



Let's Chasse

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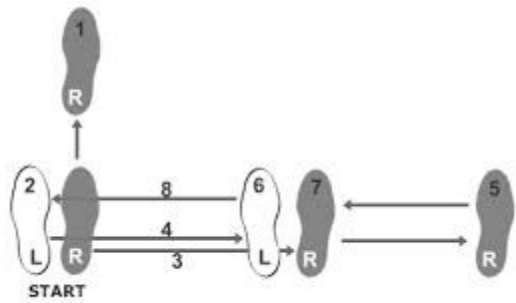
The basic building blocks of dance are steps. We dance forward, back, side. The **Chasse** is just a little more complex. In the basic Chasse, we step side, close, side. The Chasse is a "chase" -- one step (the closing step) chases another (the side step). We can start with either foot, but in standard choreography, we are in closed position, or at least a facing position. For instance, the **Forward and Chasse to SCP** might begin in banjo position M facing DLW. He steps forward R (W bk L) both turning to closed position M facing wall. Now the Chasse -- sd L/cl R, sd L (W sd R/cl L, sd R) turning to SCP on the last step. The timing in waltz would be 12&3; in foxtrot, SQ&Q. Notice that we are in closed position during the Chasse. We begin in banjo and we end in semi-closed, but during the Chasse itself, we are facing partner. We turn to closed during the first step and we turn to semi during the last step. During the Chasse, we face partner.

The **Thru and Chasse to Banjo** might begin in SCP LOD. He steps thru R (W thru L) turning to CP, sd L/cl R, sd L (W sd R/cl L, sd R) blending to banjo position on the last step, M facing DLW.

A little bit of controversy arises when we dance **Thru and Chasse to SCP**. This one begins and ends in SCP. Standard form asks us to turn to CP on the first step and then turn back to SCP on the last step, but many have danced this figure remaining in SCP throughout, and this shape is accepted American style (as opposed to the facing shape of International (and Roundalab) style. In our "Americanized" version, the "side" steps then become "side & forward," and they do flow a little smoother, a little less busy, a little less jerky, even. We might call this a **Semi Chasse**, rather than Chasse to Semi. Many choreographers have used each of these forms: turning to face, as well as staying in SCP.

But let's admit that it feels quite good to turn from SCP to CP during a Chasse, to face partner, maybe even to glance flirtatiously at each other, just out of the corner of your eye. Don't actually gaze into her eyes -- remember, closed position has him looking through his "window," over her right shoulder, and she closes her head, looking left over his right shoulder or even farther left, for *drama*. This turn from SCP to CP feels so good that we have other chasses that exploit that turn and make it even bigger. The **Peek-A-Boo Chasse** does allow us to gaze into each other's eyes, as we step side and close, and the **Ripple Chasse** incorporates a little sway toward RLOD during the side/close. But don't turn as far as to reverse semi-closed position, and don't break your trailing sides -- don't turn the ripple into a violent thrashing. The **Tipple Chasse** incorporates a little sway toward LOD, so again it punctuates the turn toward partner and makes it a picture. We also turn RF during a Tipple Chasse. A Ripple is sway away from our line of progression. A Tipple is sway toward our line of progression and usually involves turn ("tipping" around a corner).

The **Turn Left and Right Chasse** might begin in CP DLC. The steps for the man are forward L, sd R/cl L, sd R, but there is turn on each step so that we end in banjo position M facing DRC (12&3 in waltz). So, once again, the Chasse is not pure. Each side step is really side and small forward, in order to accomplish the turn. Again, we can start with



either foot (Turn Right and Left Chasse?), begin with a forward, side, or back, turn left or right, and turn to varying degrees.

Can we find other Chasse examples? In two step, we have the Side Two Step -- sd, cl, sd (QQS). In cha, we have the Side Cha (Q&Q). In merengue, there is a Glide -- sd, cl, sd, cl, sd, cl (1&2&3&4) -- We can count three "chasing" steps in this busy little figure, definitely a kind of Chasse. In slow two step, we have

Traveling Chasses. In CP, we dance fwd L turning LF, sd R cl L; fwd R turning RF, sd L cl R (SQQSQQ).

In quickstep, there is a Progressive Chasse. In CP often facing DRW, we dance back R (W fwd L) beginning to turn LF, sd L, cl R, sd L (SQQS) to banjo. Again, the side steps are side and slightly back (forward for the lady), to accomplish the LF turn. Quarter Turn and Progressive Chasse actually has two Chasses in it. In CP often facing DLW, we dance fwd L, fwd R turning 1/8 RF, sd L, cl R turning 1/8 RF, sd and bk L to CP DRW (SSQQS). Then we dance the Progressive Chasse to DLW. Two times, we dance a side-close-side, but in each case, we adjust the side steps to accomplish the turns.

In bolero, there is a Riff Turn, in which the man dances sd, cl, sd, cl, while the lady spins (QQQQ). In tango, there is a Chasse Tap Ending that can be added to any figure that normally ends with a side-close, such as the Closed Promenade. The Chasse Tap Ending is done in CP. We dance sd L (W sd R), cl R, and then tap or press the lead foot, without weight blending to SCP. Where the Chasse to SCP ends with trail feet free, the Chasse Tap Ending ends with lead feet free. In paso doble, we have Chasses to Right. In CP we dance sd R (W sd L), cl L, sd R, cl L (QQQQ). Note that in one measure we have two "chasing" steps; hence the plural name. In west coast swing, we have the Triple Travel with Roll, which incorporates four Chasses -- sd, cl, sd (1&2). We'll let you look up the details if you like, but again, each one uses little forward or back components to accomplish the turns in the figure.

The Chasse is a straightforward bit of choreography, but you can do a lot with it, and it feels much better than its simplicity may imply.

