

Joan Sawyer's Persian Garden Tango

Tango steps described by Joan Sawyer in a series of 1913 and 1914 newspaper articles. Steps described are for gent unless specified otherwise. Lady dances opposite steps.

Part 1: Backing the Lady

The Plain Walk

Ⓢ WP ↑ L ↑ R ↑ L ↑ R (See the end for an explanation of these symbols)

The Major Luna

Ⓢ PP ↑ L ↓ R Ⓢ RS ↓ L ↓ R ↑ L ↑ R

The Plain Walk

Ⓢ WP ↑ L ↑ R ↑ L ↑ R

The Cortez

Ⓢ PP ↑ L ↓ R Ⓢ RS ↓ L ↓ R hold

Repeat Part 1 and twist into Tango Promenade Position at the end of this 2nd time.

Part2: Tango Promenade

The Nip-Up (like a Tango Chassé)

Ⓢ PP ↑ L ↑ R ↑ L ↓ R ↑ L ↑ R ↑ L ↓ R ↑ L ↑ R

The Major Scissors

Man:

Ⓢ PP ↑ L ↓ R Ⓢ RS ↓ L ↓ R ↑ L ↑ R

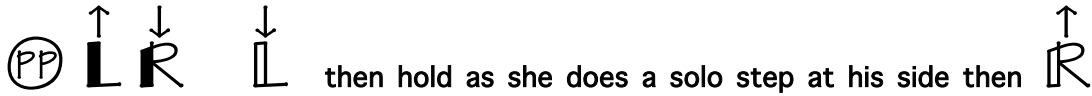
Lady:

Ⓢ PP ↖ R ↓ L Ⓢ RS ⤴ R (↖ L ↓ R ⤴ L)

then repeat Major Scissors, or else do:

The Feather Stitch

Gent:



Lady:



Repeat Part 2. On the last step of the repeat, face partner in closed waltz position.

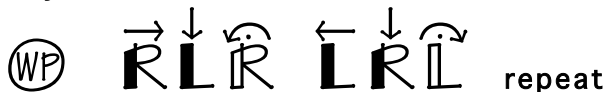
Part 3: Steps in Place

The Back Scissors Lady crosses in front as above and gent crosses behind, backing into center

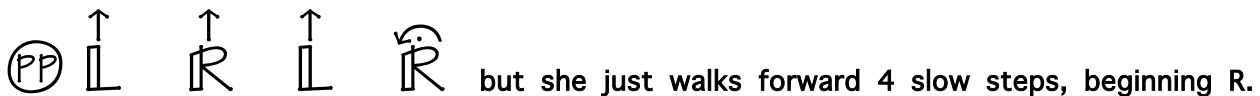
Gent:



Lady:

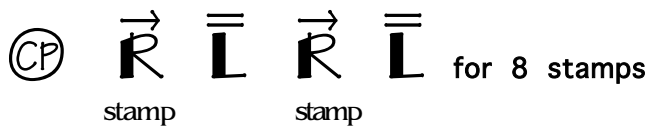


The Slow Walk Forward



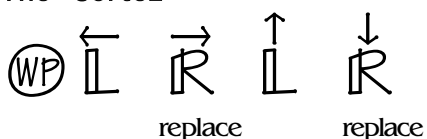
The gent has crossed R tightly over L, rises on toes and unwinds CCW one full turn
While lady may just walk forward around him with 8 slow steps, beginning R foot.

Or she may choose to do Pivot Tap (like a Rueda) around him:



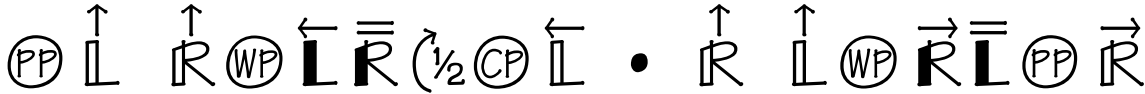
The woman has her choice of which version to do. He doesn't decide for her.

The Cortez



Part 4: Conclusion

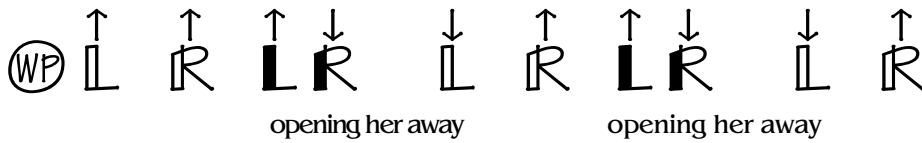
Figure Eight



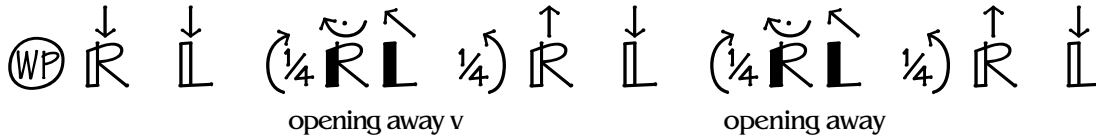
Repeat, while slowly rotating this CCW, to promenade toward center of hall and out.

The Throw-Away (with gent facing LOD)

Gent:



Lady:



Repeat the entire Persian Gardens Tango from the beginning.

Notes about this dance: Joan Sawyer was famous on four fronts – as a Broadway stage dancer, as a nightclub manager (running her New York club The Persian Gardens), as a composer (she wrote "Persian gardens Tango" among other tunes) and as a noted feminist and Suffragette who traveled across the country for the cause of women's rights. This latter focus may explain why the tango steps she described were especially workable for the woman's role in dancing. Unlike most 1913 tango steps, which could only be done if the woman learned and practiced them in a class, Joan Sawyer's steps could all be followed easily in freestyle dancing, and therefore more fun for the woman.

SOME SAMPLE NOTATION CODES:

