SOME MORE MISCELLANEOUS NOTES, FRAGMENTS, ETC. ABOUT THE SLIDING-GLIDING MAZUR STEP: FINALLY DONE 2007

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(Any abbreviations or special terms can be found in our other volumes dealing with the Mazur-Mazurka or Polonaise. These are not detailed descriptions but rather short-hand descriptions.)

THESE TOPICS BELOW ARE <u>NOT</u> GIVEN IN ANY <u>SPECIAL</u> ORDER AND ARE LOOSELY RELATED TO ONE ANOTHER

AESTHETIC BEAUTY MAZUR CONTEMPORARY MOVEMENTS

This involves the use of the simple but beautiful Waltz Balance (which is basically a back-Pas De Basque) and turning movements of the upper-body and shoulders: known in Ballet as "Epaulement."

First do some exercises. Do the back-stepping Balances to both sides, even turning as you do it. (See the description in our *Mazur: The Elegant*... or learn it in Ballet class.) Swing the arms, one at a time and both. Then from feet together, step the right foot across, in front of the left foot, upper-body follows the crossing at the same time unfolding the arms and hands ending in a modified delicate Staropolska Pose. Do to both sides.

Couple dances forward for 3 measures then the man detaches himself and does the Waltz Balance turning as much as he likes, returns to his partner and both repeat in the other direction. (Recall that the CHARACTER WALTZ BALANCE, described by us elsewhere, is different from this Balance.) The eight measure can just be a step-close the feet together Practice with inside and outside feet. Sometimes you have to modify the Waltz Balance to fit it to the measure. Both partners may turn. A variation is to dance forward for 2 measures, then make a forward turning on measure 3, to be followed by the Waltz Balance which turns in the opposite sense.

AN ATTEMPT AT A CONTEMPORARY AESTHETIC "MAZOURKA"

(AS I RECALL THIS SECTION WAS THOUGHT ABOUT IN THE 1980'S: SO IT WAS NOT BASED UPON OUR MOST RECENT RESEARCHES.)

The long title above describes this Mazurka variant almost completely. It is a contemporary variant "invented" or "discovered" by the present author.

The term, "Aesthetic" points to its great Beauty and Ease of execution (if done well). It is based upon some Historical Steps and on a Ballet Step; however, because it is not the same as

the Ballet Step we have declined to use an appropriate Ballet term. So we are using the term "Aesthetic" to denote the step's movement as one of "airiness," of "lightness" which are qualities associated with Ballet.

The Quality of this movement is also due to the music which is light, easy and has a swing to it. It is not the impelling, forceful Polish Mazur music and Dance.

Why "Mazourka" instead of Mazurka? We use the term "Mazourka" to emphasize Its derivative nature, that is, to further distinguish it from the Polish Mazur. Of course, it is derivable from the Mazur: it is done to Mazurka music. "Mazourka" gives to most people the feeling of a Balletic-Style of Dance. It is a deliberate use of this French term to convey that it should be done with a high-level of Balletic Style and Inspiration. It is a type of short-hand expression with cultural Associations.

HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS

You, the Reader, now know the Basic Running Step and its many Variants. This "Running-Movement" was uncovered almost archeologically—we had to sift our way through layers of characteristic steps. These characteristic steps are those steps or **parts** of steps which have something unusual about them. This was especially true of for non-Polish dancing observers. They stressed and wanted something different to dance. So we have accents, kicks and slides but not much running. (Of course, Poles did have Running-Variants with these special effects.)

The Historical Antecedents of the Mazourka are those Variant Running Steps of the Mazurka are those which have the Cut-Accent on count three, as well as those which have the term "Pas de Basque" for the name of the step. This term is now (2007) almost used exclusively only by non-Poles for the Run Step.

HOW THE "HOVERING MAZOURKA" CAME ABOUT

In the summer of 1985, the Historical Dance Researcher, R. Powers, was teaching the Pas de Basque of Cellarius. During his teaching he used the word "hovering" to describe the second count. He, if my memory serves me correctly, mentioned how delightful it is to just hold or "hover" the free foot forward as long as possible before placing it on the floor. He was correct; however, since he was teaching the Pas de Basque of the 1840's, he included the cut-accent (Pas Coupe) which follows the second count. I believe that this is the very <u>antithesis</u> of "hovering." It spoils the "delightful feeling." It makes the Run not a forward, flowing step but a staccato, go, step, go, step movement. It leads to all the poor execution which Mazurists and Mazurkaists have been warned against for the last hundred and fifty years. On the whole it is not a pleasurable movement. (We or others may have been "hovering" before 1985 and not realized it.)

So we experimented with this movement (as we do with all movements) and introduced the following changes.

- 1. We eliminated the cut-accent.
- 2. The hovering was extended over two counts.

3. And the step was executed in the same manner as is today's (2007) Pas de Basque of Ballet.

Done to normal Mazur music this is not a worthwhile movement: the music is too fast. One does not have enough time to stretch-out one's movements. It is not fun!

In January 1986 we obtained some Mazurka music which just fits this Hovering Mazourka movement. It becomes just Heaven to dance and it is so different from the Basic Running Step! Who could have thought that it would be so.

So that is how the "Hovering Mazourka" came to be born. In this context we shall use the terms "Mazourka" and "Hovering Mazourka" as practical equivalents.

THE "HOVERING-MAZOURKA" STEP-MOVEMENT

First we must master the proper feel for the Pas de Basque of Ballet.

1. BALLET'S "PAS DE BASQUE"

Start with the Right foot crossed in front of the Left foot, heel to toe. Feet may by loosely opened or closed. Stand facing diagonally left.

m1

- ct& Bending both knees, glide Right foot front & sweep it CW in a quarter-circle, toes on floor.(Left foot remains bent.)
- ct1 and transfer weight onto Right foot (knee bent), body facing right,
- ct2 Left foot glides directly to Right foot, closes Left in front of the Right foot,
- ct3 Left foot continues to glide forward on the left diagonal, at the same time the Right foot closes in behind of the Left foot.
- m2 repeat m1 do opposite footwork, direction.

For the arm movements see any standard Ballet text. But get the feeling right. Press into the floor on both counts two and three, coming up out of the floor on the finish of count three.

There is a natural leaning back of the body for this on count&, count1. Exaggerate it even more.

2. MOVING THE "PAS DE BASQUE" FORWARD

Now practice the above but facing directly ahead, foot also. Still make the arc on count &,1. Close foot together on count three. Press the balls of the feet into the floor. Let the knee bending take care of itself. Head up, body leans back on count one,two.

3. "PAS DE BASQUE", HOVERING

This still is not the "Hovering Mazourka."

Stand with feet together, facing front.

m1

- ct& Sweep Right foot front, around a CW arc to finish diagonally, about 1-2 feet distant, to right.
- ct1 transfer weight onto the Right foot at the same time sliding the left foot over to the right (pulling it along the floor), in front slightly of the Right, then glide the Left foot forward. The Left foot is held just overt the floor with the Left leg straight and stretched forward. The body reacts to this side leap by leaning back. Since the leg is stretched and reaching, with the head held upwards the feeling is that of climbing on an incline.
- ct2 continue ct1, that is, fully stretch the Left leg and foot forward. Weight remains Right foot but the lower body is impelled forward. At the absolute last instant transfer weight onto Left foot,
- ct3 close Right foot to Left foot.

m2 repeat m1 do opposite footwork, direction.

After mastering these technical aspects of this movement it must be taken further. Here is how. Keep the body erect; chest up and out.

Practice all the steps without the "hovering." Do it without ever taking the ball / big-toe of the floor. Do not let weight be taken to the rear of either foot. Skim your foot on the floor.

Turn your foot out as you pull them forward, slide and glide them.

Have at least a two-four feet distance between ct1 and ct2. (Maybe even more!)

Dance it expansively and cover distance. But lightly!

On ct3 the foot may close behind in a closed position or even step further in front.

4. THE "HOVERING MAZOURKA" STEP-MOVEMENT

So here we are!

Do the above "Pas de Basque Hovering" movement but with the following change. Be in the position of ct1 above at the beginning of ct1 or at the end of ct&: be ahead of the timing. Thus there are almost two counts to "hover" forward—almost four-tenths of a second! How delicious! It is to be savored! To accomplish this do not make an arc on ct& but just make it a rapid weight change. Do not kick the legs.

As we know the continuous stretching requires a flexible leg, ankle and foot. There is no getting around it. So do it! The up and down motion, the Waltz-like, requires a supple knee-bend.

Now for the arms. Try this with the arms held up, hands place on the shoulders. Then out to the sides and forward. The feeling of Grace is more easily apprehended if the hands are used in a feminine manner. (See our 1984 Volume II, p.173.) Or some typical Ballet Port-de-Bras may be done.

THAT STRETCHING

More needs to be said about stretching the free leg and the foot. As you stretch the free leg down and outwards (forward) are you still or stationary? No. Because the supporting leg which is bending pushes the entire body forward. This pushing is done naturally by and through the supporting foot. The pushing forward is done upon a flat-foot. Then this pushing-foot goes to the ball of its foot (so that you are on the ball of this foot.) You push evermore forward. At the last possible moment all the weight is transferred to the out-stretched free leg—and you are now completely over that foot or in the process of "rising" over it.

Remember that since the supporting leg is bending downwards it reactively unbends during the forward pushing. That is the necessity for "climbing-of-the-inclines." Practice the weight transition as a leaping forwards and keep both of the balls/big toe of the feet on the floor.

"HOVERING MAZOURKA" COMBINATIONS

The Hovering Mazourka is easiest done as a Solo: a single person. However this depends upon how much or how little of an arc the dancer makes.

Remember that this is an unaccented, "un-characteristic" step. It is peculiar. As soon as one tries to make it closer to the Mazur then the nature of the Hovering Mazourka gets lost. Change the music instead and Mazur.

Combination #1

m1-3 Three Hovering Mazourka in LOD starting to the right side. Finish so that Left foot is free.

m4

ct1 Take a long step onto the Left foot in LOD turning both foot and body \(\frac{1}{4} \) CW, sinking onto a bending knee,

- ct2 do a Right step behind Left foot onto the ball of the Right foot, knee straight.
- ct3 transfer weight onto Left foot in front of the Right foot, flat-footedly.

As you can see this is just what is known in Ballet as a Waltz-Balance. Its motions are: down, up, even. It has the elasticity of an accordion. It involves the legs and pelvis. Do not throw the upper-body about. Actually on m4,ct1 either leg, with the appropriate body turn can be free to Waltz-Balance.

Combination #2

- m1,2 Two Hovering Mazourkas,
- m3,4 two Waltz-Balance: first, in LOD, then, in RLOD.

Combination #3

m3 Do a complete turn with the Waltz-Balance and go doing a Hovering Mazourka in LOD.

WITH A PARTNER

Do a certain number of Hovering Mazourkas in open couple Mazur Position. Then do the Tour sur Place or Hołubiec Couple Turn.

IN FIGURES

This is really just a forward running movement and does not lend itself to being used in collective figure-sequences.

"HOVERING MAZOURKA" SUMMATION

To the appropriate music this movement can yield a delicate Beauty and Pleasure with its glide and swing.

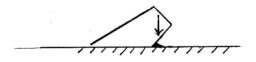
AFTER THOUGHTS ABOUT THE "HOVERING MAZOURKA"

How difficult this all becomes. No sooner do we discover the pleasure in "hovering" but we "rediscover" the pleasure obtainable by keeping the ball/big toe of the foot on the floor at all times. Then, to re-experience the pleasure, of executing today's Ballet Pas De Basque to the music!

How extraordinary! One develops the same enthusiasm as when executing the various Mazur Runs!

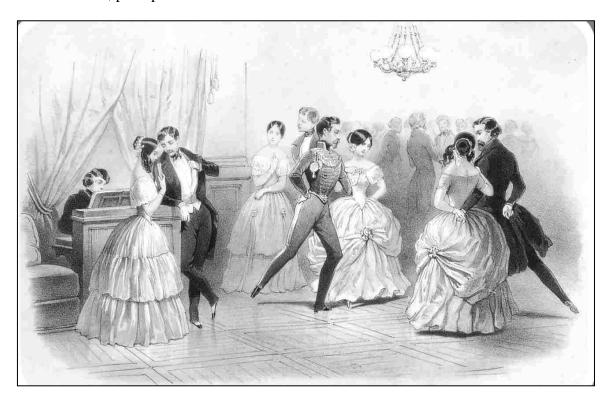
NON-HOPPING PZJP/PZDP VARIATIONS

Instead of first hopping forward and sliding just "sink-down" on the front supporting leg and stretch the trailing leg behind, toes pointing to the rear: open wide the legs at the pelvic region. There is still some forward movement. Recall that this is primarily a men's step.



A SIMPLE ANALYSIS OF SOME PICTURES OF THE <u>POSUWISTY Z DWOMA</u> <u>PODSKOKAMI</u> (PZDP) STEP VERY GENERALLY KNOWN AS "PAS GLISSE"

Immediately following is the illustration from an album of drawings entitled, "La Mazourka" done by the artist Labourde, sometime in the 1840s. It depicts the dancing of the Mazurka in a Ballroom of Paris, perhaps it is even from Cellarius' Dance School.



The men of the two center couples are doing the PZDP with a relaxed grace: so relaxed that they may really be doing the PZJD variant, that is to say, done with only one hop or they may be doing it with no hop at all. They may be doing it without any risings at all! They may be just swinging their leg from the back to the front, supporting leg bent at the knee, dragging-sliding—really, just like ice-skating along the floor. ¹ This does resemble ice-skating since the couples are in what can be called the "back-hand hold skaters position." This brings to mind the Waltzes of the French composer, Waldteufel.

One part of the great pleasure of dancing this step is sliding the entire dancers' body weight across the dance floor. As we have mentioned elsewhere, this pleasure is a function of the condition of the floor and of the foot wear and of the physical conditioning of the dancer. If the floor is too slippery and the dancer too aggressive this movement can be dangerous to do!

Notice that here the Woman is on the Man's left side: usually she is on his right side. Perhaps they got into this position from a halfly-formed Sur la Place couple turn—this would make a delicious variation!

We do not know the nationality of the dancing men, in particular of the soldier. This could be of some importance since in the popular imagination the Mazur-Mazurka, was and is, associated with the Polish Military, specifically, with the Polish Cavalry.

Obviously here the artist was at pains to show the PZDP step. So let us look at another more recent example of this step, in this case, from a photograph of Polish Dancers taken in the 1960s.



This photograph was taken as the dancers were dancing forward. Note in particular that the Woman is doing the Basic Running Step and she is making the transition from count 3& to count

¹ These and other variants of these steps have been thoroughly discussed in our other Mazur-Mazurka written works. See for example, *Mazur: The Elegant Polish Running-Sliding Dance*.

1 and is not in contact with the ground. She is rather high off the ground. The ground is the "problem." There is too much friction with the foot wear. It would be dangerous to stay on or just above the surface; however for the man wearing heavier foot wear, he can look as though he is doing a slide forward, although he is just posing the slide.

Is it instructive to place the men together? Let us try it.





He we easily see the relaxed attitude or the nonchalance, of which the French were commented about, compared to the more vigorous attitude of the Polish pair. It is not a small thing to notice that the Pole does not have his hand on his hip. His free arm is to show guidance to the Woman.

But these are in some sense personal characteristics (either in-bred or learned) as well as sustained practice or lack thereof. Of course, it does matter from whom one learns the Dance and its step movements.

SOME NON-HOVERING COMBINATIONS FROM THE STAGE

Here are a number of stage combinations which we have gleaned from our time with various Polish Dance Companies during the 1970s. (Do you recognize them?) Elements of these can be used in the General Ballroom Form of the Mazur as couple solos. Experiment. There a lot of strong body poses and accents in these; in fact, without the body actions it is just footwork.

Combination #1 HOŁUBCOWY Z WYBIJANY I PZDP

Here is a two measure combination where you "rock-forth" in doing the PZDP.

m1,ct3 Do the Wybijany in such a way as to kick the free foot up and out

suspended above the floor,

m2,ct1 leg continues upward,

ct2 now step onto it in LOD,

ct3 kick out and up (to the rear) the back leg.

Combination #2

This is done as a couple going forward. Woman does her Basic Running Step.

m1 Hołubiec

m2 PZDP Z "Coupe" position. This is described by us elsewhere as the "Pas Mazurka Attitude," if I recall correctly. ²

m3 Basic Running Step,

m4,ct1 do a run step forward,

ct2 bring the free foot up next to, in back of, the supporting foot making a ¹/₄, 1/3, ¹/₂ turn-away,

ct3 do a rise or even hop upon the supporting foot.

m5-8 Rep m1-4, same feet.

Measure 4,ct2 can also be done as a run-sep forward.

This can also be done as a man's solo.

Combination #3

This is a backwards moving combination for the man. It starts from the usual open couple position, couple dancing forward. Assume man is on the woman's left. At some point the man steps ahead of the woman with his Left foot and pivots on it, finishing so that he is facing the woman, and

m1,ct1 Bowing to the woman, releasing hand-hold, stretch back the Right leg (man is in a pose). Arms open downward as part of the Bow.

² See The Elegant Running-Sliding Polish Dance: Mazur-Mazurka.

ct2 continue ct1,

ct&,3 turning ½ CW do a Wybijany freeing the Right foot

m2 do a PZDP Z Tupniecie, stamping the Right foot

m3,4 2 Basic Run Steps forward, rejoining hand-hold

m5-8 repeat m1-4.

Woman dances forward with the Basic Run Step. Actions of this type can be done in circular formations with the women stationary, the men moving in a circle.

Combination #4

m1,2 Do 2 PZDP going diagonally right, then left. skippingly, hoppingly-like manner. The leg sweeps out an arc, Right leg CW, Left leg CCW. Do these with a strong body lean, free arms sweeping across the chest and out..



m3 Right leg strongly stretches back, hop, m4,ct1,2 do a strong Zeskok-Close, m5-8 make a couple turn.



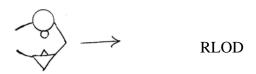
Combination #5

Same as #4 above except make m3 another right PZDP.

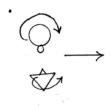
Combination #6

Couple starts facing each other, woman's Left hand in man's Right hand.

m1,2 Do 2 Kroczny step-movements in RLOD. Man doing an Ukłon or Bow with his Left arm.



m3 Releasing hands, both turn away from each other, man reaching back with his Left foot, woman with her Right foot, finish so that they are facing RLOD,



m4 stamp, rejoining hands, man's Left, woman's right.



m5,6 (Now for a beautiful movement—described by us elsewhere.) as a couple do the CHARACTER BALANCE at the same time turning,



m7 releasing hands, man does a low, long Bow reaching back with his free foot at the same time woman turns, spins in place, arms upraised, finishing in her Bow, free foot forward. (Both are Bowing to each other.)



m8 Both quickly recover and take the allemande position, Right hands joined.

m9,10 Couple does a Krakowski Obrot,

m11 man repeats m7,

m12 take up the usual couple position,

m13-16 couple does PZDP away.

This entire combination is done with strong body leans and arm movements. The Krakowski Obrot may be done with arms on the shoulders. Woman's turn on measure 7 can be a wonderful done with full shoulder "Epaulement." The Bowing above may be replaced with the man, turning somewhat away from the woman, falling upon one knee, slashing his arm across his chest in the Bow as shown below.



Combination #7

Couples face each other, man's Left hand holds woman's Right hand. **Measures m1-3 are the same as for #6 above**.

m1,2 Hołubcowy Z Wybijany I PZDP in RLOD,

m3 with a step-hop start to do a turning around, pivoting in place, man CCW, woman CW, sweeping the free leg in an arc around in back of, the supporting foot making a complete turn-away, finishing so that you are facing your partner,

m4 do a Stamp-pose.



m5 joining right hands, half circle around



m6 man does a strong Zeskok-Close,

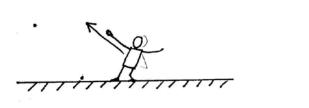
m7-12 taking up couple facing position, do a Hołubiec, then wide-open position ending in a Zeskok, inside hands, man's Left, woman's Right joined. Then repeat do opposite footwork, direction.

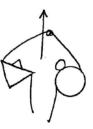
m13-16 Both individually circle away.



Combination #8

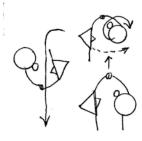
Same as <u>Combination #7</u> above, but done in LOD. For m1, man leans strongly to his right side, upon bended knees, man's Left arm strongly diagonally upwards.





Combination #9

With couple leaning strongly "upwards" as described above, do the standard Hołubcowy Z Wybijany I PZDP step combination for m1,2. For the next two measures step more or less in place as the woman turns away from the man, CW. Do not change hands, man changes his position also, as show below. For measures 5-8 the couple runs forward as shown, not leaning upwards.



m3,4

m1,2

m5-8

Combination #10

- m1,2 Hołubcowy Z Wybijany I PZDP step combination,
- m3,4 do the Character-Balance, changing hands,
- m5,6 Hołubcowy Z Wybijany I PZDP step combination, m7
 - ct1 man changes position, not hands, doing Hołubcowy Z Wybijany I PZDP
- m8 do PZDP,

m5,6 m3,4 m7,8
$$m1,2$$

m8-12

Combination #11

You start first with hands not joined and you are at a considerable distance away from each other as you swing into each other with your arms and body, joining right hands with measure one, both do a "swinging-type" of PZDP/JP with the right foot-leg across each other, that is, each crosses to their left. Repeat with opposite footwork, hands direction for measure two, pushing away, against each other and completely turning away from each other. Quickly take up the position shown for measure three and do the usual Hołubcowy Z Wybijany I PZDP for measures three, four. On measure 5,6 do two Rozkroks.

m1
$$\longrightarrow$$
 m2 \longrightarrow m5,6

There are variations of this. Couple may take up the shoulder-waist position and quickly turn in place, etc.

Combination #12 **DOS-A DOS**

These are based upon the dos-a-dos pattern—again, described by us elsewhere. I shall describe this in detail for the man. The movement: On measure one the man makes with his Right the longest, strongest PZDP, knee strongly bent, going diagonally right forward. At the same time he deeply, quickly sweeps his Left arm, down past his Left side and forward, body leans leftward somewhat. The Left arm is active: Right held out-stretched to the side. On

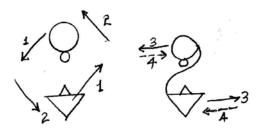
mea two the man pivots CW, upon his Right foot and does a back PZDP (although this is usually a very truncated one, or one can just do two or three weight changes in place). Now the Right arm is the active arm except it goes forward and back. This arm sweeping motion is much less than the arm motion for measure one. Finish so that partners are facing each other. Now repeat, finishing so that all in original position.

Many different step combinations can be done for this.

So here is a variation.

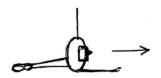
m1,2 Two PZPD

m3,4 Two CHARACTER WALTZ BALANCES. Remember to make these big, sweeping, side-rocks.



MEN'S ARMS, HEAD, HANDS FOR THE PZDP

Starting with the Right leg strongly held up in back as you are sliding forward as shown here below. Now repeat but change the position of the arms. Also practice this with one arm vertical straight upwards.

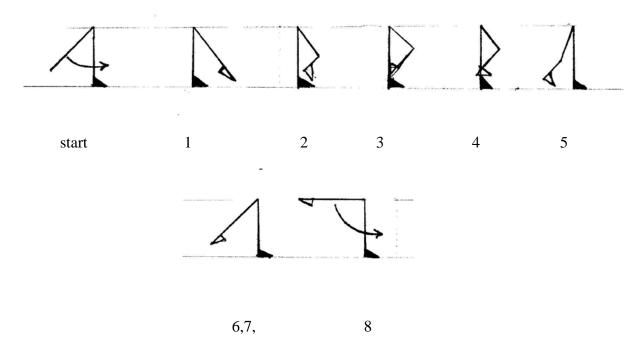


As you do this, put your head in various positions: turned to the right, left, and ahead. Practice sweeping the arm from the rear, to the side and forward. Do this with the palm down, hen up.

A MEN'S PRACTICE SUMMATION EXERCISES FOR THE PZDP

Assuming that one has strong legs and knees which are thoroughly exercised here is a summation exercise for most of the foot and leg attitudes for the free foot, that is, the non-weight bearing foot, of the PZDP (and maybe all glides and slides). One can do this to eight measures of Mazur music. Once you have the idea of this exercise any amount of music can be used, etc. This is drawn from our previous mentions, elsewhere, of the named by us, "Coupe" foot position and the "Mazurka" foot position.

Start standing with the weight upon the Left foot, Right foot held to the rear. Now swing the Right leg forcefully forward, stopping suddenly as shown below in (1); then proceed to place the foot and leg into (2-8). Sometimes the foot and leg is turned-in, sometimes turned-out.



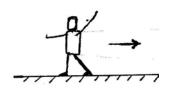
Position (3) actually is with the foot crossed in front of the standing leg. We also do positions where the free foot is placed at the side of the ankle.

Try this rising up upon the Left leg-foot: then with hops. Then try it with stamping down-accents. Try hitting the heel on the floor as you go from (8) to (1).

Of course one can just do (8)-(1,2)!

MEN'S DRAMATIC POSES

Poseing may be done during breaks in the music or when the man is waiting. Starting from a Pose with one leg behind the other (m1), take a strong step back and pose again.



EDWARD de KURYLO

Edward de Kurylo was the first soloist at the Imperial Theater in Warszawa, later danced and taught in London. In 1915 he danced with a Ballet Company throughout the USA. He worked in Hollywood on the film "Intolerance" and in 1919 was a Ballet master for J. Phillip Sousa's New York Ballet Company. Interesting, isn't it?

AN INVENTION OR JUST AN EXPERIMENTAL DISCOVERY OF A GENTLE VARIATION OF THE PZDP GLIDING STEP?

This came to us in the year of 1994. I may have already described it—I do not remember. As the Reader will recall there have been attempts to use a two/four time step in the Mazur, namely, the Pas Chasse as a type of PZDP or Pas Glissé. This is not easily done; however, if we think of doing a PZJP or just even a non-hopping PZJP going forward of only counts one and two we can have a pleasant movement.

So what do we do with count three? We close the feet together on count three, pointing directly ahead (in Character Dance 6th position).

You start with the foot-leg attitude of Londyński on count&. As you go to count one you are raising upon the ball of the foot; now you begin also to glide the free foot forward; as you complete count two you are descending vertically via the rotation of the supporting ankle. This produces a pleasant up-down motion—Pas Chassé-like. This can be done to slow music. (Naturally, there is some splendid dancer or danceress who will be able to do this to fast music.

Of course this goes against the Mazur's moving forward on all three counts character. But it does fit the Cellarius' type. It is useful in crowded spaces where instead of moving forward you rise and fall.