

DANCE

M- 39
B

- CATEGORY: MEXICO: NOW
- CONCEPTS: FOLKLORE
- ACTIVITY: PERFORMING TWO MEXICAN DANCES.
- OBJECTIVES: Students will perform two dances from Mexico.
- MATERIALS: See directions for each dance.
- PROCEDURE: Here are directions for two dances,
Los Viejitos and El Fado Blanquita.

Los Viejitos

Los Viejitos is a dance that is popular in many Latin American countries. This version of the dance was adapted by Rochelle Robkin so that it could be taught to a class of sixth graders in less than 2 hours. It is traditionally a dance for men and boys but there is no reason girls could not participate if it fits your programming better.

Here is what you need to set up to perform the dance:

- 1) a cane - the main idea is to look very old and tired. Dancers should bend their knees, lean forward, keep one hand on a hip and the other holding the cane:



- 2) masks - white paper plates can be used. With magic marker make pink cheeks, smiling, crinkled faces. Yarn or cotton for beards, mustaches and eyebrows.

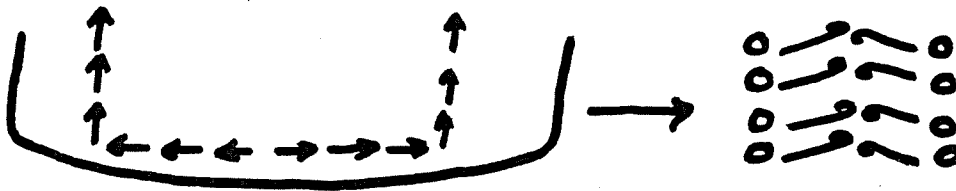


- 3) hats - straw hats with colored paper or ribbon taped on adds color to the dance.
- 4) other clothing - white shirts, colorful sashes, sandals (huaraches).
- 5) music - traditional Mexican "zapateado" music can be used. Contact the Center for Latin America if you need records on a free loan.

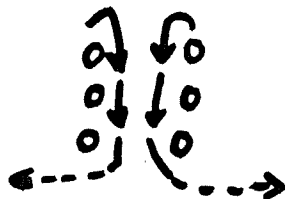
The dance itself can be performed using the traditional Mexican "zapateado," a basic three step: STOMP (r) step (l) step (r) STOMP (l) step (r) step (l)

Rochelle Robkin worked out this relatively simple choreography:

- 1) Enter in a line, hold your back, lean on your cane 13 steps. As you enter, form 2 rows one in front, one in back. When you reach your spot do the step in place.
- 2) Canes in left hand, circle to the left, 6 steps. Canes in right hand, circle to the right, 6 steps.
- 3) repeat #2
- 4) Facing back of stage, do steps forward until front line is even with back line.
- 5) Turn stage front and do 4 steps forward.
- 6) Break line in the middle and leaders (2 end boys) lead each half to sides of stage:



- 7) Lines do 4 steps toward each other.
- 8) Link canes to make a bridge while doing one step in place.
- 9) Starting with the back couple, the pairs help each other under the overhead canes, shaking hands as they emerge and exiting the stage in opposite directions.



- 10) As the final pairs are exiting, one of the last dancers "faints." Those dancers remaining on stage assist the exhausted dancer to exit.

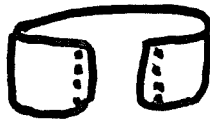
(An interesting twist to the Dance of the Old Men in Brazil is that at some point the dancers begin to dance upright, rapidly and full of vigor. This presents an amusing contrast. If desired it might be incorporated into #7 above.)

El Fado Blanquita

The fado, originally from Brazil and Portugal, has also spread to other parts of Latin America. The version below, the fado blanquita, is danced in Mexico and South Texas. Blanquita is a common nickname for girls. Here is how it was staged and performed in Baraboo.

1. Costumes:

- a. Full, colorful skirts should be worn. The decorated skirts can be made with $2\frac{1}{2}$ yards of fabric with ribbon or bias tape trim.
- b. "Peasant blouses" would be appropriate and are a common wardrobe item.
- c. A wide belt is easy to make. Use at least a 4 inch wide strip of leather, naugahide, felt or even tagboard. A shoelace, piece of yarn or ribbon will lace up the front of the belt.



- d. Either highheels or sandals can be worn.
2. The dance reflects a traditional Mexican image of women. Performers should swish their skirts, stand very upright and adopt a rather coy expression.

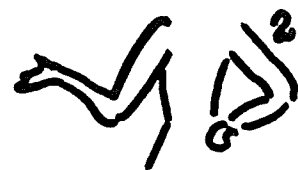
The choreography of the dance is as follows:

1. Enter in a line, go round the front of the stage and form a line at the back of the stage. Stamp on a count of 16.

2. Face right, right foot in front:
rock forward, rock back
rock forward, rock back
rock forward, turn to the left.



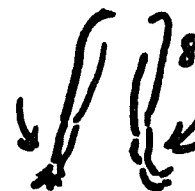
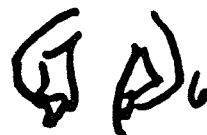
3. Face left, left foot in front:
rock forward, rock back
rock forward, rock back
rock forward, turn to the right.



4. Repeat #2.
5. Repeat #3.



6. Stamp right, stamp left, stamp right.
7. Four waltz steps:
 right-left-right (arms toward right)
 left-right-left (arms toward left)
 right-left-right (arms towards right)
 left-right-left (arms towards left)
8. Four fast steps back as arms come down slowly.
9. Repeat #2-#8 if desired.
10. Skip off stage, holding hands in the same position as in #1.



There are many recorded versions available of the fado. Call a Center for Latin America if you need help in obtaining the music. A good accompanying class activity is to discuss sex roles as they are portrayed in these two dances and compare with dances in the United States.