

Santa Barbara Country Dance Society

Is It a Sin To Twirl?

At a dinner the other night, the conversation turned to dance. A friend said to me, "I thought you didn't want us to twirl." This shocked me, so I'd like to take this opportunity to once again clear up where I stand on contra dance and twirling and other flourishes.

Between consenting dancers I fully support and enjoy the vast forms of interaction that can go on: twirls, high octane swings, flourishes and all. One of the great joys of contradancing is that even though there is a rigid structure, there is much room for improvisation and personal expression. I do, however, have two qualifiers. The first concern is this business of consenting. The second is the community aspect of the dance.

On consent: when you move into a figure, how do you know a person wants to add flourish? **THIS IS IMPORTANT:** at a recent dance in Brattleboro a woman's wrist was broken because she resisted a twirl she didn't want to do! So somehow a good dancer needs to develop a sense of give and take, of flexibility, and a sense of preparedness.

I use past experience and familiarity with dancers. I freely use twirls with dancers I know like them. I swing fast when I'm with someone I know is into them. Sometimes, with unknown dancers, it's obvious that they are capable and willing. If I feel at all tentative, I try to use my other senses: eye contact, a brief word, e.s.p., or whatever, and err on the conservative side. If I have an inexperienced partner for a dance, I may try to introduce a single twirl, but I also try ask if they like it. I'm sure I'm guilty of some blunders, and occasional rambunctious-ness, but I hold in mind the model of not exceeding the bounds my dance partner's ability or desire.

Most important, I think of the dance as a community event. I want all sorts of people to be welcome. I want all levels there. Beginners watch experienced dancers. They may think they are doing it wrong if they don't add the flourishes. You are the example. You are the welcoming committee. If you turn them off, they may not come back.

If newcomers think they are doing it wrong when all they can manage is to somehow make it through a dance there is a problem. If they too, cannot engage in the spirit of fun, then I think something is wrong. When we engage in endless flourishes that continuously avoid the simple pleasures of the basic form, we take the risk of discouraging newcomers.

Also, many times I've heard that people don't like to come because they get too dizzy. This tells me they've most likely been twirled and swung too hard for a beginner. Experience, practice and sense of place will usually overcome this sense of dizziness. An inexperienced

Continues on Page 2: Twirl

English Dancing Returns

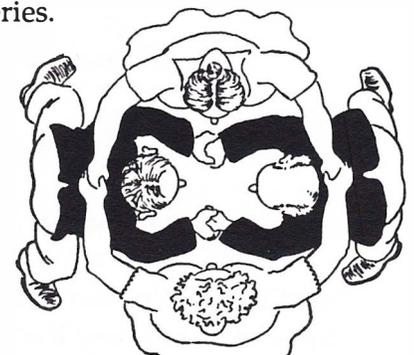
Starting September 11, the Santa Barbara Country Dance Society will once again sponsor English Country Dancing. The series will be held every second Wednesday, upstairs in Room 2 of the Carrillo Rec Center, going from 7 - 10 pm.

Leading the dance will be Robin B.C. Brodeur. She has much experience teaching dance through the Society for Creative Anachronism. In this series she will mostly limit herself to the eighteenth century and forward, but who knows? We might get treated to some real ancient dances.

English country dances were one of the predecessors of contra dancing. But like contras and squares, many are being choreographed today, so there is a modern element in this old style.

Though there is less touching, i.e. less swinging, English country dances vary from extremely smooth and flowing to highly boisterous and spirited. All of them demand grace, and this grace deepens ones ability all dances.

So come check out our new series.



What's in a (Gender) Role?

Many of our figures have gender specific names, well, at least in the woman's chain. But most do have a gender specific orientation. Does this mean we must limit ourselves to this condition of birth (or operation)? No.

It is good for dancers to become familiar with all the rolls. What's it like to be twirled? Or to twirl? Or to be lead into a move, or to follow?

The traditional roles of men and women can be broken down into the less specific roles of leader and follower. Most men, as they dance, learn how to lead, most women learn to follow (and as in the case of twirls, lead the leader by asserting her desire). But, as I say at almost every dance I call, it's good to learn all the roles.

It's been my experience that women will often dance with women, especially if there are more women than men. Men will usually sit it out if there are no female partners. This is too bad, because dancing the followers role is not only fun, it's highly educational.

By dancing the woman's/follower's role, men, you get firsthand knowledge of what women have to put up with. You also get to find out how uncomfortable some men are with dancing with guys. But, you get to be twirled, you get to learn to spin, and you get to develop skills you never even knew existed.

And women, by taking the man's/leader's role, you too, get to learn to take initiative, to twirl people, and to lead partners to the correct place at the correct time.

But even more than that, it can add to the fun!

After years of dancing and developing a network of friends from the dance community, I know more of the women than men. This is because the dances put us in touch with many people of the opposite sex while hardly ever creating strong connections for people with the same set of equipment.

I think this is too bad. Apparently others do too, because in some communities they have introduced gender-less dances. They will give out arm bands for one role, then there will be arm-bands chain, or bare-arm chains.

By experimenting with roles you expand your knowledge and skill, as well as appreciation for those who have traditionally carried out the given function. Also, you will find that you are connecting with more people and expanding your community of friends.

Erik Hoffman

A Call to Writers

Got a story about dance? We are looking for writers, ideas, songs, dances, or things you might think suitable for the *Dance Star*.

Some ideas you might like to write about are:

- A special dance experience.
- What makes you keep coming to dances?
- Instructional articles.
- Dancing stories you heard from a parent or older friend.
- Dance camp fun.

If you want to submit an article for possible publication, send it to:

Dance Star, c/o SBCDS
PO Box 21904, SB, CA 93121

Twirl

From page 1.

dizzying dancer can become a wonderful experienced dancer, but not if they don't come.

So, do I think it's a sin to twirl? No, but think of the big picture: welcome everyone and be sensitive to others needs. When dancing with those who can handle twirls and hopping swings, cut loose. But joining in the spirit of making it fun for everyone can make it even more fun for yourself.

Erik Hoffman

Carol Bemis



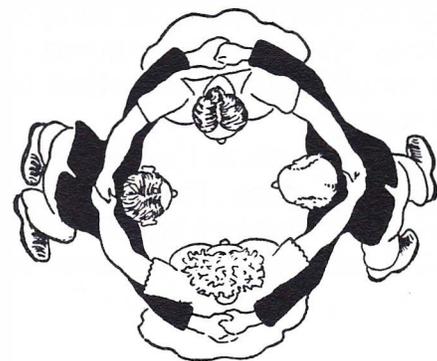
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Gently Turn

© Michael Mendelson, 1991
(Santa Barbara, CA)

I completed this tune a few weeks before the 1991 Harvest Moon Festival, but was having difficulty coming up with a title. During the festival a friend, and one of my favorite partners, was having to sit out many of the dances because of injuries. She did agree to go out on the floor a few times, and the dancing we did do was smooth and gentle, and the inspiration for the title of this gentle waltz!

The musical score for 'Gently Turn' is written in 3/4 time and consists of six staves of music. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The second staff includes first and second endings, marked '1' and '2' respectively. The third staff has a repeat sign at the end. The fourth staff also has a repeat sign at the end. The fifth and sixth staves continue the melody. Chord symbols are placed above the notes: Dm, Gm, Gm, A7, A7, Dm, F, Bb, Gm, C, F, Bb, Bm, F, C, F.

Monica's Joy

an improper contra by Erik Hoffman

- A1: Do Si Do below (8), Allemande right the same three fourths (4) until the men meet in the middle, Men allemande once to face neighbor (4) and start a:
 A2: Hey for four: start passing neighbor's left shoulder (16)
 B1: Gypsy neighbor (8), Swing neighbor (8). End facing across to:
 B2: Circle left (8), Number one couples swing in center (8).

This smooth contra was written originally to teach the hey, I called this dance as *Unnamed #3* for quite a while. Finally Monica Rice said how much she liked it. Thus it gained it's title. The two allemandes in A1 are quite snappy, so alert the dancers. I have been known to do a Penn Fix fix by changing B1 to Balance and Swing neighbor.

Summer 1991

Old Time Barn Dance Calendar

The Santa Barbara Country Dance Society, PO box 21904, Santa Barbara, CA, 93121, (805) 969-1511

Come dance on the finest dance floor in the West at the Carrillo Ballroom or under the stars at Oak Park. Join the fun! Dance to the irresistible rhythms of a live old-time string band. We'll do the flowing contra dances of New England, the colorful square dances of the Old West, plus a few old-time couple dances such as waltzes & polkas.

Beginners' Workshop

There is a beginners' class before each weekend dance! Come a half-hour early to learn the basic moves. No prior experience is necessary as all dances are taught and prompted. Wear comfortable clothes. Generally dances become more challenging as the evening progresses.

Location Key

- CB:** Carrillo Ballroom, 100 East Carrillo Street, Santa Barbara. Co-sponsored by the Santa Barbara Parks & Recreation.
OP: Oak Park dance platform, Junipero at Calle Real, Santa Barbara.
CP: Carpinteria Main School. 8th St. & Palm Ave., Carpinteria.

Phone

For the latest dance information call the SBCDS hotline:
(805) 969-1511.

Sun. June 2 CB

Chuck Galt and the Old Grange String Band come up from L.A. to call and play for us. 7 - 10. Intro at 6:30. \$5.

Fri. June 7 OP

Kathy Fanning-Tingos and Cara Moore share the calling. Music by Michael Mendelson & Friends. 7:30 - 10:30. Intro: 7. \$5.

Sun. June 16 CB

Erik Hoffman and the Growling Old Geezers join forces again. 7 - 10. Intro: 6:30. \$5.

Sat. June 22 OP

Drew Tronvig returns with more advanced contras. J&T Fiddle Band plays. 7 - 10. No intro. \$5.

Fri. June 28 CP

Come contra while Kathy Fanning-Tingos calls. Music by Carrik. 7:30 - 10:30. Intro: 7. \$5.

Sun. July 7 CB

Our own Erik Hoffman with O'Ryan's Belt. 7 - 10. Intro: 6:30. \$5.

Sun. July 21 CB

Up from LA, Susan Michaels and the Turtle Creek String Band host the evening. 7 - 10. Intro: 6:30. \$5.

Fri. July 26 CP

Cara Moore and Kathy Fanning-Tingos share the calling. Music by the J&T Fiddle Band. 7:30 - 10:30. Intro: 7. \$5.

Sun. Aug. 4 CB

The J&T Fiddle Band return for a mystery caller. 7 - 10. Intro 6:30. \$5.

Fri. Aug. 9 OP

Help us welcome Ruth Lowengart from the Bay Area and the Growling Old Geezers from SLO-town. 7 - 10. Intro: 6:30. \$5

Sun. Aug. 18 CB

Tom Sauber and Friends, including Monica White on piano and Chris Cooper on banjo & guitar, bring their talents up from LA to back-up the calling of Erik Hoffman and Cara Moore. 7-10. Intro: 6:30. \$6 for this special dance.

HOT! HOT! HOT!

Fri. Aug. 23 CP

Come and welcome Carl Magagnosc back from his summer travels. Carrik provides the music. 7:30 - 10:30. Intro: 7pm. \$5.

Sat. Aug. 24 OP

Erik Hoffman and that mysterious TBA band for an evening of Advanced Contras. 7 - 10. No intro. \$5.

Alta Sierra is back!

This popular LABOR DAY WEEKEND dance festival in the Sierra foothills is on again. Mark you calendar and be on the lookout for flyers, or talk to Drew Tronvig when you meet him in a left-hand-star or a four-go-down-the-hall-and-back.

Other Dances In Our Vicinity:

Ojai Art Center:

Saturday June 8. At the Art Center on Montgomery St. just off Ojai Ave, Ojai. 7:30 - 10:30. Intro: 7. \$5.

San Luis Obispo:

Second Saturdays; June 8, July 13 & August 10. San Luis Grange, 2880 So. Broad St. 8 - 11. Intro: 7:30. \$5
The July and August dances are preceded at 3 by Callers Workshops. Free to dancers, musicians and callers.

Irish Ceili's (Kay-lees):

Every second and fourth Sunday evenings, the Rusty's Pizza on the corner of Carrillo and Bath Streets hosts Irish Ceili's. These are Irish parties featuring music jams, singing, and both solo and set dancing in a highly social spirit of fun. Free!

Los Angeles Area:

Country dances every weekend. Call their dance hotline: (818) 951-2003.

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Join the Santa Barbara Country Dance Society. Members of the Santa Barbara Country Dance Society receive a \$1 discount at all regular dances. Members also receive the *Dance Star*, our quarterly newsletter. Membership is \$18 per calander year, January 1 to December 31. To join now for for the rest of 1991, simply send a check for \$9, name, and address to:

SBCDS
PO Box 21904
Santa Barbara, CA 93121.

To receive just the Summer 91 and Fall 91 issues of the *Dance Star*, send just \$3 to the above address.

LOOKING FOR A WAY TO PLUG INTO THE DANCE COMMUNITY?

SBCDS is looking for.....

- * someone to help sign people in at the door at some of the dances,
- * someone to type up minutes, correspondence, etcetera (this can be done with your own equipment or take advantage of training in how to use a Macintosh),
- * someone with a 386SX computer willing to provide time and/or access to maintain the records (we'll provide the relational database program),
- * someone with a garage to store dance decorations (including the famous Harvest Moon Parachute!);

if so, call Bob Hamber at 964-1445 or leave a message on the dance hotline;

And

- * somefew to help with the Harvest Moon Festival (people chosen to fill volunteer positions are guaranteed a space in HMF);

if so, call Bettine Wallin at 566-1501 or leave a message on the dance hotline;

And

- * everyone who has left parts of their wardrobe behind at one of the dances (please ask at the front desk for the lost and found).



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