pas de six Sons, and implies that you enter into the preparation 3rd with a changement from the other 3rd, immediately followed by the extension to 2nd. F. J. Lambert (ca.1820) defines the sissone the same way: (1) assemblé to 5th; (2) extend the rear foot to 2nd.

Sissone dessous Preparation: 3rd. Plié, then spring upward and fall on the foot that was in front, at the same time closing the rear foot to 6th behind. *JHG, Guillou, Strathy*

Variation: Upon springing, the free foot may pass from 3rd above to 6th behind.

Sissone dessus Same as above, but fall onto the rear foot, closing the forefoot to 6th above.

Changement de jambe Preparation: 3rd. Plié, then spring straight up, with legs and toes extended down while aloft, crossing the feet over, passing through 1st (not 2nd) to land softly in 3rd with the other foot in front. *JHG, Guillou, Strathy, Conway*.

Strathy closes to 5th instead of 3rd, and implies that you do not plié upon landing.

Echappé to the sides: Similar to a simple sissone, except than you land in 2nd with weight evenly on both feet. To complete the echappé, spring up again and close to 3rd. *JHG, Guillou, Strathy*

Echappé on one foot to the rear: Similar to a simple sissone, except that you extend the free foot to the rear, holding it in 4th behind. *JHG, Guillou, Strathy*

Glissade dessous Preparation: 3rd. Shift weight back and plié, raising the forefoot to 6th, knees turned out. Rise, extend the foreleg to the side, and gently leap to that side, quickly closing the chasing foot to 3rd behind, with weight. Perform to either side. Note: Guillou implies that you complete this step on the downbeat (on count 1), meaning that you initiate the side step an instant early (count "and"). *Magri, Compan, JHG, Guillou, Strathy, Conway.*

Strathy substitutes 5th for 3rd throughout.

Saltator's Le Contretems seems to be a glissade dessous, but may actually be closer to Peacock's Kemkossy step.

Glissade dessus The same, but close the chasing foot to 3rd above.

Balonné Preparation: 3rd. Plié and extend the forefoot forward to 4th without weight; then rise and bring the forefoot back against the front of the supporting ankle, keeping the knee turned out. *Magri, 1923 JHG*

Gourdoux-Daux's Balonné sequence continues with a jeté forward onto the free foot, extending the other foot forward to 4th without weight, to continue balonnés.

Pirouette (half turn in 2 counts) Preparation: 5th. (1) Move the forefoot to 2nd, then draw it to 5th behind. (2) Rising on both toes, turn half around, ending with the feet in the original 5th. *Gallini, Strathy.*

Pirouette (full turn in 4 counts) Repeat the half-turn for another two counts. *Gallini, Strathy.*

Pirouette (full turn in 2 counts) Preparation: 5th. (1) Shifting weight forward, point the rear foot to 2nd, rise on the toe of the forefoot, cross the free foot tightly over the supporting foot and pivot halfway around. (2) Without stopping the pivot, cross the free foot over the supporting foot again and complete the full turn, ending in the original 5th position. *Strathy.*

Saltator's La Pirouette includes two hops while you turn upon the toes, and seems to end with an assemblé.

Coupé One foot cuts the other from its place, from an open position (2nd or 4th), through a closed position (1st, 3rd, 5th), ending with another open position, all in one motion.

Coupé dessous Preparation: 4th with R raised behind. R cuts under the supporting L, in 3rd, cutting the L into 4th raised above. May also be performed with the L from behind.

Coupé dessus A free foot in 4th above cuts over the other foot, cutting it to 4th behind.

Sissone doublé Preparation: 5th, L in front. (1) Assemblé, bringing R to front, (2) sissone the R to 2nd (3) with the R, chase the L out to 2nd. *Conway*.

Rigaudon

Compan: Preparation: 1st. (1) Plié both knees equally, then spring up, raising the right leg, at the same time, to the side, extended straight.. (2) Spring up again to close back to 1st. (3) Extend the L to the side without a jump, and close it back to 1st again. (4) Conclude with a jump in place.

Gallini version 1: Preparation: 1st. Similar to *Compan*, but to the other side, mentioning that it can be done to either side.

Gallini version 2: Preparation 3rd. The rear foot extends to 2nd, then closes in front. The other foot extends to the other side without a jump, and closes in front. The final jump in place is an assemblé with the rear foot closing above.

Saltator's "Rigadoon" is unclear, but is similarly composed of five movements in four counts.

Ballotté (*Magri*) Three jetés (quick-quick-slow) plus an assemblé.

Balletté (*Saltator*) Preparation: 5th, L behind. (1) Changement; (2) L to 2nd; (3) Close L to 5th before; (4) Changement; (5) R to 2nd; (6) Close R to 5th before; (7 to 9) repeat steps 1 to 3; (10) Changement to 3rd.

Ballotte (*Peacock*) His *Seby-trast* is "like a Balotte." One interpretation: Preparation R 4th above; Coupé dessus with the R; coupé dessous with the L; coupé dessus with the R; hop on the R and swing the L forward to 4th above. Repeat opposite. Yves Guillard.

Sissone ballotté (*Conway*) Preparation: 5th, L behind. Assemblé, bringing the L to 5th above. Sissone, extending the R to 2nd. Bring the R in 5th, raise the L, put it down, (?) extend the R to 2nd, and close it to 5th.

Note: *Conway* likens this step to the "rigodon."

Pas de Basque (*Casorti*) (1) Jeté R diagonally fwd over the L (diagonal 4th) and bring the top of the L foot against the back of the R knee; (2) fall back onto the L in place; (3) Step R to 2nd. Repeat to the other side, crossing L diagonally over the R.

Pas en Basque (*Saltator*) Preparation: 5th, L behind. (1) R to 2nd; (2) L closes to 3rd before; (3) R tightens to 5th behind. Repeat to opposite side. *Saltator's* multiple *Pas en Basque* sequence ends on a count 2 (3rd position), not closing tighter to 5th.

Pas de Basque (*1818 Paris*) Preparation: 3rd or 5th, R before. (1) Jeté L to diagonal rear 2nd; (2) Glide or jeté R to diagonal left 4th, crossing over L; (3) Close L to 5th or 3rd behind R; (4) rest. Repeat to the other side.

Grand Coupé Preparation: 3rd. Shift weight to rear foot and plié while raising the forefoot to 6th. Spring upward and extend the free leg sideways to 2nd, immediately returning it to 6th above as you land. If repeating several grand coupés in a row, alternate 6th above and behind. *Guillou*

Temps de cuisse Preparation: 3rd. (1) Shift weight back and plié while extending the forefoot sideways to 2nd. (2) Spring upward in place, closing the extended leg to strike the calves together in 3rd (above or behind), and the free leg rebounds to extended 2nd before landing. If repeating, close the extended leg to the alternate 3rd for the next strike. *Magri, 1823 JHG.*

Pas de Zephyre (Pas Battu) Preparation: 3rd. Count (1) Shift weight to rear foot and plié while extending the fwd foot sideways to 2nd, toe pointed near the floor; (2) Spring upward from the supporting leg while closing the free foot to 3rd behind, and then through 1st, close it to 3rd above, knees and toes extended downward. Alight softly in this 3rd. *Strathy.*

Perform also by closing above, then behind. Perform to either side.

When this step is linked to another, such as the glissade, it is performed in one count.

Pas de Zephyre forward Preparation: 3rd. Count (1) Shift weight to forefoot and plié while extending the rear foot back to 4th, toe pointed toward the floor; (2) Spring upward from the supporting leg while closing the free foot to 3rd behind, and then through 1st, close it to 3rd above, landing softly in this 3rd. *Strathy.*

Pas de Zephyre backward Preparation: 3rd. Count (1) Shift weight to rear foot and plié while extending the forefoot forward to 4th, toe pointed toward the floor; (2) Spring upward from the supporting leg while closing the free foot to 3rd before, and then through 1st, close it to 3rd behind, landing softly in this 3rd. *Strathy.*

Brisé (1823 JHG) Preparation: 3rd. Plié and unfold one leg to 2nd. Spring up and close or strike this open leg over the other. Then land in 3rd with the open (striking) foot behind.

This brisé may also be done under, which is identical to Strathy's Pas de Zephyr.

Brizé (Conway) Preparation: 5th, L behind. Raise the L leg to 4th behind, spring off of the R, strike the R leg against the L, and land on the L foot, leaving the R leg in 4th behind, in the air. May also be done forward, and with either foot.

Brisé (Magri) Preparation: 4th, with R behind. Plié and extend the R to 2nd. Strike the calf of the R against the instep of the L, chasing the L to 4th forward. May also be done backwards thusly: After the extension to 2nd, beat the instep of the R against the calf of the L, which is chased, in the path of a semicircle, to 4th behind.

Saltator's Le pas Brisé is a casting off step. It seems to be: (1) Step L to 2nd and hop on the L; (2) Jeté R to 3rd above; (3) Jeté L to 3rd above; (4) Assemblé R above, all done while turning in place to the left.