

From Catherine Turocy, 2017 Summer Historical Dance Workshop in Seattle, produced by The New York Baroque Dance Company with partial support from the National Endowment for the Arts

This document can be found in the Library of Congress Website along with other dance manuals.

Please note our class did not complete the entire drill, but the entire drill is described on these pages. There is no accompanying music as it is to be chosen by the one directing the drill.



A SCARF DRILL

THE pose plastique in a drill is an innovation. The word drill suggests something studied and regular, and the present adaptation is, therefore, somewhat paradoxical, since there is a charming abandon about the figure and a lightness and airiness in the movements that bring before the mental vision a picture of "L'Allegro" and the lines,

"Come! and trip it as you go,
On the light fantastic toe."

This swaying, tripping motion is, in fact, a distinct departure from the usual form of drill. The lithe and supple figures of the youthful company may assume any statuesque pose, and will, when clothed in classic, flowing draperies, be a perfect embodiment of poetic harmony expressed by the graceful movements and attitudes that give this drill to a certain extent the nature of a dance.

Seven maidens of a uniform height take part in the drill, and the costume is a simple but artistic Greek gown that yields to every motion of the wearer, adding greatly to the beauty of the various figures and individual postures. A soft, clinging textile should, of course, be chosen for its development, such as crépon, nun's-veiling, wool batiste, cashmere or cheese-cloth; and it may be either cream-white or of some dainty hue, green, mauve,

heliotrope, blue, yellow and pink being well adapted for display by either natural or artificial light. A rainbow effect may be produced by selecting gauzy scarfs in the primary hues, giving every maid a different color; or, if preferred, the scarfs may match the costumes in tint.

Each wrist is encircled by a ribbon bracelet, to which a metal clapper, like those seen on a tambourine, is fastened on the underside of the arm.

A pretty tableau would make an effective prelude for the drill proper. The curtain should be raised to display it, and then, after a few moments, should be lowered to allow the stage to be cleared for the drill. A simple but pleasing tableau is arranged thus: A couch or divan is placed at the centre of the stage near the back, shown in diagram 1 as A; and over it is thrown a drapery of some delicately tinted fabric. One of the maids reclines upon the couch in a graceful attitude, and behind it stand two maids, B and C in same diagram, who hold feather or punco fans as though about to wave them over their reclining companion. Near the ends of the couch a little in front are two maids, D and E, in the attitude shown at No. 3; and further forward at the centre the two remaining maids, F and G, half recline upon rugs, which are chosen as being in conformity with the character of the tableau.

The accessories used in the tableau having been removed, the curtain should rise on a clear stage, and at the same time the music for the drill should begin, a slow, dreamy movement, being required.

After the first few bars have been played, the maids enter the stage at the centre of the back H, diagram 2, advance in single file with a tripping or dancing step, and take the position shown in the initial illustration, the maids standing one behind another at the centre, as indicated by the vertical dotted line in diagram 2. The scarf is passed about the hips and carelessly knotted in front near the top of the skirt. The arms are raised and the wrists held

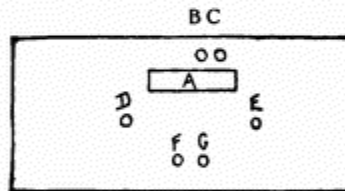


Diagram 1

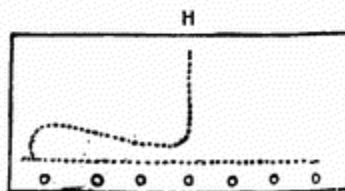


Diagram 2

close to the head, with the palms of the hands forward. The maids execute the skipping movement in perfect unison during several bars (the number will have been decided upon, of course, beforehand), and the column then turns to the left and then to the right until the maids reach the positions indicated by the circles in the diagram, all facing the audience. Illustration No. 1 shows a back view of one of the maids.

A change in position is now made. Each maid lowers her hands, unties the scarf and holds it out almost at arm's length behind the body, as pictured at No. 2. The maids dance side by side with a swinging, pendulous motion, and the line

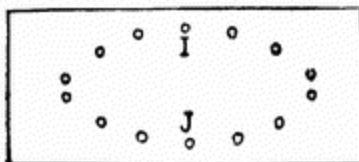


Diagram 3

curves inward, as denoted by the upper row of circles, marked I in diagram 3, and then outward, as indicated by the row marked J, the scarfs being still held at arm's length.

A charming tableau representing the Graces may now be

formed, the maids, who are constantly tripping to the measures of the music, grouping themselves as follows: One takes the position shown at No. 3, standing near the back of the stage at the centre; K, diagram 4. Three maids having knotted their scarfs about their hips, form a ring in front to the left, L;

all face the audience, poise themselves upon their toes and join hands in a circle, the hands being held well backward. At M another group of three is



No. 2



No. 1

formed, one maid being in the centre and one at each side. The centre maid places her right arm about the neck of the maid on her right; the latter's left hand clasps the right hand of the maid on the left, who leans her head upon the centre maid's shoulder and places her left hand in that of the centre maid; and the maid at the right places her right hand on her right hip. In this group, also, each maid knots her scarf about her hips.

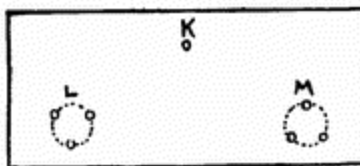


Diagram 4

The curtain should be lowered for a few moments after this tableau, and then rise to display the maids in the posture represented at No. 4 (which is a back view), all facing the audience. Each maid throws her scarf upward in bow fashion, the pose suggesting the picture of Iris, the goddess of the rainbow; and the company form a curved rank, as in diagram 3, their bodies swaying slightly to the music. The artistic effect of this figure would be greatly



No. 3

her right hand high above her head and waves it toward the floor to produce a serpentine effect. All the maids face the audience except the one at each end. The maid at the right-hand end turns and waves her scarf toward her neighbor, curving her left arm gracefully. The next maid returns the compliment by waving her scarf toward the end maid, her left hand being held out as if to clasp her neighbor's left. The third maid rests her left hand on her hip, the fourth raises hers to the embroidered band encircling the bodice, and the fifth and sixth maids allow their left arms to hang easily. The maid at the left-hand end turns her body toward her neighbor and her head over her right

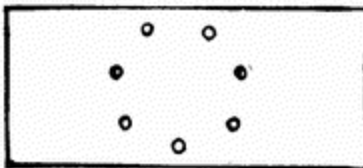


Diagram 6

shoulder toward the audience, curving her left arm. The movements of the company give the scarfs

the undulating motion which, when gracefully executed, is such a charming feature of this figure. The maids now trip alternately backward and forward, as indicated by the dotted lines in diagram 8, waving the scarfs all the time; they then fall into graceful postures forming a tableau thus: The centre maid quickly ties the scarf about her hips, steps backward to the point marked P, diagram 9, and then forward to Q, and falls upon her right knee,

enhanced if scarfs of chiffon in the prismatic colors were used. Rainbow-tinted chiffon may be purchased by the yard in many shops; but if it cannot be conveniently obtained, the rainbow effect may be produced with chiffon scarfs in the separate primary colors—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet.

The company now change the curved rank into a V-shaped one, as shown by diagram 5, and then form a complete circle, as in diagram 6. The scarf is lowered, as at No. 5, the arms being held out at full length and the scarf gracefully supported near each end.

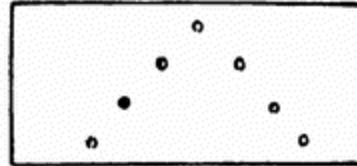


Diagram 5

The step being kept up without cessation, the maids form a line diagonally across the stage, as shown by the row of circles marked N, diagram 7, and then march in the winding course indicated by the dotted line O. They then range themselves once more in a curved rank; and each maid, taking backward and forward steps,

holds one end of her scarf in



No. 4



No. 5

"queen" (who has moved to the centre, diagram 10) forming a canopy over her with their scarfs. If preferred, they could stand and kneel alternately in a whole or half circle about her, or the two lines could curve outward and inward about the kneeling maid.

Lastly, the seven maids assume a reverse attitude, which is most effective and forms a concluding tableau.

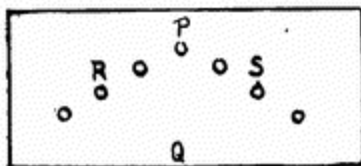


Diagram 9

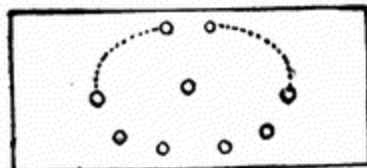


Diagram 10

deavor to express exactly the poetic ideas

It is not necessary to adopt only the Greek garb for this drill. The national costume of any country, especially if it be loose, flowing or picturesque, can be substituted for the one illustrated. Ribbons or garlands of flowers may take the place of the scarfs, although the latter gives the drill its name.

advancing the left foot. As she steps out of the group, she gathers up the lower ends of the scarfs held by the other maids, who stand as shown by the two groups marked R and S, each holding the end of her scarf in her right hand, and placing her left hand on her left hip. The kneeling maid grasping three scarfs in each hand, holds them over her head, and the other maids dance gracefully, swinging the scarfs in unison with their motions.

The six maids now circle about the

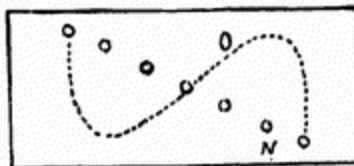


Diagram 7

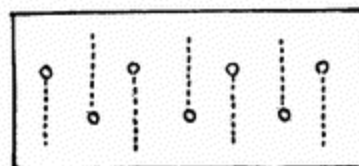


Diagram 8

concluding tableau. The centre maid rises with the six scarfs in her uplifted hands and goes to the rear of the stage; the two maids at each side of her kneel upon one knee, with their left hands resting upon the raised knees or at the side, and with their right hands raised to support the scarfs; and the maids at the ends stand facing each other, holding the scarfs in their extended right hands, and allowing their left arms to fall gracefully. The curtain descends upon this charming tableau.

Considerable practise is necessary, not only to assume quickly the proper attitudes, but also to merge one movement into the next without losing the time or breaking the continuity of the drill. The entire performance must be accurately executed, for the slightest move in the wrong direction would create a most disastrous result. The drill is, however, of such an interesting and artistic nature that those who take part will gladly concentrate their attention upon the director's instructions and endeavor to express exactly the poetic ideas