

RAMEAU'S "NOUVELLE METHODE" (FINAL INSTALMENT)

Translated by ELLIS A. ROGERS

DISCOURSE COMPARING THE OLD AND THE NEW CHOREOGRAPHY

By the trouble they gave themselves in revising an Art which the passage of time had destroyed, the intention of many clever dancing masters, who worked on choreography, was without doubt to leave to posterity some evidence of their own reputation.

It is to them we are obliged for the system enabling us to draw dances on paper. Therefore, to make of it all the use which it merits and demands, I have undertaken, without straying from their path, to give you an explanation so easily understood that it can be used by everybody.

It is at this point that I make comparisons by which you will be able to understand the difference between the dance steps of the old choreography and the new system that I am proposing.

FOR EXAMPLE

The first square shows a Temps de Courante on the right foot. The body being supported by the left foot, where the two principal actions are begun, which are the sink and the rise, whilst the right foot leaves the ground in order to approach the other and passes beyond it with a slide of the toe, although the right leg must not fail to participate in the sinking and rising movements which are being made by the left leg and this is what one must understand by the line joining the two heads; they are white in order to make it understood that this is a slow step and one is able to use them in the same way as white notes in music, thus as I have said already about the length of steps.

In the second square one makes a quarter turn and it is for this reason – that one turns in rising – that I have detached the sign for turning from the character for a step in order to place it in a more appropriate position.

With regard to the third square, which is a demi coupé forward, there is only the bar which is just above the head of the step, which is to ensure you understand that the foot is raised from the fourth position where it has been behind, in order to close the two heels together the one to the other, and there (in that position) to sink in order to pass it forward, and to rise at the end of the step. The sign for raising the foot, which is, as I have already said, just above the head of the step, is very necessary to make it clear that the sink must take place on the front* leg and that the rise which is at the end of the step is put in its right place.

As regards the fourth square, this is the same but started from the first position; this is why the sign for the sink is before that for raising the foot. Which seems to me a just distinction, this is why when one draws a step it is absolutely essential to place the signs in the appropriate places in order to avoid those mistakes that one might make during the execution of the steps.

In the fifth square, the only difference (between old and new systems) is the sign for raising the foot.

The sixth is a coupé where the same observation that I have made on the demi-coupé applies.

In the seventh and eighth, by examining the one and then the other, one will easily perceive which step is the most accurate, the old or the new.

The ninth, is a Slip where it appeared to me that the two little lines with a bar on top would be a convenient sign for showing the manner of performing the step, because it is derived from (the sign for) a spring together with a falling step; this is why I regard this one as a half spring.

In number ten, which is a coupé, close, and a rise onto the toes, there is another sign which appeared to me to be absolutely essential for making its distinctive character felt; because the sign for rising (from a sink) and that for raising the body are completely different, in as much as it is necessary to be sunk in order to rise, but raising the body can only be done by an extension of the instep which obliges the heels to rise and accordingly you rise onto your toes.

In twelve and thirteen, one omits the last position in order to avoid confusion; because when a sunken step is encroached upon by one that crosses the line twice, it is to be presupposed that you must beat before or behind, according to which is indicated. If the head of the step moves upwards and crosses the line, one must suppose that you beat behind; in the other case, when the step passes downwards, one must suppose that you beat onto the instep.

Number fourteen is different, a half-position is absolutely necessary in order to make it understood that the (right) leg is supported on the instep whilst sinking and rising but the leg which

makes the second step only moves towards the other in order to be carried back to the side and as the beat is not crossed, it only makes an approach to the line.

As regards those Pas de Bourées which occupy squares fifteen and sixteen. The one is the true Pas de Bourée with a movement of the instep on the last step and the other is that which one calls a Fleuret.

The seventeenth is a jetté which is no different from the old character except for the bar which is just above the head and which indicates that the foot is in the air, before sinking in order to throw yourself further forward.

As for the Pas Assemblé (closing step) contained in the eighteenth square, it seems to me more conforming to its true shape, since one sinks on one leg whilst the other, which is in the air, opens to the side and returns to the first position whereupon the left makes its extension in order to jump.

It is for this reason that the half-position of the left leg is charged with the signs for sinking and springing and why, on the character for the right foot, the sign for springing is at the end of the step. In addition, the line joining the two heads is in order to make it understood that although the principal action of the step is made on the left foot, the right participates and moves in concert, the one with the other, the one done backwards (No.18) has the same action and timing.

In number twenty, one makes a complete turn and it is only by jumping that the turn is made. This is why the sign for turning is placed just above that for jumping; in order to conform with the correct manner of performing the step.

As regards number twenty-one, this is the contretemps which seems to me so accurately represented that one cannot make a mistake, thus one sinks and hops on the left foot whilst the right leg makes a step forward.

Number twenty-two is the same step, backwards. It is the same rule for all these steps, where the two actions of sinking and rising or jumping are found as often on one foot as on the other, thus one only has this to decide in order to be able to represent it accurately. This is what has compelled me to give the same step twice, using the same foot in each square in a different manner, in order that one is acquainted at a glance with the augmentation and its accuracy.

I pass from number twenty-two to number twenty-nine because these steps will be found to conform so well to the manner in which they must be executed that one is not likely to be here mistaken.

In number twenty-nine, there is the contretemps sideways. This step being begun from the second position, one sinks with both feet on the ground and one hops on the left foot whilst the right foot passes in front and one makes another step with the left foot to the side, thus completing the step, just as I have drawn it.

In the thirty-first square, is the Rigadoon step which starts from the first position, in sinking with both feet on the ground and in hopping on the left foot whilst the right opens a little sideways in circular or rounded motion and is returned during the same rhythmic beat of the music to the first position.

The left leg then makes the same movement, without sinking or hopping and just as I have drawn it. I have then shown some other versions of the step, taken from other authors in order that you will be able here to distinguish the true from the false.

As regards all the other steps which follow, as I have drawn them, so must they be done, I do not explain these. I hope that for these few one has enough smattering of the dance to find them easy. There are similarly some which appear alone (i.e. without the old notation) because I have not found them drawn in the old tables (of dance steps) and I believe it will please the public to set them down here in their correct form.



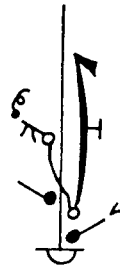













Although this 'Method' is very easy, one must not believe that you will shape the steps without the help of a dancing master. It is only by him taking great pains and the aptitude you have, that one will achieve the best performance.

But I believe that, being a person with a thorough knowledge of how to dance, one could teach oneself with this Treatise steps or dances that one had not known and one will not forget those that one has already learnt.






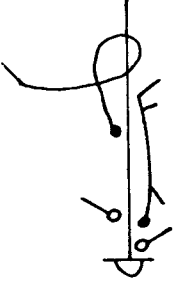




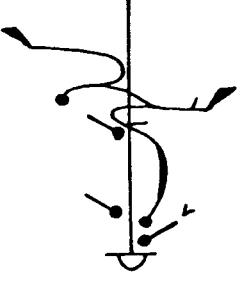



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**The original has 'rear leg'. As this contradicts the rest of the paragraph I have presumed it to be a printer's error.*



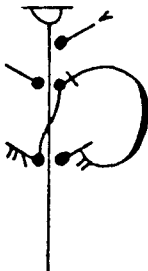





Table, comparing the Old Choreography with the New

(Temps de Courante)		(With a $\frac{1}{4}$ turn)	
New	Old	New	Old
			
1		2	
Half-Coupé forward		Another, from the 1st position	
New	Old	New	Old
			
3		4	
New		Old	
		A Coupé	
5		New	Old
			
		6	
New		Old	
		New	Old
7			
		8	




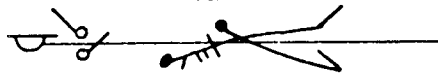



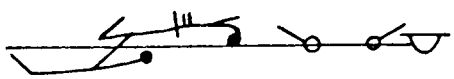


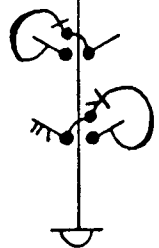
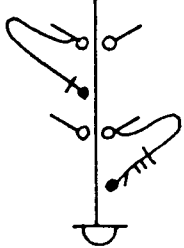
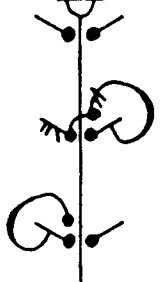
(Comparisons - continued)

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<p style="text-align: center;"><i>New</i></p>  <p>11</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Old</i></p> 	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>New</i></p>  <p>12</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Old</i></p> 
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>New</i></p>  <p>13</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Old</i></p> 	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>New</i></p>  <p>14</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>New</i></p>  <p>15</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>New</i></p>  <p>16</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Old</i></p> 

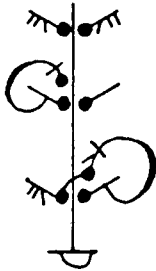
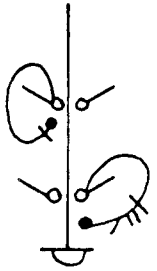
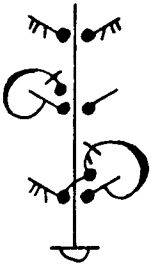
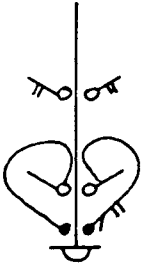




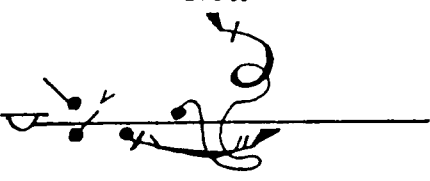
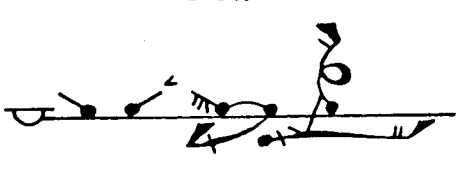
(Comparisons, continued)

<p><i>New</i></p>  <p>17</p>	<p><i>Old</i></p>  <p>18</p>
<p><i>New</i></p>  <p>19</p>	<p><i>New</i></p>  <p>20</p>
<p><i>New</i></p>  <p>21</p>	<p><i>Old</i></p>  <p>22</p>
<p><i>New</i></p>  <p>23</p>	<p><i>New</i></p>  <p>24</p>



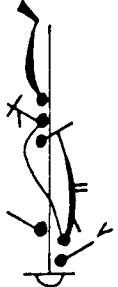





(Comparisons - continued)

<p><i>New</i></p>  <p>25</p>	<p><i>Old</i></p>  <p>26</p>
<p><i>New</i></p>  <p><i>Old</i></p>  <p>27</p>	<p><i>New</i></p>  <p><i>Old</i></p>  <p>28</p>
<p><i>New</i></p>  <p><i>Old</i></p>  <p>29</p>	<p><i>New</i></p>  <p><i>Old</i></p>  <p>30</p>
<p><i>New</i></p>  <p>31</p>	<p><i>Old</i></p>  <p><i>New</i></p>  <p>32</p>





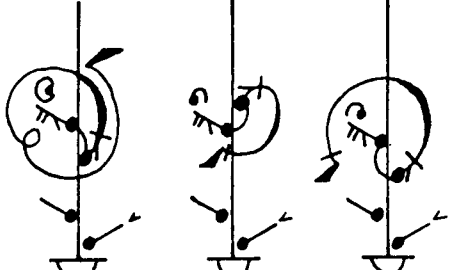
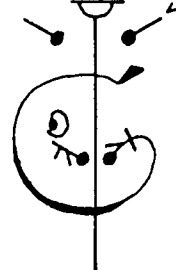
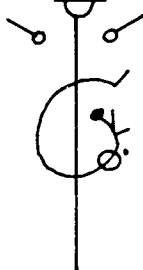
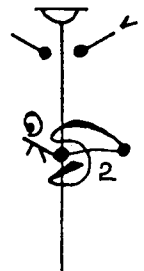
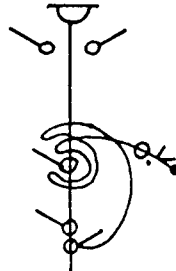

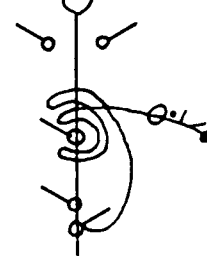
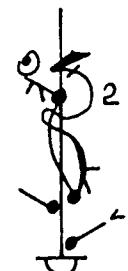



(Comparisons - continued)

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<p style="text-align: center;"><i>New</i></p>  <p>35</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>New</i></p>  <p>36</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>New</i></p>  <p>37</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>New</i></p>  <p>38</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>New</i></p>  <p>39</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>New</i></p>  <p>40</p>



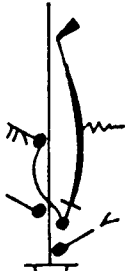
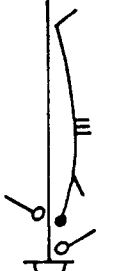

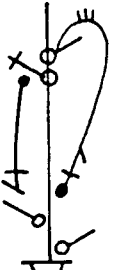

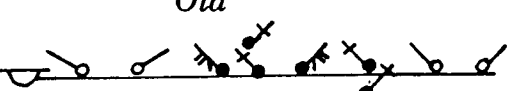

(Comparisons - continued)

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<p><i>New</i></p>  <p>43</p>	<p><i>New</i></p>  <p>44</p>
<p><i>New</i></p>  <p>45</p>	<p><i>Old</i></p>  <p>46</p>
<p><i>New</i></p>  <p>47</p>	<p><i>Old</i></p>  <p>48</p>

(Comparisons - continued)

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>New</i></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Old</i></p>  <p>49</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>New</i></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Old</i></p>  <p>50</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Piroette with a jump, three versions</i></p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>New</i></p>  <p>51</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>New</i></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Old</i></p>  <p>52</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>New</i></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Old</i></p>  <p>53</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>New</i></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Old</i></p>  <p>54</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>New</i></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Old</i></p>  <p>55</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>New</i></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Old</i></p>  <p>56</p>

(Comparisons - continued)

<p><i>New</i></p>  <p>57</p>	<p><i>Old</i></p> 
<p><i>New</i></p>  <p>59</p>	<p><i>Old</i></p> 
<p><i>New</i></p>  <p>61</p>	<p><i>Old</i></p> 
<p><i>New</i></p>  <p><i>Old</i></p>  <p>63</p>	<p><i>New</i></p>  <p>64</p>

A TREATISE ON CADENCE

After having given the key, in every detail, to the principal steps which are used in Town Dances, it seemed to me to be necessary to put here the 'Treatise on Cadence' in order that one can understand with certainty how the steps must be fitted to the tune that is played.

I do not, myself, take to the idea the first author (of a book on dance choreography) has given to us, where he claims that all steps can be fitted to any sort of Tempo. Cadence being a word that all those who practise dancing have to learn; for it consists in the manner of moving, either more slowly or more quickly; thus filling the various bars of music by matching the steps accurately to the tune.

And as I have not found in any of these Treatises such a true and understandable explanation, although good enough in their way, it is this that I have undertaken to do here with the greatest accuracy of which I am capable in order that you will be able to remember clearly how all the parts of a step are made to match with the notes; as one will be able to see in the first example.

I intend you to know, with regard to the note which precedes the (first) bar, that it must be used for raising the foot, sinking, and passing the foot forward in order to rise on the second note 2, which marks the down-beat of the (first) bar and stay on the toes of the right foot for the duration of the crotchet; but as it is dotted one places the heel down in time to the dot 3 and 4 is for raising the (left) foot and bringing it up to the other one. The fifth is for sinking and moving the foot past the other about the length of a normal step, in order to rise onto the left foot on the note marked 5 so that afterwards two steps can be made quickly on the toes during the duration of the crotchets 6 and 7; but on the last the heel is lowered to the ground and one sinks immediately in order to be ready to rise again in the following bar.

This has seemed to me the truest way of presenting the minuet step correctly in all its parts.

In the second example, the first note 1 is placed at the rise: it is this which shows clearly that the sinking and passing (forward) of the foot must be done before the bar begins, so as to be ready to rise when the downbeat comes.

As regards the other steps which are found in the minuet, I have followed the same methods as I have just described, and which seemed to me the most accurate.

This one will be able to examine in the examples that follow, by seeing the numbers which are under the notes, with the corresponding numbers being placed on the correct foot movements. Thus one is able, not only in the steps of the minuet but in all the variety of dance steps, to see where all the parts of a step occur in the music.

I have used as examples many passages of dances by Mr. Pecour as being familiar, all fitted precisely to the tune. I have even asked that excellent author to cast his eyes over them before they were drawn and he has found them conforming to his intentions, likewise with the dances that follow in the second part (of the book).

I have likewise chosen those which are most in use and I finish with La Royale, which has been composed for the late departed Madame la Dauphine; but it will be unnecessary to speak of their beauty, the memories which the public retain being above anything that one could say.

With regard to the other dances of Mr. Pecour, I have them all written out, attending to the proof reading, and for the convenience of the public, they are to be sold separately, in the same way as the new dances that I shall give every year before St. Martin's (Day), either in a collection or separately. They sell for 12 sols, and a collection of new minuets with their accompaniments which will be at the same price.

I will continue to give advice in a General Treatise on Choreography, containing an infinite number of all the steps that are used in serious dancing and in addition new diagrams that I have invented in order to explain the steps of all the comic characters. It will be adorned with many plates which show the various attitudes you must adopt.

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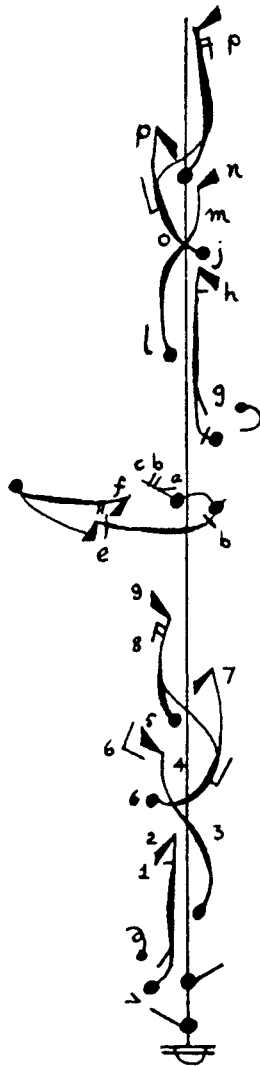
Treatise on Cadence

<p>Example of the Mimuet Step</p> <p>1</p>	<p>2nd Example</p> <p>2</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>

(Treatise on Cadence - continued)

<p>7</p>	<p>8</p>
<p>9</p>	<p>10</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>12</p>

(Treatise on Cadence, continued. Excerpt from 'La Mariée de Rollant')



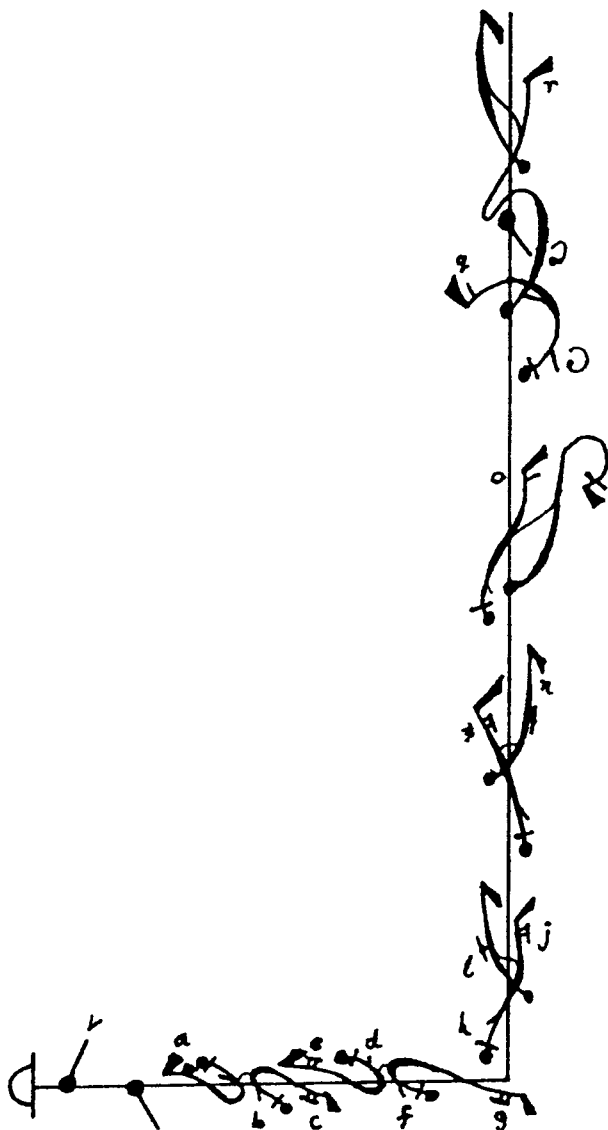


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