

Chant Calling

“Chant calling” is the intermeshing of the calls with the harmonics (or melody) of whatever music the caller chooses to use to call his/her patter. This has also been referred to “old timey” calling. Callers - like auctioneers - were/are known for having a cadence to their vocal delivery. When it’s there, it adds a flair and a panache to the event. When it’s not ... well, something is just “missing.”

With the advent of alternative music, and more difficult/complex choreography, there has been an increase of the “talking” caller versus the “chanting” caller. This means that, instead of being out in front of the band, leading the band, more callers are expecting the music to carry them. This is an abdication of duties that has taken a chunk of the pizzazz out of the caller’s delivery. And - if you don’t SOUND like a caller, dancer confidence in your abilities to lead them is impacted negatively.

For some callers, finding the harmonic and matching the phrasing and timing of the calls to the music is more natural than for others. If it’s not natural for you, it may seem impossible ... however, with some work, it can become a more natural part of your repertoire. These steps will give you a roadmap to understanding the art & science of putting your own personal choice of patter music to better use.

- 1) Choose one piece of music with which to start.
- 2) Listen to it OVER & OVER!
 - a. When does it actually start?
 - b. How many beats are in the intro?
 - c. What is the instrumentation?
 - d. How does it end?
- 3) Once the musical phrase actually begins, COUNT from 1-8 repeatedly until the end
 - a. Do this a minimum 25 times thru
- 4) Find a pleasing harmonic note and chant 1-8 using that note repeatedly until the end
 - a. Do this a minimum of 25 times thru
- 5) Experiment with notes above and below the root note chanting 1-8 repeatedly until the end
 - a. Do this a minimum of 25 times thru
- 6) Substitute the phrase “Bow to the Partner, Corner too” for the first 4 beats of the musical phrase, using the chant notes you have been practicing
 - a. Do this a minimum of 25 times thru
- 7) Now add the phrase “Circle Left, all 8 of you” AFTER the previous phrase. This will give you an 8-beat phrase with which to fit to the musical phrase
 - a. Do this a minimum of 25 times thru
- 8) Do NOT try calling any other choreography until you have done the above many times.
- 9) Start collecting rhyming phrases
 - a. Listen to other callers for rhyming ideas
 - b. Write some of your own
 - c. Buy a booklet on patter fill-in calling
- 10) START and END each tip with chanting. You will sound more like a caller that way!
- 11) The more complicated your choreo, the less you will probably chant ... unless you actually PRACTICE it. You CAN do it!

