

THE MESCOLANZES

G.M.S. Chivers claimed to have invented Mescolanzas, and described twelve in his *The Dancers' Guide*, 1821. His Mescolanzas were first mentioned in a newspaper advertisement by Chivers in 1819.

This description from J. S. Pollock's *Companion to La Terpsichore Moderne*, c.1830. The description is reproduced on page 4. Chivers' 1821 Mescolanzas is on p. 4.

Reconstruction by Richard Powers

Formation: Double longways set, four facing four, improper, with top couples changing places.

O	X	O	X
X	O	X	O
X	O	X	O
X	O	X	O
X	O	X	O

"In large parties, this dance may be performed in lines of six or eight instead of four."

Pollock clearly describes the progression as duple minor sets, not the more common triple.

The head couples dance to the bottom of the set, change places with partners as they wait, dance to the top, change places again, then the dance is concluded when they reach the bottom of the set the second time. Pollock's illustration of a set of 20 dancers (above) doesn't limit the set to five lines, of course, but it is a good length for this once-and-a-half progression, 15 times through the music.

Mescolanzas No. 1

- A) Taking hands 4, all advance and retire twice. [8 bars]
- B) The 4 ladies moulinet by the R hand [4]; Back by the L hands, keeping L hands. [4]
- C) Offering R hand to partners, all set in the form of a cross [4]; Turn partners to place [4]
- D) All set to one's vis-a-vis, slightly advancing. [4]; All turn vis-a-vis halfway, into their place, still facing them at the end of the third chassé [3], then quickly turn on the final jeté and assemblé, to face the next along the line. [4]

Mescolanzas No. 2

- A) Taking hands 4, all advance and retire twice. [8]
- B) The 4 ladies advance to the center and retire [4]; The gents do the same. [4]
- C) All set to partners [4]; Turn partners to place [4]
- D) All set to one's vis-a-vis. [4]; All turn vis-a-vis halfway, into their place, then turn to face the next along the line, as in No. 1. [4]

Mescolanzas No. 3

- A) All change places with partners and set [4]; Back again and set. [4]
- B) The 4 ladies moulinet by the R hand [4]; Back by the L hands, keeping L hands. [4]
- C) Offering R hand to partners, all set in the form of a cross [4]; Turn partners to place [4]
- D) All advance and retire, 4-in-line. [4]; All pass forward through to the next line. [4]
(Note the different progression from No. 1 and 2.)

All three of Pollock's Mescolanzas were copied verbatim in Henry Whale's 1836 *Hommage à Taglioni*, Philadelphia.

A note about the progression:

Even though longways sets were traditionally **triple** minor up to this time period, the Mescolanzas was clearly described as **duple** minor. Here is Pollock's description:

The figure is first danced by the first and second lines, then the first four proceed on to the third, the second remaining at the top of the room...[exchanging places]. After the first line has proceeded to the fourth, the second line begins in the same manner from the top.

It's possible to get caught by that word "After," but in this case, "After" means immediately after the first line progresses to the fourth line. The new top couple begins just after this progression, not after the first line finishes dancing with the fourth line, which would make it a triple minor set. So, during the third repeat of the dance, all four couples at the top are dancing, without a spacer couple standing out.

The reason why I chose Pollock's version over Chivers is because I especially like Pollock's way of progressing in No. 1 and 2, which differs from Chivers' original Mescolanzas (see p.4).

II COMPANION to LA TERPSICHORE

EXPLANATION OF THE MESCOLANZES.

—oo—

O	X	O	X
X	O	X	O
X	O	X	O
X	O	X	O
X	O	X	O

The party is to be arranged in lines of four, as above described, the crosses representing gentlemen, the circles ladies; the first line standing at the top of the room, opposite the next four, all the rest of the party being placed behind the second line in lines of four. The figure is first danced by the first and second lines, then the first four proceed on to the third, the second remaining at the top of the room, and each gent. taking the left of his partner, the same as the first four on commencing. After the first line has proceeded to the fourth the second line begins in the same manner from the top; as each line gets to the bottom of the dance, the gents. again change places with their partners as at the top. The dance is concluded when the first four get to the bottom of the dance for the second time.

MESCOLANZES. 12

FIGURES FOR THE MESCOLANZES.

—oo—

NO. 1. (4 parts.)

All eight advance and retire twice—the four ladies hands across and back again—then give their right hands to partners, and all set in form of a cross, and turn partners to places—each gent. set to opposite lady and turn into each other's places, which brings the first four into the places of the second four.

NO. 2. (4 parts.)

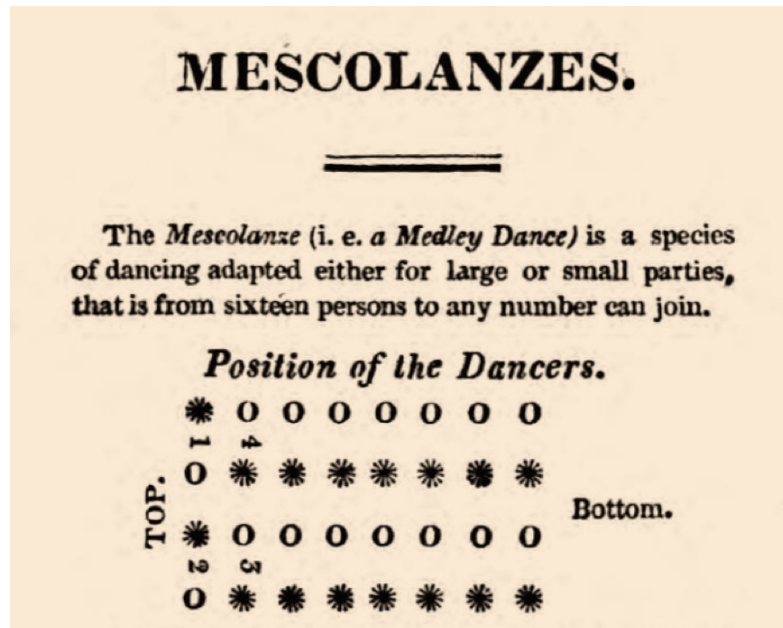
All eight advance and retire twice—the four ladies advance to the centre and retire—the four gents. the same—set to partners and turn—set to the opposite person, and turn half round, as in No. 1.

NO. 3. (4 parts.)

Each gent. change place with partner and set back again and set—ladies hands across and back—set all eight in form of a cross and turn partners—all eight advance, retire, and each cross into the opposite person's place.

N. B. In large parties this dance may be performed in lines of six or eight instead of four.

Here is G.M.S. Chivers' **1821** description from *The Dancers' Guide*:



Pollock's Mescolanzes No. 1 has some similarities to the first Mescolanzes described by Chivers, Here it is:

The Delight...Ladies hands across—back again—set all eight gentlemen outside—set all eight ladies outside and turn to places—advance in two lines—all lead through—(four parts or thirty two bars).

Note the straightforward progression.

The Delight

- A) The 4 ladies moulinet by the R hand [4]; Back by the L hands, keeping L hands. [4]
- B) Offering R hand to partners, all set in the form of a cross [6]; Turn partners halfway, so that the ladies end up on the outside of the cross [2] (timing is my best guess)
- C) All set in this form of a cross [6]; Turn partners halfway, to places. [2]
- D) All advance in two lines; all retire (not specified) [4]; All advance to pass through to the next line. [4] The exact method of passing through isn't specified, but one straightforward possibility is for individual dancers to zig diagonally forward toward the right (2 chassés, or one chassé, jeté, assemblé), then zag forward toward the left (chassé, jeté, assemblé). Or possibly to the left diagonal first.