

## El Gato

(Argentina)

El Gato, meaning “the cat,” is considered to be one of the oldest dances in Argentina and belongs to a class of dance called “picasescas” (flirtatious). It originated in the early years of the 19th century and is danced throughout the country with small variations depending on the region. It can be danced in single or double couple formations.

Pronunciation: ehl GAH-toh

Music: 6/8 meter *Music Popular Argentina, Track 10*

Formation: Couples face each other in a line going across the middle of an imaginary square.

Steps & Styling: Basic arm pos: Arms are held slightly diag fwd high, curved, with hands approximately at eye level and fwd to the point where you can just see them with your peripheral vision. Fingers generally snap to the beat of the music.

Basic step: The Basic step is performed in 2 meas of 6/8 meter. It almost always starts on the L and is a running waltz step.

1 Longer step onto L (cts 1-2); step R next to L (cts 3-4); step on L (cts 5-6).

2 Repeat meas 1 with opp ftwk.

Zapateo basico: 2 meas of 6/8.

1 Stamp L heel beside R (ct 1); stamp L ball of L ft beside R ft, taking wt (ct 2); stamp R on whole ft, taking wt (ct 3); stamp L heel beside R, no wt (ct 4); stamp L whole ft, taking wt (cts 5-6).

2 Repeat meas 1 with opp ftwk.

Zapateo basico cruzado: 2 meas of 6/8.

1 Stamp L heel, brushing L ft fwd across R (ct 1); stamp ball of L ft across R taking wt briefly (ct 2); stamp on whole R ft, taking wt (ct 3); brush stamp L heel beside R ft, no wt (ct 4); stamp whole L ft, taking wt (cts 5-6).

2 Repeat meas 1 with opp ftwk.

Palmas: L hand held at eye level to L side of head; R hand claps on L palm to the beat of the music.

Meas                      6/8 meter                      Pattern

8 meas                      INTRODUCTION. Stand in place clapping hands (“palmas”) to the rhythm of the music.

I. VUELA – LARGE CCW CIRCLE

1-8                      Beg L, four Basic steps (2 meas each) with arms held in Basic pos and fingers snapping to the rhythm of the music. Describe one large CCW circle, passing through each other’s pos and ending back in starting pos.



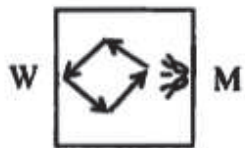


II. GIRO – SMALL CCW CIRCLE

1-4 Beg L, two Basic steps, arms in Basic arm pos. Describe a small CCW circle, meeting midway in the imaginary square and ending back in orig pos. Directions same for M and W. M and W pass each other back to back in ctr of square.

III. ZAPATEO Y ZARANDEO – M DOES FTWK IN PLACE, W MAKES DIAMOND SHAPE

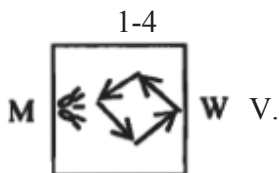
1-8 Men: With L hand in belt buckle and R arm down at side, Zapateo steps (either Basico or Cruzado) in place.



Women: Beg L, dance two Basic steps, describing a diamond shape, moving R diag fwd, making one side of a diamond with each meas. L hand on waist, R arm moves skirt from R side across body to L side and back on each meas. This figure takes four meas and is done twice.

IV. MEDIA VUELTA – HALF LARGE CCW CIRCLE

1-4 Beg with L, dancing Basic step with Basic arm pos, M and W describe half a CCW circle, ending in opp pos.



V. ZAPATEO Y ZARANDEO – M DOES FTWK IN PLACE, W MAKES DIAMOND SHAPE

1-8 Repeat Fig III from this pos.

VI. GIRO FINAL – FINAL SMALL CIRCLE

1-2 Beg L, dance one Basic step, describing a small half-circle, meeting in the center of the square and passing back to back. Arms are in Basic pos.

3 Step away from ptr on L (cts 1-2); pivot CCW on L 180 degrees to face ptr (cts 3-4); step R twd ptr (cts 5-6).

4 Point L ft fwd and put R hand on ptr's L shldr (cts 1-2); hold (cts 3-6).



Repeat all six figures once from opp pos. During the repeat of the 8-meas introduction, M walks W back to her place and returns to his new pos.

Presented by Pampa Cortés