

## JARABE SAN MIGUELITO Puebla, Mexico

The son and jarabe are the most widely spread mestizo dance form in Mexico. The dance has its roots in the Spanish tradition, developing into a Mexican mestizo form in the mid-eighteenth century.

The basic format of the dance is a series of shorter dance melodies (sones) which are strung together in a longer dance version (jarabe). The sections typically alternate between a slower waltz or paseado theme and a more lively zapateado section which uses more intricate footwork.

The Jarabe San Miguelito is a highly traditional example. It is from the state of Puebla and uses the signature costume motif of the China Poblana (sequined skirt) and Chinaco (bell-bottomed pant and simple shirt).

During the nineteenth century, the public women (mujeres públicas) of Puebla were known as "Las Chinas." These were the compañeras de partido, the women who had too much of a smile, sensuous walking styles, who offered their fresh lips to the highest bidder. This class of women dressed in extreme elegance in order to attract their clientel. Their daily dress was a skirt with a central section in red wool richly embroidered with spangles, (lentejuelas). This central panel was called "el castor" (now the word is used to identify the entire skirt) and was bordered with green material generally of silk. The blouse was at one time embroidered with thread, but later with bead-work (chaquira) to match the luxurious texture of the castor. Because the dress of las chinas was so beautiful, the other women of Puebla longed to incorporate it in their wardrobes. About 1954, some of the decent women began to wear el castor to special dinners at the palace and even to mass on Sunday. Their husbands complained bitterly, not wanting their wives to make spectacles of themselves in public. But vanity won out, and gradually the dress of las chinas, became the accepted elegant women's dress of the state of Puebla and was christened La China Poblana.

A contemporary version of La China Poblana is fully sequined castor costing around 2,500 pesos. El castor is divided into four parts, each with a separate design: in front, the eagle; in back, an Aztec motif; on the right, el charro bailando; on the left, la china bailando. The lower border is generally embroidered with flowers. At charriadas (rodeos), the Jarabe Tapatio is generally danced by a woman in La China Poblana (la mujer mas bella) partnered by El Charro (the masculine symbol of Mexico).

Profesor Elias Guerra of Puebla commented on the legend of the Mongolian Princess as the creator of La China Poblana. According to this legend, a Mongolian Princess was abducted from her Asian home and transported to Puebla, Mexico by way of the trade route connecting Manila and Acapulco. A wealthy man of Puebla bought her,

## JARABE SAN MIGUELITO (Continued)

raised her almost as a daughter, and converted her to Christianity. She decided to become a nun, but the day before she went into the convent she attended a farewell party and put on el castor de las Chinas. However, remembering her royal dresses as a child, she decorated el castor y las blusa even more richly. The legend says that from that time on, all the women of Puebla imitated the final party gown of this daring Princess. According to Profesor Guerra, the dress already existed in Mexico and was called "La Cantarina de San Juan."\*

\*A third legend about the China Poblana is in the book Mexican Native Costumes by Luis Covarrubias, Editor Fishgrund.

JARABE SAN MIGUELITO

Puebla, Mexico

Source: Taught to Susan Cashion by Maestro Elias Guerra of Puebla, Mexico in 1977.

Pronunciation:

Record: Special tape

6/8 meter

Formation: Often danced by a single couple. Multiple couples are randomly scattered throughout dance space. Characteristic to sones and jarabes, the partners never touch. The man clasps his hands behind his back (waist high), the woman holds her skirt and lifts it just enough to display her petticoat.

Symbols: ● = Man      ○ = Woman

Meas Ct I. PASEADO Entrance song (verse)

During the opening verse, the ptrs stroll past each other and return to their space. The rhythmic structure is handled freely. The feeling is casual, slow, relaxed, a time to get acquainted.

II. FIGURE EIGHT (Instrumental) 6/8 meter

1-2 Introduction.

3 1 Step R - small gliding step.

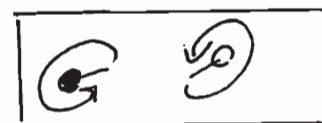
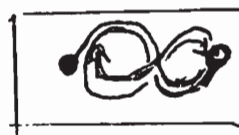
3 Step L

5 Step R

4-8 Repeat meas 3, alternating ftwk until music terminates.

Ending turn: Step L, cross R over L and take one CCW turn on both ft. Step back on L, slide R to L.

During Fig II dancers are executing a Figure 8 pattern around their ptr and finishing back in place for the turn. Each time they pass each other, the R shldr pass.



III and IV

Repeat Fig I and Fig II.

Figure-8

Turn in place

V. BORRACHO 6/8 meter

1 1 Step to R, tilting body to R.

3 Cross L behind R.

5 Step to R.

2 Repeat meas 1 with opp ftwk and tilt.

3 1 Step fwd on R.) Moving twd ptr, R shldr together.

3 Step fwd on L.)

5 Step fwd on R, 1/2 pivot turn CCW.

4 1 Step bkwd on L.

3 Step on R beside L.

During meas 3-4, ptrs have changed places.

5-32 Repeat meas 1-4 a total of 8 times (the first 4 sets will have musical accompaniment, the last 4 the verse of El Durazno).

# JARABE SAN MIGUELITO (Continued)

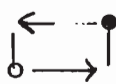
## VI. GUAJITO

- |       |   |                                    |
|-------|---|------------------------------------|
| 1     | 1 | Step L.                            |
|       | 3 | Step in place with R heel.         |
|       | 4 | Step L.                            |
|       | 6 | Step in place with R toe.          |
| 2-7   |   | Repeat meas 1 six times (7 in all) |
| 8     | 1 | Final stamp with L ft.             |
| 9-16  |   | Repeat meas 1-8 with opp ftwk.     |
| 17-32 |   | Repeat meas 1-16.                  |

During Fig VI the M and W are either crossing while facing each other, or the M is following the W.



1-8



8-16



17-24



25-32

## VII. FIGURE EIGHT

- 1-8 Repeat Fig II.

## VIII. PUNTEADO

- |      |     |   |
|------|-----|---|
| 1    | 1   | Light jump onto R, crossing in front of L.  |
|      | 2   | Maintain wt on R and tap L toe behind R.  |
|      | 4   | Light jump back onto L, crossing behind R.  |
|      | 5   | Maintain wt on L, tap R toe in front of L.  |
| 2    | 1   | Step to R on R.   |
|      | 4-5 | Repeat meas 1, cts 1,2 with opp ftwk.   |
| 3    | 1-2 | Repeat meas 1, cts 4-5 with opp ftwk.   |
|      | 4   | Step L.   |
| 4    | 1   | Step R.   |
|      | 4   | Step L.   |
|      |     | During last three steps, make a CCW turn.   |
| 5-40 |     | Repeat meas 1-4 a total of 10 sets, the first 4 sets, or 16 meas, are with instrumental accompaniment; then the verse enters and there are 6 more sets. |

Man's variation:

- |       |     |   |
|-------|-----|---|
| 17-40 |     | The M change to a <u>zapateado</u> variation and dance around the W who maintains the <u>punteado</u> . She turns to always face the M. |
| 17    | 1   | Step R.   |
|       | 2   | Maintaining wt on R, brush L heel to front.   |
|       | 3   | " " " " " " toe to back   |
|       | 4-6 | Repeat cts 1-3 with opp ftwk.   |
| 18    | 1   | Step R.   |
|       | 2   | Step L.   |
|       | 3   | Step R.   |
|       | 4-6 | Repeat meas 17, cts 4-6.  |
| 19-40 |     | Repeat meas 17-18, alternating ftwk.  |

JARABE DE SAN MIGUELITO(Continued)Ending for Fig VIII. TURN

The rhythmic phrase changes and the musicians sing:  
"Da la vuelta, y vamanos" -"Take a turn, and let's  
go on."

During this phrase, the dancers take a similar turn  
as the ending of Fig II.

IX. FIGURE EIGHT

1-8

Repeat Fig II.X. BORRACHO

1-32

Repeat Fig V.XI. FIGURE EIGHT

1-8

Repeat Fig II.

Presented by Susan Cashion