

A PROVENCAL GARLAND DANCE FROM FRANCE

Source: performed at Sidmouth in 1976

Set ; initially it is 6 mixed couples who dance the introduction, then the women alone linked by 5 garlands perform the main part and then unite with their partners for the exit.

PART 1.

The couple stand together, facing the same way, the man on the left side of the woman. The woman holds the garland by the bottom of the handles and her partner holds them a little higher. Both have left hands etc on the same handle and the man stands just a little behind so that he has his right arm round her shoulders to hold the garland. The first part is danced to a low skip step.

ENTRY: form a column and come on circling anticlockwise. Having danced around a semi-circle, the column goes up the middle of the set (towards audience). At the top the couples cast alternately to right and left and the first 2 couples meet at the bottom after 8 bars. The two groups of 3 couples are now circling in opposite directions and they pass at the bottom by the left - the first passing being in bar 9. They pass again at the top by the right. When they meet at the bottom again they pass through each other, the first pair going in front of the 2nd etc. Repeat at the top. Each move from top to bottom or back takes 8 bars, 16 steps. When the dancers reach the bottom again they turn inwards and come up to the top in lines of 2 couples. It may be necessary for the following pairs to hesitate a while waiting to turn up. The top two rows rotate backwards so that they form a horse shoe. The men then pass the right hand handle of the garland they are holding to the right hand of the women on their left so that the women are linked by the garlands. The man at the extreme left hand end of the line takes the 6th garland and leads the men away from behind the women.

PART 2.

The women dance with a hopstep mostly, quite springy, foot lifted up not forward and all dancers well up on balls of feet. The horseshoe is almost a column with the bottom pair not too much out of line.

1.8 bars step on spot facing in. Start right foot.



initial position

2. No. 2 leads the line through each garland in turn along the path shown in the middle. No. 2 passes between on the hopstep numbered on the right. The first is on the 4th and then each other is 12 hopsteps later, getting to own place at the end of 24 bars. No. 1 does not move from the spot. All step until the dancer has been turned to face out away from the centre. These turns are anticlockwise. The turns take about 2/3 hopsteps. The exact timing is a little variable from performance to performance but match all those quoted to within ± 4 steps. The dancers have been turned out & stopped dancing as No. 2 passes them in the next passing on what is then the dancers left. No. 2 holds the side of her skirt in her right hand & No. 1 in her left. When the dancers turn out they bring their knees together but do not cross the hands.

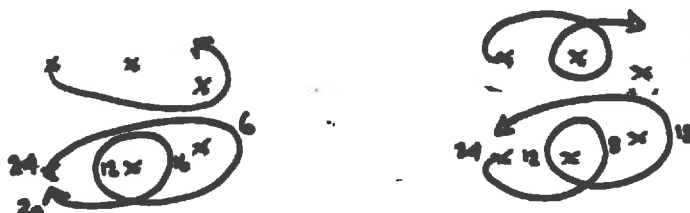
In this wound up position No. 2 has a little bit of stepping. Right foot forward & tap while hopping on the left and turn clockwise enough to pass under the garland, in one bar. Repeat with left foot and turn back anticlock.



Provençal 2.

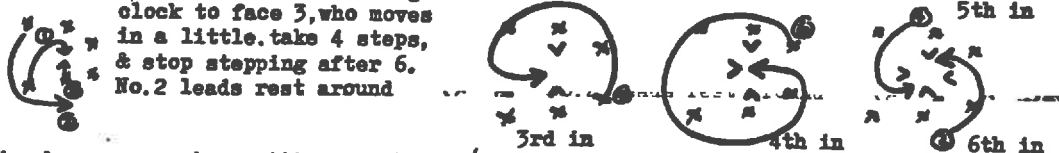
To unwind, no. 2 follows the path indicated going clockwise round each position. The size of the loops both winding and unwinding is dependent on the number of free dancers in the chain. Having passed between 1 & 3, 2 goes down the centre of the set and sweeps out back to place so that all the evens at least come in to place together.

3. Wind up 2 at a time. The top pair go down the centre and through the bottom garland between 5&6 and cast out following the path indicated to place. The other dancers turn out & face out and stop stepping as before. In the wound up position the ends, 1 & 2 step & turn each way as no. 2 did in the previous movement. The set unwinds in the inverse direction as indicated.



4. The dancers form a bower going round anticlockwise getting into place to raise the overlapping garlands on the 24th step.

No. 1 crosses set turning clock to face 3, who moves in a little. take 4 steps, & stop stepping after 6. No. 2 leads rest around



The dancers are in position on steps 1/3 - 4, 5 - 8, 6 - 14, 4 - 16, 2 - 20 and each stops dancing two steps later.

The men come forward and join hands to form a circle around the bower, 4 steps in, 16 hopsteps once around clockwise, and 4 steps out. At the end the women lower the bower.

No. 2 leads them out, turning the easy way. She faces in but the others are facing out, no. 2 having transferred her handle to her right hand in order to lead. It takes 36 steps to complete and each dancer turns out & follows as late as possible. No. 2 changes the garland handle back to the left on beat 36. No. 1 does not cross back but waits till turned and follows the others round. Nos 4, 6, 5 should start to turn at steps 4, 8, 12 but it takes much longer before 3 & 1 join in - at step 24 and after.

5. Form a Tunnel: The dancers line up in a column down the middle of the set.



6. EXIT: starting with no. 2 the dancers exit up under the arches, picking up other end of own garland as pass through. Each dancer goes up in turn separated by 2/3 hops. As each dancer emerges they are picked up by their male partner in the posture as at the start and dance off. The 6th man brings on the garland for the last woman.