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# Negri's Il Canario

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This is one of the most complex dances in Cesare Negri's book *Le Gratie d'Amore*. While it is basically similar to some of Negri's more complex balli, it has a number of steps and step sequences that are unique to the canaries dance form.

This is a dance for two people, a man and a woman.

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## Step Descriptions

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**RvL -- Riverenza  
(Grave) Left**

Begin with the left foot somewhat ahead of the right foot. On the first beat do nothing. On the second beat, slide the left leg back behind the right. On the third beat, place the weight on the left foot, bend the left knee and sink lightly, keeping the head forwards and upright, and the body erect. On the final beat return to the upright position.

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**RvML – Riverenza  
Minima****CnL – Continenza  
Left**

The Continenza (or Continenza Grave) is done in the same way as a continenza for a 15th Century dance, except in 4 beats, taking twice the time. This is the normal style of continenza in the 16th C dances.

**CnR – Continenza  
Right**

To do these as a pair of steps, the dancers take a very small single step to the left, join feet together, and then step back towards the right, joining feet together again. The steps are done with a rising and falling movement, so that you rise on your toes slightly while stepping across, and then sink back onto your heels when the step is complete. Bring the left shoulder forwards slightly as you step to the left, and the right shoulder forwards slightly as you step to the right.

**CnML – Continenza  
Minima**

The continenza minima is done in half the time of a continenza grave, i.e. in 2 beats.

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**PsL – Passo**

This step takes a single beat. Step forward with the left foot. The right foot should not be moved.

**PsGL -- Passo Grave**

A passo grave is the same as a passo, except that it takes two beats.

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**Cd – Cadenza**

Kick the left foot forwards, a little in advance of the beat, and spring into the air. While in the air, bring the left foot back in line with the right foot. Land on both feet, with the left foot slightly advanced. This is usually done at the end of a sequence of galliard type steps (eg: sottopiedi), and the time taken to do it is highly variable, but usually in the order of half of a beat.

A cadenza can be described as “Left”, indicating that the left foot is in advance as above, “Right”, indicating that the right foot is the one moving and in advance, or “a pie pari” which means landing with both feet together.

**TbL -- Trabuchetto**

This step takes one beat. Leap slightly to the left, landing on the left foot, and closing with the right foot so that the right heel is closest to the left instep, and about two finger-breadths away. This should be done lightly, on the toes of the feet, with the legs well extended, lowering the left hip and raising the right hip slightly as you land in the jump.

**FL -- Fioretto**

This step is done in very much the same way as a trabuchetto, but much more ornamented. It starts by kicking the left foot forwards and around to the left, and leaping onto the toes of the foot as it is placed a short distance away to the left. Then, bring the right foot across and land lightly on the flat of both feet. This takes two beats, or sometimes one beat.

**Sc -- Seguito Scorsi**

This is a small forwards shuffling motion done to a specified number of counts and normally to execute some pattern. Negri says to take 8 small forward steps in 2 beats, the same time normally taken for a seguito ordinario. Caroso says to take 10 of these small steps in 2 beats.

**SsL -- Sliding step**

Also called seguito spezzato schisciato al canario; seguito spezzato al canario; fioretto spezzato schisciato; canary step.

Begin the step by sliding the left foot forward such that the heel comes to rest beside the toes of the right. Move then the right foot along the ground until it ends level with the instep of the other. Complete the movement by again projecting the left foot out and further along the ground.

**BsL -- Beaten sequences (seguito battuto; seguito battuto al canario)**

On the first count, with the weight on the right foot, slide the left heel forward, finishing slightly above the ground. Then brush the foot back, once again audibly scuffing the ground. Finish with a stamp of the left foot, coming to rest beside the heel of the right.

**CbL -- Cambiamento Left**

This is just a shift of weight onto the left foot. It usually takes less than a beat.

**Cp -- Capriole**

A capriole is a jump into the air, crossing the feet backwards and forwards. The feet can be crossed 2, 3, 4, or 5 times, depending on the height of the jump, and the skill of the dancer. Caprioles are used regularly in galliards, where the choreography for a galliard sequence usually identifies the number of crosses required. In the canaries, the number of crosses is performed as best fits the required closing position of the feet.

**RcL -- Recacciate Left**

Kick the left foot forwards, then backwards, then forwards under the right foot, kicking the right foot ahead on the last beat. This is like a campanella with a sottopiede at the end, and takes one beat.

**RmL -- Reprise  
Minuta**

A reprise minuta can be done in either four or two motions -- done in four beats, two beats or one beat. It is a small shuffling motion to the left, done by alternatively twisting on the toes and heels, so that in one movement the toes are brought together and the heels are separated, and in the second movement the heels are brought together and the toes are separated. In the Canaries, I normally do this step with a slight hopping or lifting motion -- this is not strictly part of Negri's step description, but it fits in character with the rest of the dance, and makes the step easier to execute in the short space of time allowed for it in this dance.

## Original Source

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**Transcription**

The following is the first section from the Canary of the dance master Cesare Negri, as set out in his book "Le Gratie d'Amore", published in 1602. The text was extracted from the facsimile and translation by G Y Kendall, Stanford University, 1985 (UMI publication 8602570).

**Translation**

I have made some changes to Kendall's translation, as noted. Copyright reasons prevent me from reproducing the entire facsimile and translation, but some idea of the problems involved in working from such a book can be obtained by reading this section.

<p>IL CANARIO DEL L'AVTORRE CON le sue mutanze In gratia della Illuſtriuss Signore la Signora a Marche Sa Guilia de Vecchi, e Cusana. Nel principiare questo balle, il caualiero picliara la mano della dame, come si vede nella figura, &amp; insieme faranno la Rv graue don due Cn alla sinistra, &amp; alla destra. poi faranno dodeci fioretti .SP. schisciati quattro, andando innanzi fino a mezo il ballo, pigliaranno poi'l braccio destro, &amp; se ne faranno altri quattro attorno alla destra con vna meza Rv si lasceranno, i faranno gl'altri quattro .SP. intorno alla sinistra. il caualiero va a pie del ballo, e la dama ritorna a capo, voltandosi a facci, e fanno insieme la Rv la dama si ferma, il caualiero fa quarttro .SP. in saltino inotorno alla sinistra, &amp; due .P. presti andando innanzi, e la cadenza a pie pari. questo e'l passeggio che farranno insieme amendue e poi si farancore innanzi, che si facciano le mintanze auuertendo che come si faranno questi .P. si fa'l medesimo passeggio, come di sopra, voltandosi del far le mutanze, e l'altre attione sempre all'incontro a dritte linea.</p>	<p>THE CANARY OF THE AUTHOR WITH its variations Dedicated to the most illustrious signora, the Signora Marquise Guila of Vecchi and Cusona  At the beginning of this dance, the man will take the hand of the woman, as it is seen in the figure, and together they will do the riverenza grave with two continenze to the left, and to the right. Then they will do twelve fioretti spezzati schisciati<sup>1</sup> four, going forward up to the middle of the dance floor. They will then take the right arm, and will do another four of them around to the right with one half riverenza. They will let go, and will do the other four fioretti spezzati going around to the left. The man goes to the front of the dance floor and the woman returns to the head, turning themselves to face, and they do together the riverenza. The woman stands still, the man does four fioretti spezzati in saltino going around to the left, and two fast passi<sup>2</sup> going forward, and the cadenza a pie pari. This is the passage that they will both do together and then will do again, before they do the variations, being aware that as they do this passage, as above, they will turn themselves in order to do the variations, and the other actions, so that they face each other in a straight line<sup>3</sup>.</p>
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# Reconstruction

I have reconstructed the dance, commencing with the above section, as follows.

## Starting Position

The dance commences with the couple standing facing towards the front of the hall, with the man on the left and the lady on the right. At the end of the opening passeggio, they will be facing each other, across the hall, about 2 or 3 paces apart.

## Diagrams

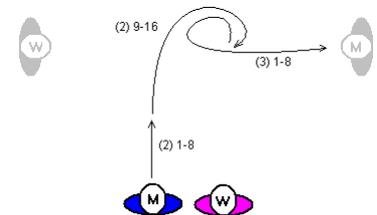
The diagrams show the floor pattern for the passeggios of the dance. The light circles show the starting position after each section, and the dark circles show the ending position.

## Figure 1: Opening Passeggio

The dance commences with the couple standing facing towards the front of the hall, with the man on the left and the lady on the right. At the end of the opening passeggio, they will be facing each other, across the hall, about 2 or 3 paces apart.

## The Passeggio Together

The diagram shows the path the man takes in this passeggio only. The lady takes an identical but opposite path.



(1) 1-8	RvL	Riverenza grave.
9-16	CnL CnR	Two continenze, left then right.
17	pause	
(2) 1-8	SsL SsR SsL SsR	Four fioretti spezzati schisciati (sliding canary steps), advancing, commencing on the left foot.
9-16	SsL SsR SsL SsR	Taking right arms, and turn around each other to the left, leading with the left shoulder.
17	RvML	Quickly make a meza riverenza.
(3) 1-8	SsL SsR SsL SsR	Change hands and turn around each other, leading with the left shoulder. End up facing each other. Finish with a quick riverenza.

<b>Turning Passegio</b>	(3) 9-16	SsL SsR SsL SsR	The man circles to the left in place. Finish each canary step "in saltino" with a small hop.
<b>Conclusion</b>	(3) 17	PsL PsR	The man does two passi presti, ending with the feet together, facing towards the lady. At the end of this passegio the couple will be facing each other across the width of the dance floor. The rest of the dance is performed from this position. During each of the following passegios, the person dancing advances towards their partner with an "advancing" sequence of steps, and then retreats away from their partner with a "ritarata", or retreating sequence.

## Figure 2: Man's First Variation

<b>Advancing Passegio</b>	(4) 1-2	Stamp L R L R	Moving forwards towards the lady.	
	3	Stamp L L	Precede the first stamp by turning the left shoulder forwards, and raising the left foot up to about knee level.	
	4	Stamp L L	Repeat.	
	5 - 6	BsL BsL	Two seguiti battuti.	
	7	RmL	Reprise minuta to the left (2 movements only).	
	8	BsL	Seguito battuto left.	
	9 - 16	repeat	Repeat 1 - 8 above, on the right foot.	
	17	pause		
<b>Ritarata</b>	(5) 1 - 4	Stamp L, RmL	With the right shoulder still facing forwards, stamp the left foot, and retreat away from the lady with a double reprise minuta (4 movements).	
	5 - 8	Stamp R, RmR	As above, but retreating with the right foot.	
	9 - 10	Stamp L R	Take two stamping steps backwards, first by stamping the left foot behind the right foot, then the right foot behind the left.	
	11 - 12	Stamp L R L	As 9 - 10, but quicker with 3 stamps.	
	13 - 16	repeat	Repeat 9 - 12 above, starting with the right foot.	
	17	pause		
<b>Turning Passegio</b>	(6) 1 - 8	SsL SsR SsL SsR	The man does the turning passegio, as above.	

## Figure 3: Lady's First Variation

<b>Turning Passeggio</b>	(6) 9 - 16 17	SsL SsR SsL SsR pause	The lady does the turning passeggio.	
<b>Advancing Passeggio</b>	(7) 1 - 8  9 - 12  13 - 16  17	BsL BsR BsL BsR BsL BsR BsL BsR  RmL RmR  ScL ScR  pause	The lady does 8 beaten sequences, advancing slightly on each one.  Two reprise minute, left then right.  Two scorsi sequences. These are done quickly, running through the steps, around in a circle, ending up back in place.	
<b>Ritarata</b>	(8) 1 - 16  17	PsGL PsGR PsGL PsGR  pause	4 Passi Gravi backwards, stamping the foot after each one (the stamping motion is the foot down part of the passo). Close feet	
<b>Turning Passeggio</b>	(9) 1 - 8	SsL SsR SsL SsR	The lady does the turning passeggio, as above.	

## Figure 4: Man's Second Variation

<b>Turning Passeggio</b>	(9) 9 - 16 17	SsL SsR SsL SsR pause	The man does the turning passeggio.	
<b>Advancing Passeggio</b>	(10) 1 2 3 4 5 - 6 7 - 8 9 - 12 13 - 14 15 - 16 17	Tap L L L Tap L L BkL CdL PsL PsR BsL BsR RmR RmL RcL RcR BsL BsR pause	Tap with left foot: heel, toe, heel. Tap with left foot: toe, heel. Kick backwards with the left foot. Left Cadenza. Two passi forwards, left then right. Two seguiti battuti, left then right. Two reprise minuti, right then left. 2 recacciate, left then right. Two seguiti battuti.	
	(11) 1 - 17	repeat	Repeat #10, starting with the right foot.	
<b>Ritarata</b>	(12) 1 - 2 3 - 4	Tap L L L TbL TbR	Tap with left foot: heel, toe, heel. Trabuchetti, left then right.	

5 - 6	Jump L	Jump backwards onto both feet.
7 - 8	PsGL	Step backwards onto the left foot.
9 - 16	repeat	Repeat 1 - 8 above, leading with the right foot.
17	pause	

(13) 1 - 17 repeat Repeat #12.

**Turning Passegio** (14) 1 - 8 SsL SsR SsL SsR The man does the turning passegio.

## Figure 5: Lady's Second Variation

**Turning Passegio** (14) 9 - 16 SsL SsR SsL SsR The lady does the turning passegio.  
17 pause

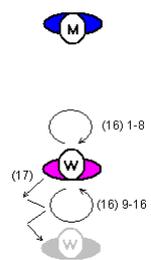
**Advancing Passegio** (15) 1 - 3 TbL TbR TbL The lady turns her left shoulder to the man, then does three trabuchetti.  
4 close close feet and pause.  
5 - 8 RmR RmL Reprise Minuta right, moving away from the man, then left moving towards the man.  
9 - 16 repeat Repeat the above, starting by turning the right shoulder towards the man, and leading with the right foot.  
17 pause

(16) 1 - 17 repeat repeat the above

**Ritarata** (17) 1 - 8 ScL ScL ScL ScL Four seguiti scorsi, travelling in a circle to the left.

9 - 16 ScR ScR ScR ScR Four seguiti scorsi, travelling in a circle to the right.

17 pause



(18) 1 - 16 RmL RmR RmL RmR Four reprise minutae, first with the left foot while facing the right shoulder towards the man, thus moving away from him. Then turn the left shoulder to the man and do the second one with the right foot, moving away from him again; then again with the left, and again with the right.

17 pause

This passage does not end with the turning passeggio, because that is the first part of the next passage, which is the passage together.

## Figure 6: The Passage Together

The couple have now completed their first two variations to each other. In this passeggio, the man and the lady exchange places.

**Turning Passeggio** (19) 1 - 8 SsL SsR SsL SsR Both do the turning passeggio.

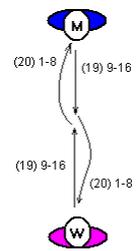
**Advancing Passeggio** (19) 9 - 16 SsL SsR SsL SsR Both do four sliding steps forwards to meet, touching right hands.

17 RvML

Meza riverenza, touching right hands.

(20) 1 - 8 SsL SsR SsL SsR

Both do four sliding steps into each others' original places.



**Turning Passeggio** 9 - 16 SsL SsR SsL SsR The man does the turning passeggio.  
17 RvML Both do a meza riverenza.

Now having completed the exchange of positions, the dancers each do the final two variations from each others' former positions.

## Figure 7: Man's Third Variation

**Advancing Passeggio** (21) 1 - 3 BsL BsR BsR Three beaten sequences, left, right, right.  
4 Stamp L L Stamp left forwards, then backwards.  
5 Stamp L R Stamp left forwards, then (stepping forwards), stamp right forwards.  
6 Stamp R R Stamp right backwards then forwards.  
7 Stamp L L Stamp left backwards then forwards  
8 Stamp L CdL Stamp left backwards then Cadenza left  
9 - 10 PsGR Passo Grave sideways to the right.  
11 - 12 Hop Hop Two hops on the right foot, ending with feet side by side.  
13 Hop PsR Hop forwards onto the left foot, then step onto the right foot.  
14 BsL Beaten sequence on the left foot.  
15 - 16 Hop PsR BsL repeat 13 - 14.  
17 pause

(22) 1 - 17 repeat Repeat #21 above, leading with the right foot.

<b>Ritirata</b>	(23) 1 - 4	PsGL PsGR	Two slow steps backwards, left then right, stamping the foot after each step. Change to the right foot and hop on it, then close feet, change to the left foot, and hop, moving backwards with each hop. Reprise Minuta, left. Two beaten sequences, right then left. Left Cadenza
	5 - 8	Hop R Hop L	
	9 - 12	RmL	
	13 - 14	BsR BsL	
	15 - 16	CdL	
	17	Pause	
	(24) 1 - 16	repeat	Repeat 1 - 16 above, leading with the right foot.
	17	RvML	Meza Riverenza.
<b>Turning Passegio</b>	(25) 1 - 8	SsL SsR SsL SsR	The man does the turning passegio.

## Figure 8: Lady's Third Variation

<b>Turning Passegio</b>	(25) 9 - 16	SsL SsR SsL SsR	The lady does the turning passegio.
	17	pause	
<b>Advancing Passegio</b>	(26) 1 - 4	RmL	Turn L shoulder to partner, reprise minuta (4 movements). Three trabuchetti, still with the left shoulder turned to the partner.  Repeat 1 - 8 above, starting with the right foot.
	5 - 7	TbL TbR TbL	
	8	pause	
	9 - 16	repeat	
	17	pause	
<b>Ritirata</b>	(27) 1 - 16	4 x PsGL PsGR	8 passi gravi, going around to the left in an S curve, returning to the place that the lady started the variation.
	17	pause	
<b>Advancing Passegio</b>	(28) 1 - 17	repeat	Repeat #26, above, commencing on the right foot and finishing on the left foot.
<b>Ritirata</b>	(29) 1 - 16	4 x PsGR PsGL	8 passi gravi, going around to the in an S curve, returning to the place that the lady started the variation.
	17	pause	
	(30) 1 - 4	RmL RmR	Two reprise minutae, the first to the left, facing the R shoulder to the man, retreating, then with the R facing the left shoulder to the man, retreating again.
	5 - 8	RvL	Both do a Riverenza.

## Figure 9: Man's Fourth Variation

<b>Turning Passegio</b>	(30) 9 - 16 17	SsL SsR SsL SsR pause	The man does the turning passegio.
<b>Advancing Passegio</b>	(31) 1 2 3 4 5 - 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 - 16 17	FL(R) Stamp R R Stamp R, SpR CpL RmR RmL PsL stamping PsR stamping PsL stamping CdL PsR PsL PsR L R CdR	Fioretti "contratempo", that is a Fioretti done with the left foot moving to the right. Two beats with the right foot, one forwards and one to the side. Stamp backwards with the right foot, then do a sottopiede to the right. Capriole spezatta to the left. Two reprise minutae Step onto the left foot stamping it 3 times. as above, with the right foot. as above, with the left foot. Left cadenza Passo backwards, stamping the right foot once. as above, with the left foot. Three faster steps backwards R, L, R. Right cadenza
<b>Ritirata</b>	(32) 1 - 3 4 5 6 7 - 8 9 - 10 11 - 12 13 - 14 15 16 17	CbR CbL CbR CdL Stamp R R Stamp R R SpR CpL RmR SpL CpR RmR Stamp L L Stamp L L CdL	Three cambiamente R, L, R. Left Cadenza Raise the right foot high, then stamp it level with the left foot, then behind it (with the middle of the right foot level with the left heel). repeat the above. Right sottopiede, left capriole with a cadenza Turning the left shoulder to partner, right reprise minuta. Left Sottopiede, right capriole with a cadenza Right reprise minuta. Beat left foot beside then in in front of right foot. Beat left foot in front of then behind right foot. Left cadenza.
	(33) 1 - 17	repeat	Repeat #31 with opposite feet.
	(34) 1 - 17	repeat	Repeat #32 with opposite feet.
<b>Turning Passegio</b>	(35) 1 - 8	SsL SsR SsL SsR	The man does the turning passegio.

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## Figure 10: Lady's Fourth Variation

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<b>Turning Passegio</b>	(35) 9 - 16 17	SsL SsR SsL SsR pause	The lady does the turning passegio.
<b>Advancing Passegio</b>	(36) 1 2 3 4  5 - 6 7 - 8 9 - 16  17	Stamp L Stamp L Stamp L Stamp L  BsR BsL RmR RmL repeat  pause	Beat left heel beside right foot. Beat left toe in front of right foot. Beat left heel in front of right foot. Beat left heel behind right foot, then close feet. Two beaten sequences Reprise minutae R, L. Repeat 1 - 8 above, leading with the right foot.
	(37) 1 - 17	repeat	Repeat the above.
<b>Ritarata</b>	(38) 1 2 3 - 4 5 - 8  9 - 12  13 - 16 17	Stamp L Stamp R Stamp L L L repeat  PsGL  RmL pause	Stamp L, backwards. Stamp R, backwards. Three stamps behind with the left foot. Repeat 1 - 4 above, starting with the right foot. Turn right shoulder to partner, then step to the left with the left foot, stamping the foot. Reprise minuta away from partner.
	(39) 1 - 17	repeat	Repeat #38 above, starting with the right foot, and turning the left shoulder.

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## Figure 11: Closing Passage

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In this final passegio, the dancers advance to meet each other in the middle of the dance floor. They then circle around each other, and riverenza to each other and then the audience to conclude the dance.

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<b>Turning Passegio</b>	(40) 1 - 8 9 - 16  17	SsL SsR SsL SsR SsL SsR SsL SsR  pause	Both dancers do the turning passegio. Both dancers do the turning passegio again.
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<b>Exchanging Passegio</b>	(41) 1 - 4	SsL SsR	Two sliding steps forwards to meet.
	5 - 16	3 x SsL SsR	6 steps linking arms, and circling 1½ times around to the left to change places.
	17	Pause	
	(42) 1 - 12	3 x SsL SsR	6 steps linking arms, and circling around to the right to change places.
	13 - 16	RvL	Riverenza to end the dance.
	17	RvL	Riverenza to the audience.

