

## ☛ Italian Renaissance Dance Steps - from the works of Fabrizio Caroso and Cesare Negri

All steps are usually done to the left first, and will be described here as done to the left. All steps are also done to the right, and should be practiced that way as well. Thus you will be mathematically correct.

None of these steps are done with a pointed toe; the foot is always relaxed. Turn-out is not fashionable in this century. You should never make a scraping or dragging noise with your feet, for this would be very ugly.

Keep the arms relaxed at the sides when not holding hands with your partner. When you take your partner's usual hand, the arms are relaxed at the side. Do not elevate the hands; this is rude. When you take your partner's other hand (e.g., both right hands), keep the arms gracefully shaped in an S curve.

Terminology:

L = Left      R = Right



### **Riverenza** - 4 counts. (Plural: Riverenze)

Start with the feet together.

1. The left foot moves forward so that left heel is next to the arch of the right foot, placing it flat on the floor.
2. The left foot moves back so that the left toe is next to the heel of the right foot, placing it flat on the floor.
3. Bend both knees slightly. The body remains erect.
4. Straighten both knees and bring the feet together at the same time, slightly lifting both heels then lowering them.

- At the beginning and end of a dance, this is *always* done with the left foot. When it occurs in other parts of the dance, it may be done either left or right, according to what step precedes it.

- It is customary to feign kissing one's hand to one's partner during this movement. This is called "the usual courtesy."

[Teaching abbreviation: "Rev"]

**Riverenza breve, grave, longa, minima, presta** - These are the same as the Riverenza above, but take different amounts of time, according to the music.

Breve - short

Longa - long

Grave - slow

Minima - very short

Presta - quick

### **Riverenza à balzetto** - 4 counts - as in *Bella Gioiosa*. (Plural: Riverenze à balzetti)

1. Do nothing.
2. Do nothing.
3. Kick the left foot out, and jump off the right foot.
4. Land with both feet together, the left foot slightly back (a Cadenza).

**Meza riverenza** - 2 counts (Plural: Meze riverenze; Synonym: Demi-riverenza)

Bring the left foot back, bending the knees, touch the ground with the flat of the foot, and bring it back where it started.

**Battuto di campanella** (Plural: Battuti di campanella)

(campanella means "bell" - the leg moves like the clapper of a bell)

Hop on one foot, and swing the other foot to the back then to the front.

**Cadenza** (Plural: Cadenze)

A landing step with both feet at the end of a jump or a sequence of steps. Land with one foot slightly in advance of the other, bending the knees slightly. Both feet hit the ground at the same time, with the weight equally distributed. If the left foot is behind, the next step will start on the left foot, and the same for the right foot.

**Capriola** (Plural: Capriole)

Leap up, and pass the feet back and forth rapidly, as many times as you can in the time, and land in a cadenza.

**Corinto** (Plural: Corinti; Synonym: Corinth)

Do three Sottopiedi, and end with a Trabuchetto, as in the Saffice.

**Destice** (Plural: Destici)

Do two Sottopiedi, and end with a Trabuchetto, as in the Saffice.

**Continenza** (Plural: Continenze)

Step to the left side, bring the right foot up beside the left foot, then raise the heels slightly and come back down.

**Doppio / Doppio minimo** (Plural: Doppii; Synonym: Pavane double)

This is a double of the Puntata.

Take three walking steps. At the end of the third step, bring the right foot alongside the left.

Slightly lift both heels and lower them, as in the Puntata. Keep the knees straight. Do not sway side-to-side.

**Finto** (Plural: Finti; Full name: Seguito finto)

Take a small step forward onto the left toe, step forward onto the right toe, step backwards with the left foot (flat, not on toe). Keep the knees straight on the first two steps and bend the right knee on the third, leaving the right foot on toe, as in a Seguito ordinario.

To do it to the rear, take a small step back onto the right toe, step back onto the left toe, step forward onto the flat right foot, bending the left knee. You should not have moved any distance.

**Fioretto à piedi pari** (Plural: Fioretti à piedi pari)

Stamp on the left toe and at the same time kick the right foot a hand's width out to the side. Stamp on the right toe then the left toe again. Start the next step by stamping on the right toe, kicking the left foot out a hand's width to the side.

**Fioretto ordinario** (Plural: Fioretti ordinarii)

As you rise up on the left toe, bring the right toe around directly behind the left with a straight knee. As you balance there for an instant on both toes with knees straight, kick the left foot out (give a tiny hop forward on the right foot at the same time) then sink down onto the right foot with the knee slightly bent. You are replacing the left foot with the right.

**Gropo** (Plural: Groppi)

Spring onto the left toe, keeping the knee straight, and as you do this, cross the right foot behind the left calf, with the foot relaxed. Then spring on the right toe and bring the left foot behind the right calf. Then spring on the left toe again bringing the right foot behind the left calf. Do not point the toe; the foot should be relaxed.

**Passo ordinario** (Plural: Passi ordinarii)

An ordinary walking step - heel toe. Step forward about a foot's length.

[Teaching abbreviation: "step"]

**Passo breve, grave, minimo, presto, semibreve**

These are the same as the Passo ordinario above, but take different amounts of time, according to the music.

Breve - short

Presto - quick

Grave - slow

Semibreve - shorter than the breve

Minimo - short

**Passo trangato** (Plural: Passi trangati)

~ Style 1: Step backwards onto the left flat foot, placing the left foot behind the right foot at right angles to it. Bring the right foot off the ground briefly and rock forward onto the right toe as you bring the left foot completely off the ground, then rock back down. Keep your feet in the same places - don't travel.

~ Style 2: Do not take the right foot off the ground, but just rock forward onto the toe as you lift the left foot.

- In both styles bend the front knee slightly as you rock forward.

**Puntata** (Full name: Passo puntata; Plural: Passi puntate; Synonym: Pavane single)

Move the left foot forward until its heel is even with the toes of the right foot, and place it flat on the ground four or five fingers' width from the right foot. Bring the right foot alongside the left. Slightly lift both heels and lower them. Keep the knees straight.

**Puntata minima** (Plural: Puntate minime)

This is the same as the Puntata above, but takes a shorter amount of time, according to the music.

**Ripresa** (Plural: Riprese)

Step sideways onto the left toe, rising up on both toes at the same time. Bring the right foot next to the left, staying on your toes, keeping both knees straight, then lower both heels at the same time.

- Riprese are often done in pairs in the same direction (e.g., LL), and sometimes in both directions (i.e., LR).
- When two Riprese in the same direction are followed by one or two Trabuchetti, the first Trabuchetto is done *in the same direction* as the Riprese (e.g., 2 Riprese L, 2 Trabuchetti LR).

**Ripresa grave** (Plural: Riprese grave)

This is the same as the Ripresa above, but takes a longer amount of time, according to the music.

**Ripresa minima** (Plural: Riprese minime) [Men only]

Starting with feet together, raise both heels and move them to the left and lower them. Then raise the toes *only*, and move them to the left together. At the end of one step, your feet are straight again. Keep the knees straight. This is frequently done in a series in one direction.

- Do not move your hips in this step, and keep the body upright.

**Ripresa minuto** (Plural: Riprese minute) [Women only - Negri dances]

Starting with the heels together and the toes about a hand's width apart, move the heel of the left foot and the toe of the right to the left at the same time. Then move the toe of the left foot and the heel of the right foot to the left at the same. Keep the knees straight. This is done smoothly, as if you are floating across the floor. This is frequently done in a series in one direction. Keep the knees straight and the body upright.

**Saffice** (Plural: Saffici)

Do a sottopiede, and after kicking the left foot out, spring to the side into a left trabuchetto.

**Scambiata** (Plural: Scambiate)

Do a sottopiede, and after kicking the left foot out, spring to the side into a left cadenza.

**Scorso** (Plural: Scorsi)

Small running steps on the toe, done double-time.

**Seguito ordinario** (Plural: Seguiti ordinarii)

Step on to the left toe, step on to the right toe, step flat on to the left foot with the instep next to the right toe, bending the right knee and leaving the right heel raised.

[Teaching abbreviation: "up-up-down"]

**Seguito battuto di Canario** (Plural: Seguiti battuti di Canario)

A stamping step, where stamps by the toe, heel, and full foot are arranged in patterns. In this step, it is not only permissible, but required to make a noise with your feet! These are best done in shoes with a hard heel and sole. There are many variations, depending on the individual music.

Heel stamp: Swing the foot forward, hitting the ground with the back edge of the heel.

Toe stamp: Swing foot back, smacking the ball of the foot on the ground.

Stamp: Full flat foot hits the ground

Bella Gioiosa pattern:

Left stamp, right heel, right toe, right stamp, left heel, left toe, left stamp, right heel, right toe, left stamp.

Another common pattern is:

Left heel, left toe, left stamp, right heel, right toe, right stamp, left heel, left toe, left stamp, right stamp, left stamp.

**Seguito scorso** (Plural: Seguiti scorsi)

A Seguito ordinario done double-time.

**Seguito semidoppio** (Plural: Seguiti semidoppii) [Negri]

Two Passi and a Seguito ordinario.

**Spezzato semidoppio** (Plural: Spezzati semidoppii) [Caroso]

Two Passi and a Spezzato ordinario.

**Spezzato** [1582 style] (Plural: Spezzati; Full name: Seguito spezzato)

Take a step with the left foot, place the ball of the right foot next to the heel of the left foot, straighten the right knee, keeping the left foot level. The left foot does not touch the ground during this movement. Keep the left knee straight as you rise up.

[Teaching abbreviation: "spez"]

### **Spezzato turning into a Cadenza**

Do a Spezzato turning slightly to the left, then use the impulsion of the “up-down” part of the step to continue turning to the left on the ball of the foot, ending up facing front.

Gentlemen may choose to jump into the air while turning (the jump is off the left foot only, not both feet).

[Teaching abbreviation: “spez-tour”]

### **Sottopiede** (Plural: Sottopiedi)

Spring on to the left toe, keeping the knee straight, and bring the right foot flat underneath the left foot; replace the left foot with the right foot, while kicking the left foot out. Do not lean into this. This is often done to the side or flanking at an angle.

[Teaching abbreviation: “step-cut”]

[We have simplified this step a little bit. For those who are interested, Caroso’s original version is to spring to the side into a trabuchetto, then continue as above.]

### **Trabuchetto** (Plural: Trabuchetti)

Spring lightly onto the left toe about 4” distance from original position, bringing the right heel next to the left, and pointing the right toe up and a little to the right. Both knees must be kept straight. Then lower the left heel slightly, without letting the right heel touch the floor. Before you hit the ground, spring on to the right toe to begin the next Trabuchetto.

[Teaching abbreviation: “trab”]

### **Trabuchetto grave, presto**

These are the same as the Trabuchetto above, but take different amounts of time, according to the music.

### **Tritto minuto**

Three tiny hops to the left, feet together and knees straight.

### **Saltino à piedi pari** (Plural: Saltini à piedi pari)

A small single jump with feet together and knees straight.



## ☞ Other Terms

**Balletto** - A complex dance which usually has sections arranged in different tempi or rhythm patterns.

**Cascarda** - A lively dance in which all the sections are done to the same tempo, in triple time.

**Chiusa** - A “closing” figure, that is repeated at the end of all or most of the sections of a dance.

**Contra tempo** - Outside the music (usually refers to the Riverenza at the beginning or end of the dance)

**Fiancheggiati** - Moving at an angle to the line of the dance - sometimes to the rear, sometimes forward.

The angle is usually about 45°.

(Synonyms: Flanking, Tacking)

**Grave** - Slow (Pronounced “grah-vay”)

**Breve** - Taking the time of one breve measure (Pronounced “breh-vay”)

**Minimo** - Least or little

**Presto** - Quick

**Semibreve** - Taking the time of half of one breve measure. (Pronounced “semmy-breh-vay”)

**In own circle** - The step(s) are performed while the dancer turns around himself.

**In passeggio** - Couples dancing in a column.

**In ruota / Da farsi in ruota** - In a wheel / To be done in a wheel. This can be blocked either with the couples along the line of a circle, or as the spokes of a wheel.

**Jousting / Giostra** - A figure where the dancers move past each other in straight lines and return to their original places.

**Ritornello** - A short phrase at the end of a section which is repeated for each dancer to do in turn.

**Sciolta** - A section of the dance which has a faster tempo than the rest of the dance.

**Solo** - A section where one partner dances alone while the other(s) watch.

## ☞ Some Combinations to practice:

(These phrases should be practiced in both directions.)

- 2 Reprise LL, 2 Trabuchetti LR, Spezzato turning L into a Cadenza.
- 4 Spezzati LRLR, 2 Scambiate LR
- 2 Saffici fiancheggiati LR to the rear, 1 Corinto flanking forward (returning to place)
- 2 Passi ordinarii LR fwd, Cadenza, 4 Trabuchetti LRLR, 2 Riprese L, 2 Trabuchetti LR, 1 Spezzato turning L into a Cadenza.
- 2 Fioretti à piedi pari LR, 2 Passi presti LR to the rear, 2 Spezzati LR forward.
- 2 Fioretti à piedi pari LR, 2 Trabuchetti grave LR, 2 Passi presti LR, Cadenza

## ☞ French Renaissance Dance Steps - from Orchesographie, by Thoinot Arbeau

### **Allemand single**

Take a step forward with the left, holding the right foot in the air for an instant before placing it on the ground. (This resembles the German goose-step.)

[Teaching abbreviation: "step-kick"]

### **Allemand double**

Take three steps forward, left-right-left, on the last holding the right foot in the air for an instant before placing it on the ground.

### **Bransle**

A dance, often done in a circle.

A movement in four counts in the Pavane or Basse Dance:

1. Standing next to one's partner, holding usual hands, each dancer turns to the outside without moving their feet.
2. Each dancer faces forward.
3. Each dancer turns to the outside again, still without moving the feet.
4. Each dancer looks at their partner.

### **Bransle Single**

Move the left foot to the left, then bring the right foot next to it.

- This can be varied by doing them as Reprise. They can also be jumped (like jumping-jacks). This is called a jumped single.

(Teaching abbreviation: "apart-together")

### **Bransle Double**

Move the left foot to the left, then bring the right foot next to it. Repeat this. In other words, a double is two singles.

- This can be varied by doing them as Reprise. They can also be jumped (like jumping-jacks). This is called a jumped double. One may ornament this step by replacing the second single with a fleuret.

### **Congé**

A leave-taking; one performs the Révérence (Riverenza) before parting from one's dance partner.

### **Divided Double**

In a Bransle, a double may be ornamented by replacing the second step with a fleuret.

In a Pavane, a divided double is as follows:

Replace each of the three steps forward with two short quick steps, then gently raise and lower the heels.

### **Fleuret**

Three tiny kicks left-right-left (or right-left-right), with the foot relaxed. This is an optional ornament.

**Galliard five-step** (Synonyms: Cinque Passi in Gagliarda, Sinkapace)

Kick the left foot out, (the foot is relaxed, not pointed), kick right, kick left, kick right, hold the right foot in the air for a beat, then land on both feet in a cadenza with the right foot back.

- There are a great many variations on this step.

**Pavane single**

Move the left foot forward until its heel is even with the toes of the right foot, and place it flat on the ground four or five fingers' width from the right foot. Bring the right foot alongside the left. Slightly lift both heels and lower them. Keep the knees straight.

**Pavane double**

Take three walking steps. At the end of the third step, bring the right foot alongside the left. Slightly lift both heels and lower them, as in the Pavane single. Keep the knees straight.

**Reprise - 4 counts**

Standing next to one's partner, holding usual hands:

1. Each dancer turns to the outside, moving their outside foot so its toe points to the outside, then returning to the starting position. (I.e., the man will turn to the left, and move his left toe, and the woman will turn to the right and move her right toe.)
2. Each dancer turns to the outside, moving their outside foot so its toe points to the outside, then returning to the starting position.
3. Each dancer turns their face to their partner, moving their inside foot so its toe points toward their partner.
4. Each dancer turns to the outside, moving their outside foot so its toe points to the outside and returning it, as in the first movement.

- The weight remains evenly distributed on both feet throughout, and the heels are not moved.

