

BATAKOTO

(Nigeria, Africa)

This is an African dance used for religious ceremonies. It is used when there is a presentation at the altar. It has been adapted for the stage in many places.

Formation: Free; dancers may be anywhere in the dancing area. Dancers may follow a leader in the pattern changes, or may feel free to change individually.

Arms and Hands: Held relaxed at sides, slightly away from body.

Cts Pattern I. Step, close, step, brush

- 1-4 Step R (ct 1), close L (ct 2), step R (ct 3), brush swinging L heel in front of R (ct 4).
 4-8 Repeat L reversing pattern. Variation: On cts 1,2,3 move fwd, bkwd, or turn in place.

Pattern II. Lilting Air

All steps on ball of ft.

- 1-4 Facing fwd, leap to side R, knee flexes (ct 1), close L bending both knees (ct 2), step R, knees remain bent (ct 3). Brush L heel, toe pointing L and body turning L (ct 4).
 4-8 Facing fwd, repeat to L, starting L.

Pattern III. Knees and Hip Sway

Head is always fwd.

- 1-4 Keeping knees close together and slightly bent, step R (ct 1). Moving whole torso to diag L, close L (ct 2). Pivot on R heel to R (ct 3), bend both knees a little more, letting L heel raise (ct 4). Note: after pattern is started, ct 1 is stepping in place. It feels better to move fwd during the pattern.
 5-8 Repeat cts 1-4, reversing pattern to L.
 Arms are held with forearm parallel to the floor; hands are relaxed and slightly close, side of hand with little finger twd floor. Arms move in a circle down, out, up, and to ctr alternately so that when R heel is raised, L arm is up.

Pattern IV. The Walk

Fwd: Knees remain bent during the entire step.

- 1-4 Step R toe out (ct 1), rotate L knee outward and lift with heel slightly leading, bend fwd from waist (ct 2). Step fwd L, toe out (ct 3), knee outward and lift with heel slightly leading, bend fwd from waist (ct 4). Note: To start pattern, lift R knee slightly on the upbeat to ct 1. If done correctly knees will form points of an open diamond on cts 2,4. The step appears as if one is going over a high obstacle (cts 2,3,4,1).
Bkwd: Repeat cts 1-4 but moving bkwd on cts 1 and 3.

Presented by Joseph Ayewusi