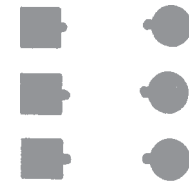


The Duck Dance

I first learned this dance from Teddy Boy Houle, a Metis fiddler from Manitoba, and since then have found it in many different communities, mainly in the north. The Metis call it their national dance because it includes the figure eight infinity symbol, prominently featured on their flag. They also say that the first couple represents a mother duck and the others the ducklings who follow her.

For a fascinating study of native fiddling and dancing in the north, see Craig Mishler's book "Crooked Stovepipe". In it, he suggests that the Duck Dance is a direct descendent of the English Country Dance "Grimstock" published in 1651!



Suitable for: Grade four to adult

Formation: Longways set for three couples

Music: Reels (CD #13)

First Figure: Facing toward the music, near hands joined. Go **forward and back**. Repeat.

Second Figure: **Cast off** — men to the left, women to the right. Meet your partner at the end of the set, rejoin hands and walk back to original position. Repeat.

Third Figure: Duck and Dive

This is an over-and-under, everybody-moving figure similar to that in La Plongeuse (page 24). The top couple begins by turning around and rejoining inside hands. They make an arch for couple #2 to pass through, then immediately dive through an arch made by couple #3, then turn around, and continue the over/under pattern back to the top. This move is unique from its many variations in that the centre couple is always diving through an arch, and the outer two are always making an arch.

Repeat, for a total of two full tours.

Fourth Figure: Figure Eight

The lead couple, upon reaching the top of the set, takes hands in **promenade position** and together cast out to the left and begin the figure eight by passing diagonally through the other two couples, who follow and alternately cross through the centre of the figure. (see figure 12)

After two full times through the figure eight, the top couple goes to the bottom of the set by passing diagonally between the other two couples, just as if they were starting the figure eight again. This time the second couple does not follow, but stays to become the new top couple.



Figure 12: Figure eight

Lo Brisa-Pè

This is a popular party dance across Europe, with many local variants, and is also called Brise Pied. The singing on the CD is in Occitan, a language spoken in the south of France. For more information on Occitan language and culture, see the Talvera website www.talvera.org/fr/occitanie.html, le Centre Occitan de Recherche, de Documentation et d'Animation Ethnographiques.



Formation: Circle of couples, hands joined.
Gender is not important, but do identify your partner and corner.

Music: CD #2 'Lo Brisa-Pè'
from *Dançadas*, by La Talvera

A Step L, close R, step L, close R, step L, stamp stamp (RR) (8 beats)
Step R, close L, step R, close L, step R, stamp stamp (LL) (8 beats)

Repeat all the above.

B Put hands on hips and do a quarter turn on the spot to face your partner (3 steps), then a half turn to face your corner, then a full turn and a half more to face your partner, and clap twice. Feet don't matter here – just use the one that feels easiest.

Do the same, beginning with your corner, then partner, ending with the claps facing your corner.

NOTE: Each of these turns changes direction, and always begins by turning towards the centre of the circle. It looks very impressive if everyone does it the same way.

There are quite a few examples of this dance on YouTube. Search for Brise Pied.

On the surface, this is a relatively easy dance, but it is in fact a powerful workout for your brain.

Many of us have brains that are strongly one-sided, and dances such as this which require us to turn both directions, can be effective tools to rebalance this discrepancy.

For more information on brain development and movement, see Anne Green Gilbert's *Brain-Compatible Dance Education*, and the other resources on her website www.creativedance.org.

Simpler Version:

Hands free, each dancer moving individually.
You can either do it in a circle, or scattered throughout the room.

Step L, close R, step L, close R, step L, clap clap (8 beats)

Step R, close L, step R, close L, step R, clap clap (8 beats)

Repeat all the above.

Put hands on hips and turn one direction (4 beats), turn the other direction (4 beats), then turn all the way around and clap twice (8 beats).

Repeat.

Ont te'n vas, te'n vas Jan Maria
Ont te'n vas, te'n vas de bon matin?

Me'n vau a la vila, cercar una filha
Quand tòrni a l'ostal
Soi piètre coma un gal!

Me'n vau a la noça, faire la
bambòcha
Quand tòrni a l'ostal
Soi magre coma un gal.

Me'n vau a la picina,
nadar ambe la cosina
No tòrni a l'ostal
Fièr coma un perdigal.

These are the Occitan words. For
an English translation, see page 25.

Lo Brisa-Pè

G D 1. G 2. G

L R L R L stamp stamp. R L R L R stamp stamp.

G D G D G

Now to your part-ner Now to your cor-ner All the way a-round clap clap.

D G D G

Now to your cor-ner Now to your part-ner All the way a-round clap clap.

Maître de la Maison

A haunting old melody from Gascony, and a simple, satisfying dance, a medieval branle.

Formation: Open circle, hands joined, leader on the left.

Music: CD #7 'Maitre de la Maison'
from *Rags to Racenicas* by the Flying Tomatoes

Doubles: *Step L, close R, step L, touch R.* (4 beats) *Step R, close L, step R, touch L.* (4 beats)
Step L, close R, step L, touch R. (4 beats) *Step R, close L, step R, touch L.* (4 beats)

Singles: *Step L – touch R, R – touch L, L – touch R, R – touch L* (8 beats)

Let go hands and individually make a full turn in place in four steps (*LRLR*).
On the fourth step, bring both feet together and lift the heels slightly off the floor, then bring them back to earth for beat 5 and 6. So this will sound like: *LRL up down*.

Rejoin hands to start again.

Arms: The arms swing forward and back in time with the music,
forward on beats 1,3,5, etc., and back on beats 2,4,6, etc.

As in *An Dro Retourné*, make the steps to the left bigger than those to the right. The line will move to the left, and the leader may choose their own path.

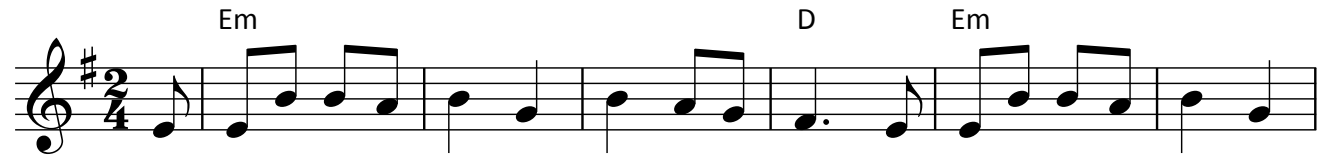


If your dancers are new to this kind of choreography, it's probably worth practicing the arms and the feet separately.

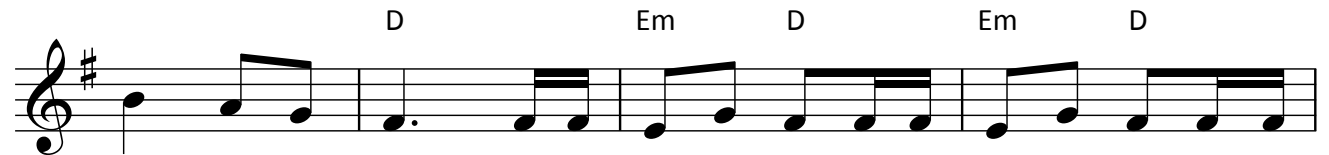
As with all such step-oriented dances, be gentle with those who become confused. Give them some time to become proficient with the steps before you have everyone join hands and dance together.

If some still feel shaky, allow them to dance behind the line for awhile so that they can watch a pair of feet. Then encourage them to join the line as soon as they're comfortable.

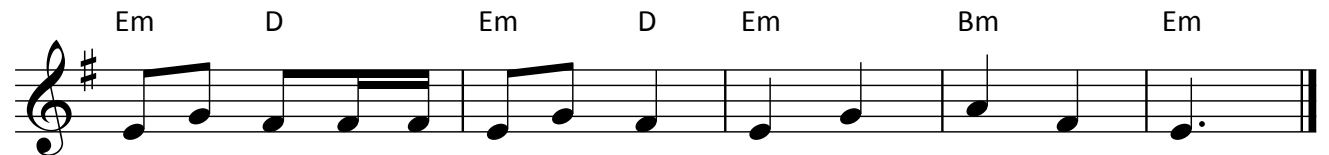
Maître de la Maison



Où rest-e donc le maît - re de la mai - son Où rest-e donc le maît - re
Doubles: *Left - right - left - touch Right - left - right - touch etc.*



de la mai - son? Il de - scend la rue, ou - blie sa char - rue bien qu'il
Singles: *Left - touch Right - touch*



se - rait temps d'la - bour - er les champs.
Left - touch Right - touch. Left - right - left - up - down.

Les Jumeaux

This is a hybrid dance—my take on the pan-European tradition of ‘mock fighting’ dances, such as Oxdansen (Swedish), Degn Dansen (Danish), Saint Ferréol (Catalogne), Kohanochka (Russia), and first cousin to others such as Capoeira (Brazil), and Morris Dancing (England). What remains constant is the sense of physical play that comes with strong, contrary movements requiring much cooperation and physical coordination between partners.

Formation: Longways set, partners facing each other.

Music: CD #12 ‘Les Jumeaux’

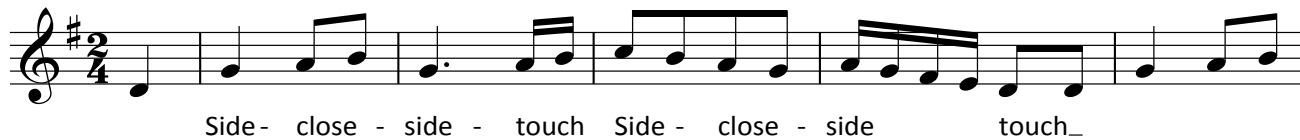
A (Truce) Moving first toward the music and stepping the same direction as your partner:

Side-close-side-touch, (now away from the music) *Side-close-side-touch*. Repeat.

Arms can be held on your hips during this part.

B (Fight) The dancers execute a series of opposing movements – two slow ones, and five quick.

See the stick men on the opposite page.



This dance lends itself to great creativity. There’s no reason why you have to do the moves that I’ve described. You could create a dance about any story that you can tell in eight moves:

Water cycle

Three Bears

A baseball game

The Odyssey

Or you could dispense with theme altogether, and simply create opposing, interlocking moves.

Have fun!

1. Clap alternately right and left.



2. Scissor kicks - alternate left and right leg in front.



3. With hands on hips, one dancer leans forward threateningly, while the other leans back.



4. Take turns making ugly faces at each other.



5. Grizzly Bear: One dancer rises up like an irate bear, while the other cowers in fear.



6. Turning: One dancer turns his back on his partner, arms folded. Then they both jump to change direction. A grumpy expression really helps here.



7. Fake slapping: This one will require some practice. Once dancer pretends to slap her partner on the face. Her partner reacts by leaning sideways away from the slap and clapping her hands to give the impression that the slap actually took place.



Note that the music slows a bit the 5th and 6th times through, to give you time to do more difficult moves.

8. Handshakes or Embracing: Depending on the comfort level of your group, dancers can make up by a series of handshakes or by fake kisses on each cheek.

