

# Principles of Party Dance Choreo

CALLERLAB Convention March 2013, Cary, NC

**Moderator:** Chris Pinkham, Panelists: Jim Wass & Bob Riggs

**Abstract:** The first experience a large number of people have with square dancing is during a Dance Party. Making this experience fun and entertaining will help create a positive image of the activity and MAY encourage new dancers to join the activity. The panel will discuss Party Night choreography to help make a successful event.

Party dance choreography should be simple, accessible, and satisfying for the dancers.

**Simple** - *easily understood or done; presenting no difficulty.*

**Accessible** - *capable of existing or taking place or proving true; possible to do.*

**Satisfying** - *gratifying a need, desire, or expectation.*

## How do we make the choreo simple?

Quick teach or no teach	Worthwhile teach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Relative to the flow of the evening</li><li>• Plain or known language</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Basics AND patterns</li><li>• Repeatable (e.g., stars can be used in circle mixer, contra, squaresj)</li></ul>

## How do we make the choreo accessible?

Pay attention to the physics	Pay attention to the customs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The dancers, the facility</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Age group, religious, other</li></ul>

## How do we make the choreo satisfying?

Make it danceable - nicely moving and pleasing	Make it fit your music	Make it matter — a point to it
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Circles, stars, weaves</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Musical style</li><li>• Musical phrasing</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Apply what you have taught.</li><li>• Repeat use.</li></ul>

## CALLERLAB Basic Program - Part 1 (as of May 2, 2012)

For a party dance I (Jim Wass) use this call **all the time\*\*\***, **often\*\***, **sometimes\***.

<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>Circle Left / Circle Right***</b></li><li>2. <b>Forward and Back ***</b></li><li>3. <b>Dosado***</b> / <i>Dosado to a Wave</i></li><li>4. <b>Swing**</b></li><li>5. Promenade Family<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. <b>Couples (Full***, 1/2**, 3/4)</b></li><li>b. <b>Single File Promenade*</b></li><li>c. <i>Wrong Way Promenade</i></li><li>d. <i>Star Promenade</i></li></ol></li><li>6. Allemande Left</li><li>7. <b>Arm Turns*</b></li><li>8. Right and Left Grand Family<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. <b>Right and Left Grand**</b></li><li>b. <i>Weave the Ring,</i></li><li>c. <i>Wrong Way Grand</i></li></ol></li><li>9. <b>Left-Hand Star/Right-Hand Star***</b></li><li>10. <b>Pass Thru **</b></li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>11. Half Sashay Family<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Half Sashay, b. Rollaway</li><li>c. Ladies In, Men Sashay</li></ol></li><li>12. Turn Back Family<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. U-Turn Back, b. Backtrack</li></ol></li><li>13. Separate<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Around 1 or 2 to a Line</li><li>b. Around 1 or 2 ...Into the Middle</li></ol></li><li>14. Split Two</li><li>15. Courtesy Turn</li><li>16. Ladies Chain Family<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. <b>Two Ladies Chain (Reg**.</b> &amp; 3/4), b. <b>Four Ladies Chain(Reg. &amp; 3/4)</b>, c. <i>Chain Down the Line</i></li></ol></li><li>17. Do Paso</li><li>18. Lead Right</li><li>19. Veer Left / Veer Right</li><li>20. Bend the Line</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>21. Circulate Family<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. (Named Dancers) Circulate</li><li>b. Couples Circulate</li><li>c. All Eight Circulate</li><li>d. Single File Circulate</li><li>e. <i>Split/Box Circulate</i></li></ol></li><li>22. <b>Right and Left Thru*</b></li><li>23. <b>Grand Square**</b></li><li>24. Star Thru</li><li>25. California Twirl</li><li>26. Walk Around the Corner</li><li>27. See Saw</li><li>28. Square Thru (1,2,3,4) / Left Square Thru (1, 2,3,4)</li><li>29. Circle to a Line</li><li>30. Dive Thru*** (Duck &amp; Dive)</li></ol>
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# Some Sample Dances

## OXO

Author Unknown

Formation: **Proper Duple** (men on caller's right, women left) lines of six couples.

Music: GMP 701 Disney Medley

1-8 **Ends Sashay** (Top couple Sashay down, bottom couple Sashay up)

9-16 **Dosado** (with opposite)

17-24 **Everybody Forward & Back**

25-32 **O-X-O** (1<sup>st</sup> 4 Circle Left, Center 4 RH Star, 3<sup>rd</sup> 4 Circle Left)

33-40 **Other Way** (Reverse the O-X-O)

41-64 **Cast Off** (All face up & Promenade to the Foot; First couple arch and others duck thru; Promenade to the head of the set.)

## Wild Turkey Mixer

Author Unknown

Formation: Triples in Promenade Circle

Music: a Jig (e.g., Siobhan O'Donnell's/Handsome Young Maidens - *Celtic Café* - Karen Ashbrook & Paul Oorts)

1-8 **Promenade** (Walk 8 Steps in Line of Dance)

9-24 **Hand Turns** (Center Dancer and Left Dancer RH, Center Dancer and RH Dancer Left - alternate to fill music. Hand hold may be star or forearm depending on what you play to use in other dances. May be replaced with a Hay.)

25-28 **On to the Next** (Center dancer advances to the next 3-some)

29 -32 **Balance** (Step and touch forward, Step and touch back)

## Freight Train

Author Jim Wass (based on another dance I can't attribute)

Formation: Facing Triples in large circle

Music: *Freight Train* (various including BS 2410)

1-8 **Forward and Bow**

9-16 **Right Hand Round** (RH dancers of triples turn each other by forearm or star)

17-24 **Left Hand Round** (LH dancers turn)

25-32 **No Hands Round** (Center dancers Dosado)

33-48 **First Train Go** (Triple facing promenade direction open circles left around the other triple.)

49-64 **Second Train Go** (Other triple open circles left around first.)

1-8 **Pass Thru to the Next and Bow** (Pass thru and blend into the Forward and Bow)

## Jim Wass Standard Opening Set (22 to 40 minutes)

(I try to use a variant of this whether we have high-functioning young adults, families with small children, or anything in between. If the opener works the rest is easy.)

1. Easy line dance (solo dance); sometimes add a second line dance
2. Serpentine (created from the lines and ending in big circle)
3. Form couples and introduce Circle, Star, Dosado in big circle
4. (Sometimes insert a circle mixer such as Bingo Waltz or Patty Cake Polka)
5. (Form Sicilian) Dosado Contra