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**Committee for
Community and Traditional Dance**
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Beginner Dance Party Program

One of the primary goals of the Committee for Community and Traditional Dance is to encourage more leaders to develop confidence in providing beginner dance parties. Such events are one way of keeping square dancing alive and thriving. We must remember that our roots are those occasional box socials or family gatherings where a fiddler and caller provided hours of joyous entertainment. It is important to ensure that it is still possible for people to arrange or participate in casual square dances. It would be wonderful, if people trying to plan a good social event often thought, "Let's have a Square Dance."

In this issue of the CD Journal we are focusing on several dances that could be combined to provide the program for one such event. In our experience, it is best to teach only a few calls and then use them in several different ways.

One approach is to begin with a big circle of partners. This is an opportunity to get everyone moving with the music, remind people about "left" and "right", settle on a common method of arm turns, and, if all goes well, teach Dosado, Allemande Left, and Promenade.

If there are enough dancers (six couples will work but eight or more couples is better) then a simple transition to couples dancing with other

couples is to use a Sicilian Circle. This can be set up from a big circle of couples by designating two couples to hold on to their partner and turn and face each other. Then ask each pair of couples moving outward around the hall to do the same.

After a rest break, place one or more couples at the top of the hall and then ask the rest to line up behind them. Make Proper Contra lines by instructing everyone to turn to face their partner and back away two steps. Proper Contras are the simplest types of contras because the progression only involves those at the top moving to the bottom of the line.

After the contra, some dancers will probably want to rest, so offer a "no partner needed" dance that will entertain both those with energy and those sitting.

If "Square Dancing" was used in the advertisement then there should be at least one true square dance, either traditional or modern. Try to utilize the same calls that have already been learned.

Finally, finish with something that is relaxing and includes everyone who wants to dance. The example given here is a Mixer.

Six dances fill these pages, but it is always a good idea to have a few extra dances in mind.

Beginner Dance Party Leaders Seminar 2013

March 23 & 24, 2013
Raleigh (Cary), North Carolina

Gather material and enhance your ability to successfully lead community, party, and educational events for new dancers.

Big Circle

Beginning Big Circle

The following are words for teaching. Mix and match the calls to make a simple dance.

“Find a partner and make a big circle. If the partners are a gent and a lady, place the lady on the right side of the gent.”

“All join hands and Circle to the Left. Step in time to the music (step, step, step). Circle Right the other way back. Everybody go forward three small steps into the middle and “whoop”, then back up three steps.”

“Face your partner. Keep facing in the same direction as you do a Dosado. Pass by right side to right side, slide back to back, and then back up passing left sides to end facing again.”

“Face the dancer on the other side of you. Bow to your corner. For an Allemande Left, join left forearms with gentle pressure and walk around each other. Let go when facing your partner.”

“Point to the right around the circle. Partners turn as a side-by-side unit to face to the right. Shake right hands with your partner and hold on. Join left hands underneath, and walk forward. That’s a Promenade.”

CD Journals Now on the Website

All back issues of the CD Journal are now available on the CALLERLAB website.

From the home page, select “Documents”; then select “Community Dance Journals” from the list at the right.

Sicilian Circle

Sanita Hill Circle

Ed Durlacher, New York, *Honor Your Partner*, 1949

Usage: This is an early version of a commonly used framework for simple Sicilian Circle dances. There are numerous variations (see two possibilities at the bottom).

Formation: Sicilian Circle — Couples facing couples around the hall like spokes of a wheel.

Music: “Every Street's a Boulevard”, Chaparral 3507 (slowed)

Prompts:

Intro or

57-64 - - - -; Join Hands, Circle Left;

1-8 - - - -; - - Circle Right;

9-16 - - - -; - - Opposite Dosado;

17-24 - - - -; - - Partner Dosado;

25-32 - - - -; - - Star Right;

33-40 - - - -; - - Star Left;

41-48 - - - -; - - Forward and Back;

49-56 - - - -; - - Pass Thru;

57-64 - - - -; - - Circle Left;

Description:

- 1-8 Each four dancers join hands and Circle to the Left for eight beats.
- 9-16 Each four dancers Circle to the Right for eight beats.
- 17-24 Each pair of facing dancers does a Dosado.
- 25-32 Dancers turn to face their partner beside them and each partner pair does a Dosado.
- 33-40 Each four dancers make a Right-Hand Star and turn it for eight beats.
- 41-48 The dancers quickly turn toward the center of the star half around to rejoin hands in a Left-Hand Star, and turn it eight beats ending in their original position.
- 49-56 Each partner pair of dancers moves forward toward their opposite pair three steps and touches on beat four. Then the pair backs up three steps and touches on beat eight.
- 57-64 Dancers Pass Thru (each pass right shoulders with the opposite dancer) and move on to the next couple.

Variations:

- 1) Change the Dosados to Ladies Dosado then Gents Dosado.
- 2) Replace the Pass Thru with Right Pull By one and then Left Pull By with the next one coming around the big circle.

Proper Contra

Spring in Duncan

A hybrid dance created by Marion Rose, British Columbia

Usage: This is an excellent, simple Contra dance with useful flexibility in the number of dancers involved. If the lines are very long, have two top couples be active at one time.

Formation: Proper Contra Lines — partners facing each other in two long lines with ladies in the line on the caller's left and gents in the line on the caller's right.

Music: Jigs or Reels

Prompts:

Intro or

57-64 - - - -; Top couple Sashay down the center;

1-8 - - - -; - - Sashay back;

9-16 - - - -; Lines Forward and Back twice, top down outside;

17-24 - - - -; - - - -;

25-32 - - - -; Chainsaw Circle Left;

33-40 - - - -; - - Circle Right;

41-48 - - - -; Turn partner by the right arm;

49-56 - - - -; Turn partner by the left arm;

57-64 - - - -; New top couple Sashay down;

Description:

1-8 The couple nearest the caller sashay, gallop, or strut down the center. The others clap in time to the music.

9-16 The same couple sashay, gallop, or strut back to the top.

17-32 The long lines join hands and go Forward and Back twice. (In, 2, 3, touch, back, 2, 3, touch; and repeat all.) Meanwhile, the top couple separates and walks down the outside of their own line to meet at the bottom.

33-40 All join hands in one long skinny circle and Circle to the Left for eight beats maintaining the skinny shape.

41-48 All Circle Right back to the starting position.

49-56 Partners turn by the right arm for eight beats.

57-64 Partners turn by the left arm for eight beats.

Share Your Ideas

Do you have questions, or a favorite
Beginner, Community, Traditional or Contra dance?

Please send, suggestions and articles to:

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Our goal is to publish two or three issues of the
Community Dance Journal each year.

No Partner Needed

Beginner Polka

Usage: This simple dance hardly needs prompting once it is explained and begun.

Formation: Two or more dancers in lightly connected lines all facing counterclockwise around a big circle like spokes of a wheel.

Music: Polka with clear 4 x 8 or 8 x 8 beat phrasing.

Prompts:

Intro or

29-32 - Walk 3 & Swing;

1-4 - Back 3 & Touch;

5-8 - Walk 3 & Swing;

9-12 - Back 3 & Touch;

13-16 - Forward Two-steps;

17-32 (total of 8 Two-steps)

Description:

1-4 All dancers start with the left foot to walk forward three steps and then swing the right foot forward.

5-8 Starting with the right foot, back up three steps and touch with the left foot.

9-12 Repeat beats 1-4.

13-16 Repeat beats 5-8.

17-32 Beginning with the left foot, dancers move forward around the big circle with eight quick Two-Steps (run, 2, 3, pause). The sequence will be left, right, left, pause; right, left, right, pause; repeated a total of four times. Energetic dancers might want to add a small hop during the pause.

Traditional Square Dance

Hot Time in the Old Town

Usage: The “Hot Time” music repeats after 32 beats. The figure must be repeated for each couple. Use the Break as needed.

Formation: Four couples in a square

Music: “Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight”, *When the Works All Done This Fall*, MP3Work2

Intro, Break, Ending:

Left Allemande your corner then;

Dosado with your own;

Promenade your lady & take her back home;

There'll be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight

Figure:

First Couple out & Circle Four hands around;

Pick up the next & make it Six hands around;

Pickup the last & make it Eight hands around;

There'll be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight

Ladies to the center and make a little ring;

Gents outside and make a bigger ring;

Weave a Basket and then Circle Left and sing;

There'll be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight

Description:

- 1-8 Couple #1 lead to the right and make a circle of four with couple #2. They circle to the left once around.
- 9-16 Gent #1 releases his handhold with lady #2 and picks up couple #3 to make six dancers in the circle still moving left.
- 17-32 Gent #1 again releases his handhold and picks up the fourth couple.
- 33-40 Ladies step into the center and join hands in a small circle.
- 41-48 Gents join hands to make a larger circle around the outside of the ladies.
- 49-64 To weave the basket, the ladies raise their joined hands to make arches for the gents to duck under. Dancers should lean back, face slightly to the left, and put their right foot in towards the center as they Circle to the Left in the basket.
- 65-72 All dancers Allemande Left with corner.
- 73-80 Dancers face their partner for a Dosado.
- 81-96 Partner pairs Promenade back home.

Circle Mixer (or not)

Smile Mixer (or not)

Dottie Welch, Nova Scotia

Usage: A simple review of the essential calls.

Formation: Circle of couples facing in

Music: “Smile Medley” on ESP 133, or any appropriate singing call.

Prompts:

Intro or

57-64 - - - -; -- Circle Left;

1-8 - - - -; -- Circle Right;

9-16 - - - -; -- Forward and Back;

17-24 - - - -; With your corner Allemande Left;

25-32 - - - -; -- Partner Dosado;

33-40 - - - -; Pass by partner & pass another;

41-48 Take the next (lady turn) & Promenade;

49-56 - - - -; -- (continue Promenade)

57-64 - - - -; -- Circle Left;

Description:

- 1-8 All dancers join hands and Circle to the Left for eight beats.
- 9-16 All dancers Circle Right for eight beats.
- 17-24 All face to the middle and take three steps forward and “whoop”. Then back up three steps and touch.
- 25-32 All turn to face their corner and turn them by the left forearm once around back to face the current partner.
- 33-40 Current partners Dosado (once around without changing facing direction, passing right shoulders, sliding back-to-back then backing up passing left shoulders).
- 41-48 Partners pass by each other (right shoulders adjacent) and continue around the circle passing one more dancer. Shake right hands with the next dancer and ladies turn around ready to begin the Promenade.
- 49-64 Those two dancers Promenade for about sixteen beats then face in ready to begin the dance again as new partners.

No Mix Variation:

If changing partners is not a good idea, replace the Pass By with Two-hands across, Turn Partner once around (clockwise), then Promenade.