

Some Practical Ideas For More Interesting and Danceable Calling

Hal Barnes

halbarnes32@gmail.com

November 2009

Revised 11/7/2012

Background – The Assignment

My friend Butch Adams asked me and a few other caller friends to write out a “Different but Easy” mainstream tip, knowing I could not resist such an invitation. (This may be a sneaky way for Butch to collect some new material.) I thought that I should probably include some rationale of what I was doing along with the calls which led to this paper. This assignment caused me to think about the creative and constructive aspects of calling. So much of what we do is quite artful and intuitive which makes it difficult to explain in procedural terms. But I am challenged to try.

Overview

This paper is not a discussion of calling basics such as sight calling techniques, resolutions, or cool GetOuts. Rather I hope to focus on the skills that come into play after the basics are solidly working. The purpose of this paper is not to put out a list of specific calls which you can take and use at the dance tonight (although you may pick up a few) but rather to lay out a method by which you can come up with your own interesting material.

If Different & Easy is a good place to be, how is that different from “regular” calling? The implication is that regular calling is either “Boring and Easy” or “Different and Hard.” The first section of this paper focuses on turning “Boring and Easy” into “Different & Easy.” The second section focuses on turning “Different and Hard” into “Different & Easy” or its cousin “Interesting & Danceable.”

Each section will complete the assignment described above with some patter figures and two singing call figures, demonstrating some of the techniques presented.

Different & Easy

Here are some guidelines I will use to establish boundaries for this section:

- “Different” means using calls or call sequences which are less common to the dancers
- “Easy” means using calls with a very high success rate. This generally means staying primarily with standard applications – that is, the common positions of the calls.

At Callerlab in Nashville there was a session on Different & Easy. Someone presented the sequence LINES PASS THRU, MEN CHASE RIGHT IN THE DIAGONAL BOX BEHIND YOU. This is certainly different but is not easy. This section focuses on improving “Boring and Easy” by finding practical techniques for becoming more interesting. A primary cause of boring calling is the square dance cliché.

Attacking the Calling Cliché

A calling cliché is a short sequence which is used with high frequency. A telltale sign that you have a calling cliché is provided by the dancers when they complete the sequence before you call it or when they have a high chance of errors when you change the sequence. Have you experienced the following? When you call SWING THRU, MEN TRADE, you need to stop and wait while the men “unRUN” so they can TRADE. The club caller of these folks is doing them a great disservice to program the dancers this way. They are primed for failure. Here are some common mainstream clichés:

- SWING THRU, MEN RUN
- COUPLES CIRCULATE, LADIES CHAIN DOWN THE LINE

- SWING THRU, SPIN THE TOP, RIGHT & LEFT THRU
- TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, SCOOT BACK, MEN RUN
- TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, SINGLE FILE CIRCULATE, MEN RUN
- TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, WALK & DODGE, PARTNER TRADE.

You may not even realize that you have your own personal calling clichés. Record yourself and listen to the result from a dancer perspective to develop a personalized list of clichés from which to work. For example, one night a dancer said to me “This must be CHAIN DOWN THE LINE NIGHT.” I realized that he was right, so I try to use that call less frequently now.

Calling can be Boring and Easy when it consists primarily of square dance clichés. Consider the following sequence. The clichés are shown in brackets.

[HEADS SQUARE THRU 4], [SWING THRU, MEN RUN], FERRIS WHEEL, CENTERS PASS THRU, [TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, SCOOT BACK, MEN RUN], PASS THE OCEAN, [SWING THRU, SPIN THE TOP, RIGHT & LEFT THRU], SLIDE THRU, LEFT ALLEMANDE

[HEADS LEAD RIGHT, VEER LEFT, BEND THE LINE], [TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, CIRCULATE, MEN RUN], [TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, WALK & DODGE, PARTNER TRADE], PASS THRU, WHEEL & DEAL, CENTERS PASS THRU, LEFT ALLEMANDE

Dances like this are just an insomniac’s remedy. One strategy to produce different material is to constructively trick your brain to avoid the regular call sequences and create some new ones by excluding some calls or call sequences and emphasizing others. The brain is really good at finding alternative routes given a few objectives and constraints, but it won’t get serious about it until the primary route is blocked.

Your brain has some favored “routes” during formation management to move dancers around the square. These routes will be the first which come to mind. However, if you decide ahead of time to exclude known calls or call sequences, then your brain will find another route which will be different from what you usually call. Unfortunately not all the new material makes the grade. The final step is to pick out the good stuff from the junk.

Taking the Call Exclusion Challenge

The sequence SWING THRU, MEN RUN is the most common cliché. On a particular patter call, try excluding that sequence from your calling. You can still use SWING THRU and MEN RUN but not together.

Before you start calling, think about what other mainstream choices could follow SWING THRU that involve just the men. What are some choices at mainstream?

- MEN CIRCULATE
- MEN TRADE
- MEN CROSSRUN
- MEN FOLD
- MEN TURN BACK

- MEN WALK AND DODGE (We may be crowding the edge of “easy”)
- MEN SCOOT BACK (It’s a lefty. We have violated “easy”).

Considering each one of these choices, you decide that some are promising and some are not. Where do you go after a MEN FOLD? This process not only ingrains the exclusion in your thinking, but also establishes some favorites or priorities among the alternates.

If the objective is to generate a variety of different material, then you will want to try a number of these alternate routes. You will find that you experience a greater level of mental activity as your brain generates new material. You will feel like you are working harder, but the creativity is worth the effort. You cannot appreciate the power of this exercise unless you try it. So put this paper down, start some music, and give it a try. The music is important because it prevents you from stopping to ponder your choices.

I think that Tom Miller does a really good job of achieving Different & Easy. I recall a tip at one of his dances that had no SWING THRU, MEN RUN sequences, but had many SWING THRU, MEN CIRCULATE sequences. That minor change totally changed the feel of the tip. Dancers were wary of anticipating and were listening better. This is exactly the point of this exercise.

The next step is to try excluding a single call. Try calling one mainstream tip without using SWING THRU. Just the process of considering the alternatives as you did here will lead to additional ideas. How can we work waves without a SWING THRU? Try a different kind of wave. For example, LINES PASS THRU, MEN RUN. From there we can have CENTERS TRADE or LADIES FOLD and suddenly we have some totally different (and easy) material. Maybe excluding SWING THRU will push us into using other formations more, such as two-faced lines. For example, have the centers of a two-faced line SCOOT BACK. We always have centers of waves RUN to a two-faced line, but we rarely use CENTERS RUN from a two-faced line to make a wave. Try it.

The key point of this section is that you have the creativity to make Different & Easy material, but you must force your brain out of its comfort zone and put it to work. These techniques are a great remedy for Slacker Brain Syndrome. The risk, however, with finding these different sequences on the fly is that you paint yourself into a choreograph corner which becomes awkward or hard to get out of, but that improves with experience.

You Can Be Too Different

Please note that the objective is not to banish all clichés. They serve the important role of letting the dancer relax for a moment and recover mentally after focusing on the different material. We are using the cliché as the entry point to the different material and want to replace some of them. Consider a sliding scale of the percentage of clichés replaced. Even small changes make a difference. At 10% the dancers probably notice some difference. At 20% to 30% the material is noticeably different. Above that we probably have so much different material that the dancers have lost much of their recovery and rest time, so the success rate starts to drop, taking us out of the “easy” range. A good analogy would be teaching a Plus Class. The new Plus calls are different so we initially include just a few Plus level calls

heavily padded with mainstream calls. Stacking too many Plus calls together is too different and results in lower success rates.

Emphasis Calls

So far we have focused on what not to call – the call sequence exclusions. We can also influence our “routes” by having some emphasis calls or call sequences in mind. Ideas for emphasis calls are found by considering what calls are under used. Here are a few examples at mainstream:

- Under used calls: Stars, Half Sashay, Cross Run, Cross Fold, 8-Chain-X, Turn Thru
- Calls that can be used from many formations but are seen in only one: Zoom, Wheel Around, Trades, Extend
- Wheel & Deal from two-faced lines.

Pick one or two of these as emphasis calls for a particular tip. Then as you extemporaneously pick routes, these calls will come into play, making your material different.

An Example Figure

My plan for this figure has the following ideas:

- Call Exclusion: Avoid SWING THRU, MEN RUN as described above.
- Use at least two of the alternatives from the discussion above.
- Emphasis Calls: Cross Run and 8 CHAIN X
- I know a GetOut for 8-CHAIN-3 from partner lines Out of sequence that I hope to use.

HEADS PASS THE OCEAN, EXTEND, (a) SWING THRU, MEN CIRCULATE WHILE LADIES TURN BACK, COUPLES CIRCULATE, WHEEL & DEAL (b), SLIDE THRU, PASS THRU, WHEEL & DEAL, CENTERS PASS THRU (c), SWING THRU, MEN CROSS RUN, LADIES CHAIN DOWN THE LINE(d), PASS THE OCEAN, 8 CIRCULATE, LADIES TRADE, RECYCLE, 8-CHAIN-3, LEFT ALLEMANDE	I move immediately to the first SWING THRU exclusion at (a). I use a WHEEL & DEAL at (b) rather than a FERRIS WHEEL because I recall it from the under used calls list, but I need to pause to ensure that everyone recovered from trying a FERRIS WHEEL. I want to setup the second SWING THRU but not in this box, so (b) to (c) is just changing the orientation of the boxes. Then I use my second SWING THRU exclusion with a CROSS RUN this time. This is long enough for formation management so I want to resolve at (d) and find that I am incredibly lucky to BE at a target setup. So I proceed with the GetOut to the 8-CHAIN-3.
--	--

I think this meets the objectives pretty well. The figure contains some under used calls (8-CHAIN-3, CROSS RUN). Note that the SWING THRU exclusion drove the flow. The section from (b) to (c) is very common flow which gives the dancers a short mental rest. Overall the figure is not too different, and all calls were from standard positions – Different & Easy.

Interesting Traffic Flow

In the example above, the purpose of the sequence (b) to (c) was solely to change the orientation of the set. This section looks at that idea in more detail. We want to look at the traffic flow in the square from a high level because it is an important factor in making more interesting dancing. Consider the following example of boring traffic flow:

HEADS SQUARE THRU, do something in a box, PASS THRU, TRADE BY, do something in a box, PASS THRU, TRADE BY, LEFT ALLEMANDE

This is boring because the orientation of the set never changed, the calls were all done in groups of four dancers, and only one technique was used to move dancers across the set. This boring traffic flow is just pervasive in singing calls. What is the most common traffic flow for a singing call?

HEADS SQUARE THRU, do something in a box, SWING CORNER, PROMENADE

I am not opposed to this flow – I am opposed to a steady diet of this flow. Variety is interesting. The following traffic flow techniques make for much more interesting dancing in both patter calls and singing calls.

Include more calls that use the whole square, not just a box of four. These are the “big vision calls.” At mainstream the following big vision calls expand the dancer’s vision to the whole square: WHEEL & DEAL (from outfacing lines), 8 CIRCULATE, SPIN CHAIN THRU, 8-CHAIN-X, DOUBLE PASS THRU, and CLOVERLEAF. WHEEL & DEAL is particularly good because it changes the orientation of the square. Another sequence which changes the orientation (from boxes) is PASS THRU, BEND THE LINE, SLIDE THRU. This is a technical zero but it gives the square a totally different look for the dancers.

Use many techniques to change sets of dancers working together. The following sequences move dancers between boxes:

- 8-CHAIN-X,
- 8 CIRCULATE,
- PASS THRU, BEND THE LINE, SLIDE THRU
- COUPLES CIRCULATE
- LINES PASS THRU, WHEEL & DEAL, CENTERS PASS THRU.

Given this awareness of traffic flow, examine the sample sequence in the previous section and note the balance of box and big vision calls. Note the variety in which groups of dancers are changed. We see that the sample above is different not just due to the selection of calls but the overall traffic pattern of the sequence.

Different Zeros and Equivalents

This section and the next discuss material which callers memorize to add variety and interesting dancing to their craft. There seems to be an undercurrent among some callers that “real callers do it extemporaneously” but this is just baloney. Good callers have a comprehensive bag of tricks that include memorized zeros, equivalents, getouts, and whole figures. Memorizing material admittedly takes more effort, but good callers have spent years improving their craft so they are not intimidated by a little work.

We can package interesting sequences as zeros or equivalents. Here are a couple of zeros I use from lines:

Interesting & Danceable – Hal Barnes

- PASS THRU WHEEL & DEAL, DOUBLE PASS THRU, LEADS TURN BACK, SWING THRU, OUTFACERS RUN (If this started from normal lines, it would be MEN RUN.)
- PASS THRU, HALF TAG TO A WAVE, SWING THRU, SPLIT CIRCULATE, OUTFACERS RUN (If this started from normal lines, it would be MEN RUN.)

The second is a little more difficult than the first which may required slow going the first time through, but both fall into the Different & Easy pile.

One of the most frequently used calls is HEAD SQUARE THRU from a square set at the beginning of a sequence. Having some different but easy methods to move out of a square is really important for breaking out of Boring & Easy. Here are some examples of equivalents to HEADS SQUARE THRU:

- HEADS MAKE A LEFT HAND STAR (or RIGHT HAND STAR TO THE CORNER
- HEADS RIGHT & LEFT THRU, ½ SASHAY, STAR THRU
- HEADS PASS THE OCEAN, LADIES TRADE, MEN RUN, VEER LEFT
- ALL COUPLES FLUTTERWHEEL, HEADS PASS THRU & CLOVERLEAF WHILE SIDES PASS THRU

If it is not important to get everyone in front of the corner, then we have much more flexibility for getting from a square to boxes:

- HEADS PASS THRU & CLOVERLEAF, SIDES PASS THRU
- HEADS SQUARE THRU WHILE SIDES CALIFORNIA TWIRL, CENTERS IN, CAST OFF ¾

These are just a few examples. Each caller should develop a few zeros and equivalents which are their own.

Different Getouts

Years ago I went to a Frank Lane Caller's College. He said that getouts are important. Dancers appreciate the art of an unusual completion and will remember it. Like zeros and equivalents, these must be developed and memorized. Yes, experienced callers sometimes have brilliant flashes of insight and see killer getouts while calling, but inspiration is a fickle mistress. Keep in mind our mandate of Different & Easy. Here are a couple examples:

From Zero box: SWING THRU, MEN RUN, TAG THE LINE, CLOVERLEAF, LADIES LEFT SQUARE THRU 3, MEET A MAN AND BOX THE GNAT, CHANGE TO A LEFT HAND, ALLEMANDE LEFT

From Zero box: SLIDE THRU, PASS THRU, WHEEL & DEAL, CENTERS SWING THRU, OUTSIDES ½ SASHAY, EXTEND, RIGHT & LEFT GRAND

Different & Easy: Completing the Assignment

I generally plan a tip by building something different into the singing call and then let that drive the patter. The A singing call opening sequence is different while the SPIN-TOP, MEN RUN, COUPLES HINGE in the B singing call is different. These will become my basis for the material in the patter call. This technique is covered in greater detail in the second half of this paper.

Singing Figure A 4 LADIES CHAIN, HEADS SQUARE THRU WHILE SIDES CALIFORNIA TWIRL, CENTERS IN CAST OFF $\frac{3}{4}$, SLIDE THRU, CENTERS PASS THRU, SQUARE THRU ON THE THIRD HAND SWING CORNER, PROMENADE	Singing Figure B HEADS RIGHT & LEFT THRU, PASS THE OCEAN, EXTEND, SPIN THE TOP, MEN RUN, COUPLES HINGE, COUPLES CIRCULATE, TAG THE LINE, LADIES GO LEFT, MEN GO RIGHT, ALLEMANDE LEFT NEW CORNER, COME BACK AND PROMENADE
---	---

The (#) sign in each sequence shows where I started sight calling to the resolution. Other letters in () are just to identify key points for reference.

Opener BOW TO PARTNER AND CORNER, ALLEMANDE LEFT LIKE ALLEMANDE THAR, MEN BACK UP STAR, SHOOT THE STAR FULL AROUND TO PARTNER, WRONG WAY RIGHT & LEFT GRAND, MEET PARTNER AND PULL BY, ALLEMANDE LEFT AND PROMENADE	I always begin the patter with a circle figure. It provides a warm-up period and lets the dancers get familiar with the personality of the tip including music style and tempo. The wrong way grand is a tip of the hat to “different.”
Figure 1 HEADS PASS THE OCEAN, EXTEND, SWING THRU, SPIN-TOP, SINGLE HINGE, LADIES TURN BACK, TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, SPLIT CIRC, MEN RUN (#), PASS THRU, WHEEL & DEAL, CENTERS SQUARE THRU 3, LEFT HAND STAR TURN IT FULL AROUND, MEN YOUR CORNER IS BEHIND YOU, LEFT ALLEMANDE, PROM	This is the simple, get acquainted figure. It has many almost clichés but with changes. For example, SWING THRU, SPIN-TOP is followed by SINGLE HINGE. The getout from stars is different because I really don’t want to square thru 3 to a left allemande (boring).
Figure 2 HEADS SQUARE THRU WHILE SIDES CALIFORNIA TWIRL, CENTERS IN CAST OFF $\frac{3}{4}$, PASS THRU, WHEEL & DEAL, LADIES SQUARE THRU 3, MEN COURTESY TURN LADIES (#), PASS THRU, WHEEL & DEAL, ZOOM, CENTERS SLIDE THRU & BACK AWAY TO HOME	I am beginning to work on the different starting figure for the A singing call. I didn’t plan a resolve to home, but it was convenient at the pickup point (#). Ladies square thru 3 to men courtesy turn is a little different but easy.
Figure 3 SIDES PASS THE OCEAN, LADIES TRADE, EXTEND, SPIN-TOP, MEN RUN, COUPLES HINGE, COUPLES CIRCULATE, LADIES CHAIN DOWN LINE (#), PASS THE OCEAN, 8 CIRCULATE, RECYCLE & SWEEP (A), RIGHT & LEFT THRU + $\frac{1}{4}$ MORE, COUPLES CIRCULATE, TAG LINE, LADIES GO LEFT, MEN GO RIGHT, LEFT ALLEMANDE, PROMENADE	I am beginning to work on the SPIN-TOP, MEN RUN, CPLS HINGE sequence found in the B singing call as it may be unfamiliar. I plan from the beginning to use the getout shown here because it is in the B singing call as well. I see all have opposites at (#). I have partner lines at (A) and from there I use the getout.

<p>Figure 4 SIDES SQUARE THRU WHILE HEADS CALIFORNIA TWIRL, CENTERS IN, CAST OFF $\frac{3}{4}$, SLIDE THRU, CENTERS PASS THRU, (A) STEP TO WAVE, SPIN- TOP, MEN RUN, COUPLES HINGE, FERRIS WHEEL (#), ZOOM, CENTERS PASS THRU (B), SLIDE THRU, PASS THRU, WHEEL & DEAL, CENTERS BOX THE GNAT & SQUARE THRU 3, LOOK FOR SAME SEX, ALLEMANDE LEFT, COME BACK TO PARTNER & SWING, BOW TO PARTNER</p>	<p>Again I am working on the opening sequence from the A singing call. This may be over exposure, but this time the sides are leading. I also hit the Couples Hinge again from the B singing call. Note the STEP TO WAVE at (A). This is for dancer success as they have a really hard time with SPIN-TOP from facing couples. I did not originally plan a resolution which stirs the bucket but I saw the opportunity at (B) and went with it.</p>
--	---

I consider this material firmly within the Different & Easy box. Although I may have over-worked the preparation for the singing calls, I would use judgment when calling. For example, if Couples Hinge was really shaky in figure 3, I might decide not to repeat it in figure 4 and bail out to an easier singing call figure. The final getout is showboating a bit, but why not go out with a bang.

Different & Easy Wrap Up

This section started with material that is potentially Boring & Easy and introduced techniques for callers to stimulate their own thinking to generate Different & Easy material. We rarely left the standard positions for the call since that comes with the term “easy.” While the early sections focused on call selection and sequence, the later sections moved on to discuss how traffic flow, zeros, equivalents, and getouts all contribute to Different & Easy calling. Finally the assignment was completed with patter call and singing call figures with annotation of what I was thinking as the figure developed.

Interesting & Danceable

The first section addressed techniques for turning Boring & Easy into Different & Easy. However, that is only half the story. The introduction suggests that we consider starting with Different & Hard material and use techniques to move that to Different & Easy. Unfortunately, it is much easier to transform Boring into Different than transform Hard into Easy. What really are the objectives?

The word “different” implies that our “regular” calling is boring, filled with square dance clichés and dancing drivel. I know the inventors of the term did not intend it as an insult, but it certainly has a negative connotation. I believe that *interesting* dancing is really our objective.

The term “Easy” is very subjective. I have tried to make it more concrete in the section above by saying it means sticking primarily to standard or common position for all the calls. However, by its nature “interesting” will be somewhat harder than “boring” precisely because it is different. Isn’t our real objective dancer success? I will use the term “danceable” to convey dancer success. If I call something which breaks down half the floor, I did not call danceable material to that floor. It also carries the connotation of being smooth or flowing. So my modified mandate is to start with Different & Hard and produce something “Interesting & Danceable.” The following chart contrasts the two mandates.

“Different & Easy”	“Interesting & Danceable”
Focuses on the constraints.	Focuses on the objectives.
Limits the discussion to choreography.	Has a much broader vision. Variety is interesting. Variety includes the personality of different music, calling styles, themes, and choreography. Variety starts with the overall plan for the dance. “Interesting & Danceable” does not conflict with “Different & Easy” but includes all the positive benefits we addressed in “Different & Easy.”
Achieves dancer success by limiting choreography to “easy” or standard positions. The underlying philosophy here is to lower the calling to the capability of the floor.	Achieves dancer success by using every trick in the book to help the dancers succeed: helping words, dance flow, progression plans, call packaging, and timing. The caller becomes highly invested in techniques for dancer success because that opens the door for more varied choreography. The underlying philosophy is to raise the capability of the floor to the level of the calling.
Promotes the status quo relative to dancer capability. Dancers enjoyed the dance; they were successful; but they are no better dancers when they leave.	Promotes a slow improvement of dancer capability. Dancers consistently feel that they danced “above their level” and feel good about that. They leave a little better dancer than they came and, over time, it is reflected in their dance ability.

With “Interesting & Danceable” my material is only limited by my ability to ensure dancer success. This explains why we spend so much time in the following pages on dancer success. We cannot address the “interesting” without the “danceable.” Some may infer I am advocating that every tip should be at the top of the dancer capability. That would be foolish programming as both the caller and the dancers would be exhausted at the end of the dance. I think a balanced program would have a mix of “Different & Easy” tips and some more challenging tips. I am an advocate of maximum variety for both the caller and dancer, not maximum challenge.

This section is more advanced than the first section in every way. We will spend more time on dance philosophy and the techniques are more complex but the discussion is thought provoking.

Structure of a Dance Provides Helpful Framework for Discussion

There are many different aspects that contribute to the overall dancing experience. The chart on the next page lays out the structure of a square dance from the calling perspective. This will provide a useful framework for addressing a variety of topics in an organized way and will establish a vocabulary to aide communications. Let's briefly identify the layers. Even though this is elementary, it establishes some jargon, so be patient.

The Dance is organized into tips which generally contain a Patter Call and a Singing Call. While the Singing Call will be briefly discussed, the Patter Call is the primary focus. The Patter Call template has an Opener, many Figures, and an Ending. The Figures are call sequences which usually begin from a static square (or promenade, to be more inclusive) and are usually initiated by two couples. Figures end back in the static square sometimes with an ALLEMANDE LEFT, RIGHT & LEFT GRAND, and/or PROMENADE. The Opener is an initial figure which involves the entire square from the start, such as Grand Square or Circle Left. While this is almost universal in singing calls, it is optional in patter calls. The Ending is the last Figure which is sometimes distinctive because it "stirs the bucket" for the dancers.

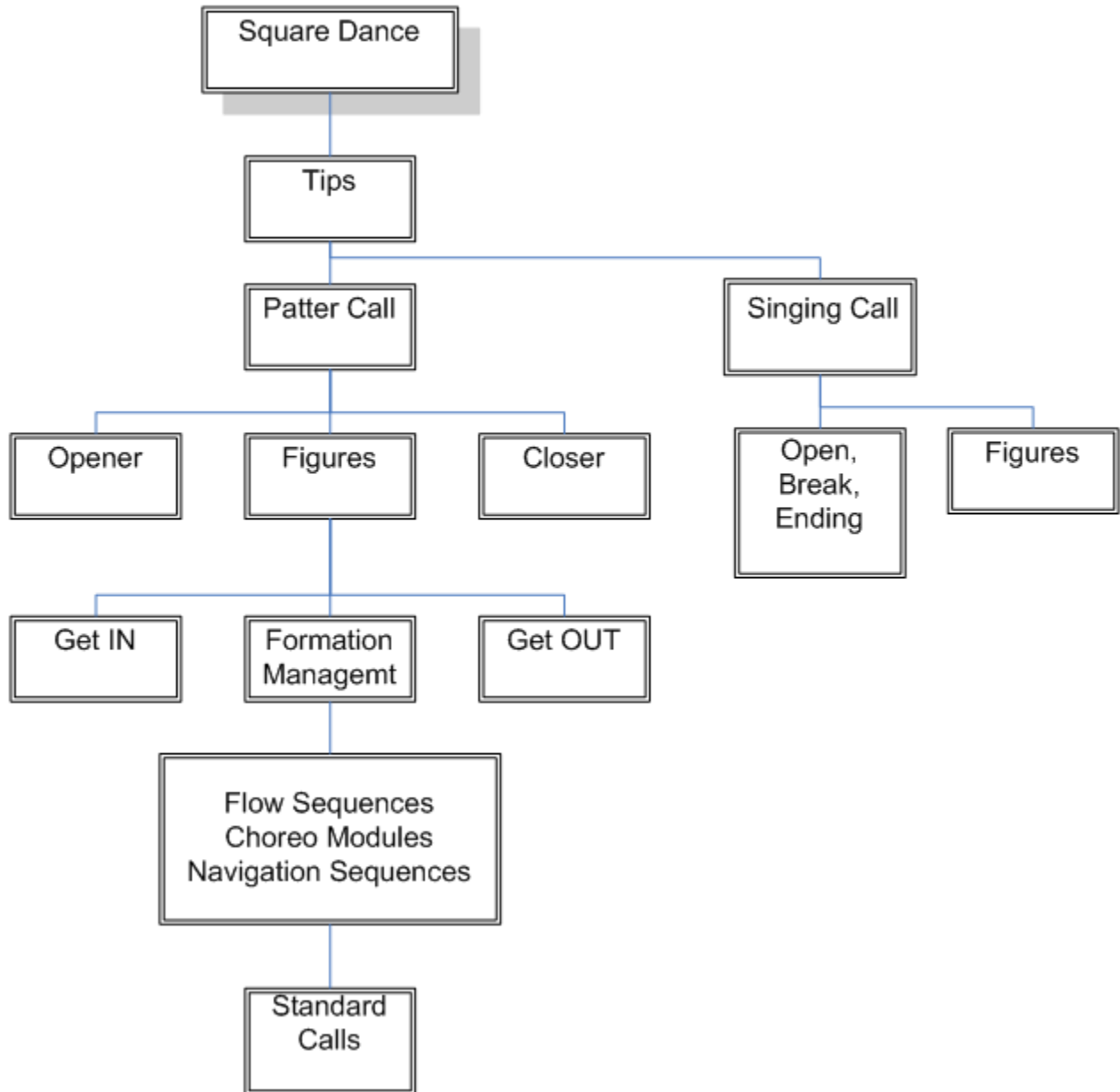
A Figure has a "Get In" which starts from the static square and a "GetOut" which resolves partners and dancer sequence. The GetOut may end in LEFT ALLEMANDE, RIGHT & LEFT GRAND, PROMENADE, or resolution to home. For our purposes, the rest of the Figure is Formation Management which is the extemporaneous movement of dancers through a variety of formations and arrangements.

Formation Management consists of individual calls, but I find there is great value in recognizing an intermediate layer which gives a way to organize call sequences by purpose. These are shown on the chart as Flow Sequences, Choreographic Modules, and Navigation Sequences. I distinguish the Call Sequence from Call Module in the following way

- A Call Sequence is any arbitrary consecutive string of calls.
- A Call Module is a particular call sequence that has a specific purpose and was designed in advance. Zeros and equivalents are examples of call modules.

Flow sequences are just the extemporaneous movement of dancers through various formations. This is the bulk of formation management. Navigation sequences are the calls that move the square to a target setup from which we will initiate the GetOut. Zero boxes and Partner Lines IN or OUT of sequence are two common target setups but there are many others. So navigation sequences serve that transition point from formation management into management of partner pairings and sequence.

Square Dance Structural Components



A Choreographic Module (Choreo Mod) is a call sequence which starts and ends in a setup which is comfortable to the dancers, such as normal facing couples, waves, or two-faced lines and contains a single interesting “Cool Idea.” This component may not be commonly recognized, but it is fundamental to a discussion of interesting dancing. One rationale for this packaging is that the cool idea may involve unfamiliar formations or arrangements which we sandwich between two familiar setups for improved dancer success. We will address Choreo Mods in much greater depth in a later section.

Dance Programming by Tip Themes & Personality

Let’s start at the top of the structure. Tip programming is the high level plan regarding the personality of each tip through the evening. What aspects of tip programming promote Interesting & Danceable calling? The primary concept is this: variety is interesting, sameness is boring. At this level we can plan variety in a number of areas. See my paper on [Comprehensive Programming](#) for a more complete discussion of tip personality.

Tip Personality – The personality of the tip does not focus on the content you are calling but rather the style of the tip. The music, vocal delivery, timing, and danceability (body flow) work together to define the personality.

Tip Themes – As sight callers, we run the risk of getting in a rut - that is repeating similar sequences every tip – unless we give ourselves an incentive to be different. Establishing a theme for each tip helps us to stay interesting. Themes can be call-based (focus on ZOOM), formation-based (focus on left handed waves), or personality-based (hot hash tip).

I find that different rhythms give a totally different feel to the dance. Country tunes and swing tunes have a strong back beat while many pop tunes have a strong front beat. A Latin rhythm can really pick up a floor, and a jig can really smooth out the dancers. A march really makes the dancers move to the beat and discourages “strolling.” Each of us has a favorite. My favorite is basic country or anything with a good backbeat, but I make a point of using a variety of rhythms because it makes the dance more interesting. I have noticed that the younger callers tend to favor the pop-style strong front beat tunes.

Vocal delivery means the style or intensity of the calling. Contrast a hot hash Les Gotcher style with a melodic Joe Lewis, a Texas Hoedown Marshall Flippo, a smooth-as-glass Arnie Kronenberger, and (my personal favorite) sing-songy Marvin Shilling. While all of us have a default style that fits us best, we can all develop some variety in our vocal delivery to give tips a unique personality.

Variety is the name of the game and Tip Programming is the starting place with a huge influence.

Topics in Dancer Success

You may be really smart and have the coolest moves on the planet, but if you cannot deliver a high percentage of dancer success, then you’re just another guy or gal with boots and a microphone. We must take dancer success as seriously as we take our choreography.

The next layer down in the patter call deals with the collection of Figures. To what degree can we program this layer? By programming, I mean having a preconceived plan which guides our choice of

what to call. Programming is most beneficial to tips where we are presenting unfamiliar (i.e. interesting) material and want to maximize dancer success. This leads into a broader discussion of techniques for dancer success in this section.

Progression Plan in Tip Programming

Here is a personal story which will explain Figure Programming. Frank Lane has always been one of my caller heroes. When I was a beginner caller, I would go to a Frank Lane dance and make a note of some very cool choreography he called with great success. Then I would try the same move at my next dance and totally drop the floor, leaving me to ponder how he could pull it off and I couldn't. The secret was a Progression Plan or Tip Programming. Frank had analyzed his ultimate target for the hard spots. Then he had worked these spots into the figures one at a time which ultimately setup the dancers to succeed in the challenging finale. This was done so well that I had missed all the preparation and seen only the cool, challenging finale.

The strongest tool for dancer success with unfamiliar material is to analyze that material for each trouble spot, plan a figure to deal with those problems one at a time, and then spring the grand choreography with high success (and great applause). This progression of preparatory figures becomes your Progression Plan for the tip. There may be other figures which are not in the progression which are woven into the mix but the organization of the Figures is driven by the progression.

There are many advantages to such a progression. The dancers may pick up on the idea that you are building on a core idea. This gives a sense of purpose and cohesiveness to the tip.

Enough of the glistening generalities. Consider the following example. I want to theme a tip on ZOOM from columns. How do I develop my progression plan?

- 1) My first concern is that many dancers consider two couples to be the basic unit for a ZOOM rather than Leader/Trailer, so I will start from a normal double pass thru position and call MEN ZOOM then WOMEN ZOOM. This will establish the recognition of a Leader/Trailer unit.
- 2) However, some dancers think that ZOOM means to roll back. They try to roll back even as trailers, so I will use some helping words to get the trailing dancer to step forward.
- 3) Next I am concerned that the leading man will always want to roll left and the leading woman to roll right, so I will go to a half sashayed double pass thru setup and repeat the MEN/WOMEN ZOOM.
- 4) Then I will put them in boy-boy-girl-girl columns and repeat the MEN/WOMEN ZOOM separately because this feels a lot like the double pass thru setup.
- 5) Then I will call SAME SEXES ZOOM
- 6) Finally I will go to boy-girl columns and try ZOOM.
- 7) Depending on the purpose I could do this from both right hand and left hand columns.

As you can see, this is plenty of material for a tip. Depending on the floor I might not take each step, but this demonstrates the analysis and the concept of the Progression Plan. On the other hand, if my trouble spot analysis has too much material for a single tip, I might spread it out over two tips before I

get to the punch line. The objective of a progression plan is high dancer success. The by-product is interesting dancing.

Helping Words

Use of helping words goes a long way to improving dancer success. Example helping words are shown in italics below:

- Key trouble spots in a call: SPIN CHAIN THE GEARS , *Women join the Men in a star.*
- Facing direction: HEADS RIGHT & LEFT THRU, HALF SASHAY, SLIDE THRU *To face the outsides and TOUCH ¼.*
- Advance warning of hand usage: WALK AROUND CORNER, *partner left for a DO PASO*

The value of just the right words cannot be over emphasized. Years ago I developed a rather unusual figure that had good potential, but I just could not pull it off with the dancers even though I tried some different helping words. So I took my problem to Frank Lane and asked for his advice on the right words. About two weeks later he got back to me with some suggested helping words. I tried them and the dancers got the figure every time. Now there is a good wordsmith.

Call Packaging

All of us who teach classes know how to package the calls so that a new or unfamiliar call is buffered by familiar calls. For example, when I am teaching Plus lessons, I will package one to two Plus calls with a number of Mainstream calls. Too many new Plus calls in a row risks failure. This concept applies on the dance floor as well. We usually know which calls or combinations will be problematic and should package these with high success calls to give the dancers some thinking recovery time and promote the smooth flow of dancing.

Timing and Body Flow

Backing off a little on the timing will give a little extra time for reaction to unusual calls, and it seems to make a big difference in the success rate. We can also improve the success rate by using a body flow which leads into unfamiliar calls. For example, consider the following two sequences which accomplish the same thing. However, the second alternative flows better into a CENTERS IN because the heads are already connected.

HEADS SQUARE THRU 2,
PUT CENTERS IN

HEADS SLIDE THRU,
RIGHT & LEFT THRU WITH A FULL TURN TO THE
OUTSIDES
PUT CENTERS IN

There is an important concept I will call Dancer Profile for lack of a better word. Consider the following analogy to driving. Aggressive drivers tailgate close behind others. They accelerate quickly and brake hard, going as fast as surrounding traffic will allow, and change lanes without warning. On the other hand, defensive drivers leave enough space in front of them to react to unforeseen events. They try to accelerate and brake more smoothly and they signal before changing lanes. These two profiles also describe dancers and groups of dancers. Aggressive dancers “tailgate” the caller and attempt to dance as quickly as possible. Defensive dancers back off a bit from the call and move through the calls at a slower pace. Aggressive dancers, like aggressive drivers tend not to dance smoothly while defensive dancers consciously strive to smooth out the dancing. The results in dancing are just like in driving.

Aggressive drivers and dancers have more accidents. They are not able to successfully respond to unseen developments, and for dancers that means unusual choreography.

As a caller I can feel if I am being “tailgated” by the dancers. If I am being “tailgated,” I cannot try anything unusual because the dancers will have a high failure rate. My test of the dancer profile lies in the long calls, such as SPIN CHAIN THRU. I can easily see which dancers and squares are sitting back and moving through the call while others are racing through like there is a prize to getting there first. If I have tailgaters, my first order of business is to get them to back off. I have two methods of dealing with dancing tailgaters. The first is the music. Some music says “let’s go” and encourages more aggressive dancing while other music is s...m...o...o...t...h. I pick music which encourages smooth dancing. The second method is in the timing but it takes a lot of attention. I try to set the timing so the smooth dancers can dance without stopping while the tailgaters are constantly in “stop and go” mode which is very annoying to them. Generally the tailgaters will get the message and back off. Now this whole profile assessment and battle with the tailgaters is going on under the radar of the dancers, but I will be relegated to mostly vanilla dancing until I can win this battle.

Establishing Dancer Trust

Dancer trust is an intangible but it is fundamental to successful interesting dancing. I am a local club caller known for calling different or unusual material and enjoy the trust of those who dance to me regularly. That means they dance the calls with confidence even when dancers get in an unusual arrangement or formation and can’t see where this is going. On occasion we will have visitors who have never danced to me, and I find it interesting to watch them when I get into some unusual material. Many of them become concerned and start looking around to make sure they are OK. Their dancing becomes tentative, their steps become slower and shorter, and they either don’t listen well or they reject what they are hearing. This puts the rest of the square in “911” mode trying to help the tentative dancers. The worried dancers can’t see how this is going to work out and they don’t trust me yet. In the worst cases, they just stop dancing. Dancer trust in the caller means that they believe the caller will successfully deliver them from a perplexing situation if they just keep executing the calls. Establishing dancer trust is critical to dancer success for unfamiliar material. When I am guest caller in a club with many who have not danced to me, I don’t even try unusual material until I think I have established that trust and, frankly, sometimes I never get there.

The following things help establish dancer trust:

- Start with the familiar material and establish a smooth flow. Show them you can competently move the square to a variety of formations and consistently resolve the square.
- Make sure you are not calling above their level. For example, many dances are Plus dances in name only. I am not going to assume that everyone can CROSSFIRE and PEEL OFF just because it is advertised as a Plus dance.
- Call with confidence. This means using material with which you are totally comfortable. I look back with some embarrassment to my early years of calling when I would try some exotic but unfamiliar material to impress the dancers. I didn’t have a clue about dancer trust, and it is certain that I didn’t have it. Tentative callers make everyone nervous.

- Try some material that is a little different, but is really quick (in and out) so the dancers are back to familiar ground before they have a chance to get worried.
- When you get into unfamiliar material, give formation and arrangement checkpoints at critical points. For example, saying “Men have a wave in the center” or “Lines with women on the ends” help everyone know they are OK and let those square which are not OK fix themselves. Yes, it causes a break in the action, but it is worth it. You can come back to this again and do it as God intended.

The following things undermine dancer trust:

- “Stop and Go” dancing gives the impression that you don’t know what to call next.
- Missing corners. Dancers are pretty intolerant of this, and it causes anxiety.
- Tentative delivery style by the caller. This will sometimes happen when you lose your principal pilot square.
- Tricking the dancers. You may think of “tricks” as entertainment but dancers become wary of the next trick. One of my best caller friends always calls the following sequence when I attend his dance because he knows it drives me crazy: LINES FORWARD & BACK, RIGHT AND LEFT GRAND.

To some degree, dancer trust is something that we have to re-establish each dance with all the dancers. Following the steps noted above to establish dancer trust is a smart way to start every dance. I call at least one figure each dance which requires dancer trust to give the dancers an opportunity to trust me.

Priorities for the First Tip

From the choreography perspective, my first tip ranges from “the same old stuff and easy” to “Different & Easy” until I am satisfied that the dancers and I are on the same page. My objectives are as follows:

- Clear the cobwebs for both them and me and get us thinking about dancing.
- Determine their dancing level as a group and adjust my level of helping words to fit their level.
- Establish dancer trust with the caller.
- Establish a smooth flow and get my timing correlated for the floor and conditions.
- Determine the dancing profile and deal with any “tailgaters.”

If I do not achieve these objectives on the first tip, then I must try again on the second tip, because I cannot proceed into what I have planned as a program until these are achieved. I have learned this through the pain of many failures. Please note that all these objectives are related to dancer success. I am not trying to impress anyone with cool choreography on the first tip. With this emphasis fresh in our minds, let’s proceed to the choreography.

Topics in Interesting Dancing

Now we turn to interesting choreography part of the objective. First we will look at techniques for generating new choreographic ideas followed by an extensive discussion about what to do with those ideas.

Generating New Ideas

The first technique for generating new ideas is to avoid the old worn-out ideas and clichés. The first section of this paper on “Different & Easy” developed this idea in some detail. This is common sense but we want to look for material that is less popular:

- Under used calls: Stars, Half Sashay, Cross Run, Cross Fold, 8-Chain-X, Turn Thru
- Calls that can be used from many formations but are seen in only one: Zoom, Wheel Around, Trades, Extend, Wheel & Deal from two-faced lines, Head Ladies Chain Right
- Calls that can be used from many arrangements (configurations of men and women) but are seen in only one: Split Circulate, Pass the Ocean, Scoot Back, Spin the Top
- Left handed calls and counter clockwise traffic patterns

Let's deal with the Dance by Definition (DBD) issue. In coming up with new ideas which involve a different arrangement am I now calling DBD? If I call a mainstream dance which includes a left square thru or a half sashayed square thru, does it become a DBD dance? I am asked this all the time because I regularly call interesting material by using a variety of formations and arrangements. But I don't consider myself a DBD caller because the material is very danceable with good success by dancers who could not begin to dance in the DBD halls at our festivals. The term is widely misused, has no communication value, and will not be fixed by anything I have to say. I would say that I play around the edges of DBD for variety, but that does not make my dances DBD dances.

Using Good Ideas

So what do we do with these good ideas? How do we implement them effectively? The Choreo Mod described above in the discussion of the structure chart is the key building block for integrating good ideas into formation management. Remember that a Choreo Mod starts and ends from a normal (i.e. comfortable) setup and contains a Cool Idea in the sequence. For example, here is a GetIn that avoids the worn out HEADS SQUARE THRU:

HEADS BOX THE GNAT, SQUARE THRU 4 WHILE THE SIDES CALIFORNIA TWIRL, PUT CENTERS IN & CAST OFF $\frac{3}{4}$

This choreo mod starts from a static square and ends in normal lines with the corner. It is unusual and has a high success rate. Here is a second one with a left handed move that provides some counter clockwise flow. I will use this from normal, facing couples. It ends in waves.

LEFT TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, SPLIT CIRCULATE, CAST $\frac{3}{4}$, WOMEN CROSS RUN, MEN TRADE

Here is how I would package these into a figure.

HEADS BOX THE GNAT, SQUARE THRU 4 WHILE THE SIDES CALIFORNIA TWIRL, PUT CENTERS IN & CAST OFF $\frac{3}{4}$	Choreo Mod as the Get IN This leaves me in facing lines.
PASS THRU, WHEEL AND DEAL, CENTERS SQUARE THRU 3	I want to do the second Choreo Mod, but I'm not in the right setup, so I use some connecting material which flows well into a left handed move.
LEFT TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, SPLIT CIRCULATE, CAST $\frac{3}{4}$, WOMEN CROSS RUN, MEN TRADE	Second Choreo Mod During this time I haven't paid any attention to partners or sequences, but now I'm ready to resolve and by good luck I find them close to a zero box.
MEN RUN, BEND THE LINE, BOX THE GNAT, SQUARE THRU 2, RIGHT & LEFT GRAND	This puts them in a setup from which I know a GetOut. Then I call the GetOut.

Let me clarify the use of choreo mods in my calling. I use this concept when I have some new material , challenging material, or a particularly good flow sequence. It ensures a good flow and avoids the temptation of putting together combinations that are more difficult than I intended. I probably use this technique at least once in most of my tips but not for every figure. But I think some of my best calling results from using this technique. Use of choreo mods is not a lot of extra work for me. When I work one out, it seems to stay in my head without specifically working on memorizing it.

The Choreo Mod Workbench

One of the most valuable benefits of the choreo mod is its role as a workbench for variations on the same idea. Given the initial sequence, I begin finding alternatives for how to set it up and where to go after the mod which invariably leads to additional new ideas. This is best demonstrated with an example.

My central idea is to have the center LADIES CHAIN DOWN THE LINE from tidal two-faced lines. This is a bit different since virtually all CHAIN DOWN THE LINE is done from parallel two-faced lines. I think a COUPLES HINGE into this would give a good flow and give the dancers a chance to see it coming thus improving dancer success. So here is my first choreo mod:

Version 1 – from facing lines: DIXIE STYLE, MEN TRADE, LEFT SWING THRU, LADIES RUN, COUPLES HINGE, CENTER LADIES CHAIN DOWN THE LINE, OUTSIDES BEND THE LINE (ending in double pass thru formation).

This is a well defined choreo mod – it starts and ends in familiar setups and contains a single cool idea. However, I am not thrilled about the flow. After the LADIES RUN the men have an awkward reach back to connect with a left. Experienced dancers will adjust to this by stepping back a bit as they slide in during the run, but not all the men will pick up on this. Furthermore, it is critical that the men be connected for the COUPLES HINGE. If they miss this connection, my success rate will go down. I can fix this by adding a COUPLES CIRCULATE after the LADIES RUN. This helps the overall flow into the hinge, really helps the men get connected, and improves the dancer success rate. It also adds some counter-clockwise flow which is always welcome.

Version 2- from facing lines: DIXIE STYLE, MEN TRADE, LEFT SWING THRU, LADIES RUN, COUPLES CIRCULATE, COUPLES HINGE, CENTER LADIES CHAIN DOWN THE LINE, OUTSIDES BEND THE LINE

This discussion demonstrates a key concept: *There is a high correlation between good flow and dancer success rate.* The term “danceable” is so perfect in the mandate because it implies both good flow and dancer success which are inherently linked.

Having established my basic choreo mod, I proceed with the workbench idea. How can I get into those left-handed two-faced lines differently? I could have the MEN RUN from normal waves. That would also easily solve the problem of the men connecting with a left. When I consider the flow, I have two choices for setting up these waves:

- Using EXTEND or CIRCULATE gives a general forward motion prior to the MEN RUN
- Using PASS THE OCEAN or FAN THE TOP gives a circular motion prior to the MEN RUN.

While both are acceptable, I think the circular motion is a little better for the women. PASS THE OCEAN is really the safer call, but FAN THE TOP is more interesting for a stronger floor and has slightly better flow into a MEN RUN. This leads to a new choreo mod version.

Version 3- from facing lines: PASS THE OCEAN (or FAN THE TOP), MEN RUN, (optional COUPLES CIRCULATE), COUPLES HINGE, CENTER LADIES CHAIN DOWN THE LINE, OUTSIDES BEND THE LINE

Another way into the two-faces lines is to setup left handed waves with the men in the middle and RECYCLE, VEER RIGHT. This is more aggressive but the RECYCLE quickly gives normal facing couples so we have a decent chance of pulling this off. Furthermore, the flow into the COUPLES HINGE is just perfect. I would need to feel pretty good about the floor before using this, but I will keep this in mind because I love the flow.

Version 4 – from facing lines: DIXIE STYLE, MEN TRADE, RECYCLE, VEER RIGHT, COUPLES HINGE, CENTER LADIES CHAIN DOWN THE LINE, OUTSIDES BEND THE LINE

Moving on, I wonder what I can do differently with the outside couples. How about a big WHEEL & DEAL around the outside? This would end the choreo mod in a square formation. This gives me the idea to write a Stir-the-Bucket module using this idea.

HEAD SQUARE THRU 2, DOSADO TO A WAVE, LADIES TRADE, MEN RUN, COUPLES HINGE, CENTER LADIES CHAIN DOWN THE LINE, OUTSIDES WHEEL & DEAL TO THE HEAD POSITION, CENTERS BACK AWAY, HONOR YOUR PARTNERS ALL

Finally, I think it would be nice to have a singing call figure to extend this idea into the singing call. So I develop one.

HEADS FLUTTERWHEEL, PASS THE OCEAN, EXTEND, LADIES TRADE, MEN RUN, COUPLES CIRCULATE, COUPLES HINGE, CENTER LADIES CHAIN DOWN THE LINE, FULL TURN TO THE OUTSIDES, OUTSIDES BEND THE LINE, SWING CORNER, PROMENADE

Summarizing our results, we probably have enough material for a full tip:

- Three good choreo mods which have been written for good flow and dancer success.
- A variety of difficulty levels which allows us to tailor this for different floors.
- A stir-the-bucket module.
- A singing call figure.

We all know that a CHAIN DOWN THE LINE can be done from left handed waves as well as lines. This suggests a different but related choreo mod featuring a CHAIN DOWN THE LINE from a left handed tidal wave. We could set it up from left handed parallel waves with the men on the ends. We could SPIN THE TOP (lefty) directly into a CENTER LADIES CHAIN DOWN THE LINE as they move up from SPIN THE TOP. That is an electrifying flow. We will leave it to the reader to develop this choreo mod but be warned that the dancers find this more challenging than the two faced line version because they don't see it coming.

The choreo mod and its use as a workbench has produced a better quality result with higher dancer success that would have resulted from calling this core idea without the deliberation and analysis done here.

Call Size: Little Calls, Box Calls and Big Calls

This is a discussion about the high level traffic flow which we build into the Formation Management (See Structure Diagram). The concept in question is the number of other dancers on a given dancer's radar for a particular call or sequence. For example, consider the following sequence from a set square:

ALLEMANDE LEFT CORNER, BACK TO PARTNER DOSADO, STAR THRU WITH PARTNER, CALIFORNIA TWIRL

This is a "little call" because it requires only two dancers: me and my partner. I am not concerned about any other dancers. Consider the following "classic" singing call figure:

HEADS SQUARE THRU, SWING THRU, MEN RUN, HALF TAG, SCOOT BACK, MEN RUN, SLIDE THRU, SWING CORNER

These are "box calls" because I must be concerned only with their mini-square – two couples. The other two couples do not concern me. Even if they break down, I am not affected until we get to the PROMENADE. A common Formation Management traffic pattern, especially for beginning callers is the following:

HEAD SQUARE THRU, [Do some calls in a box],
PASS THRU, TRADE BY, [Do some calls in a box],
PASS THRU, TRADE BY, ALLEMANDE LEFT

This is again a mini-square based traffic pattern – box calls. The following calls are examples of Mainstream "Big Calls" because they involve the whole square: Grand Square, 8 Circulate, 8 Chain X, and

Spin Chain Thru. My contention is that *calls and traffic patterns which give an awareness of the whole square are much more interesting to the dancers than mini-square patterns*. Plus level introduces many more big calls. I am not suggesting a steady diet of Big Calls but a mix of the three call sizes. I think there is a tendency today to over use the box calls.

When we are using mini-square (i.e. Box) material, just moving “across the street” doesn’t expand the call size, it just changes dancers. However, changing the mini-squares from a horizontal orientation to a vertical orientation effectively does expand the dancer impression of call size. Consider the two call sequences below in which I have tried to keep the figures similar, but changed the box orientation.

“Across the Street” Action; Fixed Orientation	Horizontal to Vertical Box Orientation Change
HEADS SLIDE THRU, PASS THRU RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, VEER LEFT, COUPLES CIRCULATE, LADIES CHAIN DOWN THE LINE, SQUARE THRU 3, ALLEMANDE LEFT	HEADS SLIDE THRU, PASS THRU, RIGHT & LEFT THRU, SQUARE THRU 2, BEND THE LINE, RIGHT & LEFT TURN $\frac{1}{4}$ MORE, 2 LADIES TRADE, COUPLES CIRCULATE, LADIES CHAIN DOWN THE LINE, SQUARE THRU 3, ALLEMANDE LEFT

I think that the sequence on the right promotes a bigger impression of call size than the left even though the material is similar because we changed the orientation of the boxes. Any call which changes the orientation must be a big call. In the example on the right,

Dynamic Focus Formations

However, there is more to the call size than just traffic patterns. The Focus Formation is the set of dancers involved in a particular call from a single dancer’s perspective. In the following sequence I am noting the focus formation of each call.

HEADS SQUARE THRU (center box), SWING THRU (my wave at the sides), SPLIT CIRCULATE (my box at the heads), HINGE (my adjacent dancer), CENTERS TRADE (my wave at the heads), MEN RUN (my line at the heads)

Call sequences which quickly change the focus formations do the following

- Makes the dancing more interesting
- Gives a bigger perceived call size without having to move the dancers anywhere
- Makes the dancing more mentally challenging and therefore higher risk.

I have some choreo mods specifically to remind me to use this technique. For example, I really like the SWING THRU, SCOOT BACK combination because it opens up the perceived call size and is very danceable.

Tension & Release Concept

We are still on the general subject of creating interesting dancing, but will shift gears to a different concept: Tension & Release. The reason sports fans get such a “rush” out of watching the games is the intense cycles of tension and release we get from the experience. Consider the cycle in a football game. Each play provides a tension/release cycle. The quarterback drops back into the pocket. He holds the

ball waiting for an open receiver as the pocket collapses around him (great tension). He throws a long pass and we see that the receiver has just one step on the defender, but is the pass on target (greater tension)? At the last second, the defender gets a finger on the ball and the receiver can't quite hang on. Incomplete pass. Joy or agony depending on your team and release of tension. Most plays are between 5 and 10 seconds. A 15 second play invariably is noted by the announcers as taking a long time to develop. They marvel that the pocket held up.

In soccer the tension cycle starts as the crowd sees a scoring opportunity: a good cross into the box, a breakaway, a corner kick. These cycles are also resolved in 5 to 10 seconds.

Square dancing also has these tension/release cycles and the dancers respond to them just like sports fans because the underlying cause is the same: the risk of failure and the thrill of success. If a common tension cycle in sports is 5 to 10 seconds, how does that translate into square dancing? In round numbers our tempo is about 120 beats per minute or about two steps per second. A 5 to 10 second cycle translates into 10 to 20 steps which is a relatively short call sequence. So the Choreo Mod from above now takes on an additional role – it is the basic unit of applying the tension/release cycles. It fits the role because it starts and ends with familiar material and contains something unusual or interesting. I have the following observations about the tension cycle:

- Unusual or more challenging material has a higher risk and results in greater tension.
- If the tension cycle continues too long, it loses its effectiveness. There is apparently a tension fatigue that comes into play. The higher the tension, the shorter the most effective cycle time.
- The ideal time for high tension cycle seems to be 5 - 10 seconds while lower tension sequences can extend up to 30 seconds. This is just my rough estimate. I have no concrete studies on this.

What is the connection between this tension/release cycle and interesting dancing? Here is my take on it:

- No risk of failure = Satisfying dancing at best and boring dancing at worst,
- Managed risk of failure with tension/release cycles and successful conclusion = Interesting and exciting dancing,
- Risk of Failure followed by actual failure (square breaks down) = Frustrated Dancers.

The art in creating these cycles is the judgment of matching the tension levels to the ability of any given floor, because there is a high downside to getting it wrong. While succeeding in the risk of failure is stimulating, actual failure in a tension cycle (i.e. the square breaking down) leads to dancer frustration. This fact creates a very high incentive for dancer success when we are creating these tension generating choreo mods.

The following example of a choreo mod specifically designed as a tension/release cycle uses inverted lines as the unfamiliar formation at the mainstream level. It ends in normal, facing lines. Helping words are in italics.

HEADS SLIDE THRU, RIGHT & LEFT THRU A FULL TURN AROUND
OUTSIDES SLIDE APART, CENTERS IN, CAST ¾, ENDS RUN

In round numbers this whole module takes about 24 beats or about 12 seconds, but the unfamiliar part is only 5 seconds of that time. If I wanted to raise the tension a bit, I would extend the module:

HEADS SLIDE THRU, RIGHT & LEFT THRU A FULL TURN AROUND
OUTSIDES SLIDE APART, CENTERS IN, CAST $\frac{3}{4}$, ENDS TRADE (Wait 2 beats),
CENTERS PASS THRU, *HOOK ON AGAIN* & CAST $\frac{3}{4}$, ENDS RUN (To normal lines)
This extends the unfamiliar time to about 20 beats or 10 seconds.

Non-Stop Dancing

The method of creating tension described above is based on variations in formation, arrangement, or combinations that are interesting but less familiar thus introducing a higher risk of failure as the price. So I pondered the question of how to generate a tension cycle without harder material – just using familiar material. The result was the Non-Stop Dancing concept. I use easy material but provide continuous flow through that material. This means no stopping and no LINES FORWARD AND BACK. I also try to keep the Perceived Set Size big which keeps most of the dancers moving most of the time. This creates a tension cycle with an optimum cycle time of about 35 to 45 seconds before tension fatigue sets in. I attribute the longer cycle time to two factors:

- It takes the dancers about 10 seconds for the dancers to recognize the game. Until that time it seems like no-risk dancing.
- Unlike strange formations or arrangements where the tension rises sharply, the tension in this game gradually increases the longer we go without a stop. Lower tension can sustain a longer cycle time.

The underlying cause of the tension is the lack of a recovery opportunity if you make a mistake, not the unfamiliar material. The non-stop nature is pretty unforgiving which is why the material must stay familiar to ensure dancer success. Here is an example of non-stop dancing which I think would run about 45 seconds. Note the big set feeling and high activity level. Another aspect of this sequence that adds tension is the dynamically changing focus formation which is characteristic of big set choreography. Helping words in italics.

HEADS PASS THRU, CLOVERLEAF, ALL DOUBLE PASS THRU, LEADS TURN BACK,
STEP TO WAVE & SWING THRU, SCOOT BACK, WOMEN FOLD, DOUBLE PASS THRU, CLOVERLEAF,
MEN SQUARE THRU 3 WHILE WOMEN HALF SASHAY, PASS TO THE CENTER,
WOMEN TURN THRU *TO THE MAN BEHIND YOU*, MEN COURTESY TURN THE WOMEN

Now I check partnering for a GetOut and see that my corner is across the street. I go there and continue with a known GetOut.

SLIDE THRU, 8-CHAIN-2, DOSADO TO A WAVE, WOMEN CROSS RUN *LEFT*, MEN *SLIDE TOGETHER* &
TRADE, ALLEMANDE LEFT

A Note About the GetIn and GetOut

Variety is interesting. How often do you use HEADS SQUARE THRU to start a figure? There are a hundred other ways to get two couples together. For starters try HEADS PASS THRU AND CLOVERLEAF, SIDES PASS THRU. Now everyone has moved from home and the world looks different. We should all be conscious of using the familiar, over-worked calls just because it is easy. Delivering variety is a lot more work than calling clichés. As a dancer if I find the caller delivering too many dancing clichés, my impression is that he or she just doesn't think we are worth the effort. As a caller, I don't want others thinking that of me.

I am not advocating banishing HEADS SQUARE THRU, I just want some variety. In fact, there are good reasons for calling that GetIn. My good reason for using a SQUARE THRU to start is when I am working with the other couple concurrently. For example, HEADS SQUARE THRU WHILE SIDES HALF SASHAY.

I am more sympathetic about GetOuts because we have to care about partners and sequences. Dancers really appreciate a good GetOut, but they can't all be spectacular. Set a target. Try to have at least one great GetOut and a couple good ones each Tip. Note that there are four Getout endings so vary them as well: Left Allemande, Right & Left Grand, Promenade (directly), and Resolve to Home. This has been a personal weak area for me which I am trying to improve.

A Note About Singing Calls

Singing Calls are the part of the structure chart which has not been addressed yet. There is a surprisingly wide variation of philosophy about singing calls among callers. I present mine here but claim no particular virtue other than it seems to work for me:

- Singing calls should be interesting and have a very high dancer success rate.
- I use two figures. Ideally one should be familiar material and the other should use some interesting idea which was presented in the patter call. The sequence of the figures should be A-B-B-A so that each dancer gets to do each figure from a different position.
- I write about 95% of the figures I use in singing calls to match some choreo mod from the patter call. I rarely call a singing call figure extemporaneously.
- I try to vary the Opener/Middle Break/Ending but never try to be terribly creative.
- The SWING has degenerated so badly from the traditional buzz step, flowing swing of old that I design over half my singing calls without a corner swing because I can't stand to watch.
- Sometimes when I do a corner swing in the corner position, some ignorant dancer just stops immediately at home causing a traffic jam. My first reaction is to eject them from my dance and publish their names in some public place, but I have realized that there is another solution. I design most of my singing calls to end in the right hand couple position so everyone is already past home, thus avoiding the problem.

Dancer Success Revisited

There are a couple more topics about dancer success which require the background of the formation management discussion above to treat properly. So we revisit dancer success one more time.

Partial Resolution and the Quick Getout

An alternate title here is “If you’re going to practice risky behavior, do it close to home.” The main idea here is that we check partner pairings and get the setup to a familiar box. A familiar box is one that contains two sets of corners or two sets of partners. Then we do our risky choreo mod and if things get shaky we are very close to a GetOut. Two sets of corners resolve quickly to a zero box GetOut while two sets of partners resolve quickly to a Partner Line GetOut. This works best when the choreo mod is limited to the box. Note that the dancers don’t need to actually be paired up as partners or corners, and the arrangement does not have to be “Boy-Girl.” The benefit is knowing that you have the right people in the box and need not go outside the box for the GetOut. The calling complexity is greatly reduced because you are calling to a mini-square at that point. The interesting aspect of this technique is that we do a partial resolution, continue with an interesting piece of formation management, and then complete the resolution.

The Auto-Fix Module

I must introduce this topic with a personal story. About 25 years ago I attended a Marshall Flippo dance at Frank Lane’s Dance Ranch in Estes Park, Colorado. There were about 25 squares on the floor. With no prior preparation he started a singing call figure as follows:

HEADS RIGHT & LEFT THRU, DIXIE STYLE, MEN TRADE, EXTEND.

I clearly remember that I was a Head and I knew that an EXTEND from a left wave in the center ends in a left wave with the outsides, but how about the other squares? Alarm bells were going off in my head. I looked around quickly and saw that many squares around me had extended to right hand waves. I thought “He’s going to drop half the floor on this.” He continued the call with EXPLODE AND RIGHT & LEFT THRU and continued on without losing a square. I was astounded. What had just happened? After I figured it out I had to admire the brilliance of this move. It didn’t matter if they got the EXTEND correct or not. The “EXPLODE AND” had automatically fixed all the squares that were wrong. He had used an Auto-Fix module. That is when I knew that this “good ole Texas boy” had a lot going on upstairs.

I don’t remember the rest of his figure but here is my singing call figure with this sequence (Yes, I know EXPLODE is a Plus call.)

HEADS RIGHT & LEFT THRU, DIXIE STYLE, MEN TRADE, EXTEND, EXPLODE AND RIGHT & LEFT THRU, FLUTTERWHEEL, REVERSE THE FLUTTER BUT PROMENADE CORNER (LONG)

Note that he had used the Auto-Fix module proactively since it was built into the singing call, but we can also use the same sequence in a reactive way. For example, suppose we call FOLLOW YOUR NEIGHBOR to a shaky floor and notice that many of them added a SPREAD just for good measure. So now you have

mixed right and left handed waves and some inverted lines. Call EXPLODE AND RIGHT & LEFT THRU for the fix.

There is a family of Auto-Fix modules based on MEN/WOMEN FOLD. If we find that some couples in a line or two-faced line are improperly half sashayed, using MEN or WOMEN FOLD, STAR THRU will fix the half sashayed couples, ending in normal lines or two-faced lines. If some couples are improperly half sashayed in boxes, then we must move them to lines or two-faced lines using gender-independent calls:

- TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, WALK & DODGE
- TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, SPLIT CIRCULATE,
- VEER TO THE LEFT.

Note that until we fix the problem, we must keep current partners together, and we cannot direct any calls to MEN or WOMEN.

A final Auto-Fix example is admittedly a specialized case, but it is a curious example of how two wrongs can sometimes make a right. Consider the following call sequence from a tidal wave:

LINEAR CYCLE, VEER LEFT.

My experience is that some of the dancers are convinced that a LINEAR CYCLE must end in facing lines (rather than the boxes we should get here), so they leave off the final PEEL and just face in to give them facing lines. However, these same dancers are equally convinced that a VEER LEFT must end in parallel two-faced lines, so they consistently do what amounts to a VEER LEFT, COUPLES HINGE in order to make parallel two-faced lines. This puts them exactly where they should have been if they had done the LINEAR CYCLE correctly. So following the LINEAR CYCLE with VEER LEFT makes the sequence dramatically more successful than any other combination such as LINEAR CYCLE, PASS THRU. A clever choice of the follow-on call automatically fixed the errors made during the first call. Two wrongs make a right?

Reviewing the “Take Aways”

We began by looking at ideas for developing “Different & Easy” material. This is relevant and helpful and should be the standard for the first tip of every dance. The principle methods were attacking dancing clichés and adopting under-used calls as emphasis calls.

Then we expanded the mandate to “Interesting & Danceable” which is a broader view, incorporating dance programming as well as choreography. This view gave us the freedom to expand choreography into many arrangement and formation variations along with the responsibility to maintain dancer success when we venture into unfamiliar dancing. We looked at a number of techniques to promote dancer success, beginning with the idea of a progression plan. This derived from an analysis of potential dancer trouble spots and a logical order of working on those points. An important by-product of the progression plan was a cohesive package of material for the tip. We also looked at the importance of helping words, timing and flow (including tailgaters), and finally the importance of establishing dancer trust in promoting dancer success.

We then shifted the focus to interesting dancing choreography. We noted a number of common sense ways to generate new ideas, but spent most of the time on how to work the new ideas into the tip. The choreographic module (choreo mod) was introduced as a new structural element during formation management in the patter call figures. It packages a good idea with a familiar starting and ending setup. Choreo mods which support the tip theme are used with connecting material and straight extemporaneous sequences to make up the figures. We looked at an extensive example of how the choreo mod can serve as a workbench for developing variation from the original idea.

We recognized that square dancing has tension/release cycles similar to what football or soccer fans experience. Choreo mods can also be seen as the packaging one of these tension cycles. Purposely developing these tension cycles can add excitement to a dance, but we recognized that dancers can get tension fatigue by extending unfamiliar or challenging material too long without some familiar material to provide the release.

Then we focused on traffic patterns in choreography. A basic concept is the mix of “little” calls (2 dancers), box calls, and “big” calls. This is the sense from the dancer perspective of how many other dancers are on his or her radar. Sequences that spend most of the time doing box calls, like many singing calls, have a predictable traffic patterns. Sequences that use calls which give visibility to the whole square, such as SPIN CHAIN THRU, and traffic patterns which quickly move dancers to different groups promote a bigger vision and more interesting, less predictable choreography.

We concluded the choreography section with a discussion of singing calls, pointing out that we can use interesting material in singing calls provided the dancers are prepared in the patter for the material. In other words, the objective is not easy material, but high success rate dancing.

We returned briefly to dancer success with two specialized topics: partial resolution to a quick GetOut and Auto_Fix modules.

Many callers don't need to know any of the concepts I have described above. I am convinced that many of the best callers among us intuitively know how long is enough on a tension cycle; they practice a big view of the square because they intuitively know that it gives more interesting dancing. They do a good job promoting dancer success because it comes naturally. But other callers, like myself, can improve our product by consciously incorporating some of these ideas into their material.

At the highest level square dancing is enjoyable because

- People like moving to music
- They like the friendships and social connection that clubs enjoy
- They enjoy travelling to different areas and meeting others with a common bond
- They like the decorations or the food.
- They like solving the puzzle and the enjoyment of succeeding in a stimulating mental game.

Let's recognize that we, as callers, can only influence some of these items. To be sure, we should try to do our part with excellence, but we are just a part of the picture. There is no average dancer. They enjoy different aspect to different degrees. While making your dancing more interesting may attract or

hold some of the dancers, there will probably be others who liked it less interesting. We all have to pick a calling “product” with which we are comfortable, and be the best that we can at our niche.

On occasion when someone calls me to book a dance, they will say “We just want a fun dance.” I am always tempted to say “Just tell me the fun calls and I will only call them.” In 45 years of calling, I don’t have a clue how to call a “fun” dance. Using the techniques described above, I can deliver an interesting, danceable program, and my continual hope is that some of the dancers consider that to be fun.

Completing the Assignment

Well, I have done a lot of talking about how I intend to do the assignment, but don’t have much to show for it. In this section I put a tip together and provide running commentary in an attempt to show how I try to practice what I preach. In order to be realistic about creating the figures, I used the following approach: I starting calling and noted the figures without moving any dolls around so I would not be influenced by partners or sequence. At the point I would normally start checking for partners and sequence for sight resolution, I moved the dolls through the figures to that point, checked setup, and proceeded to the GetOut as I would normally call it. I made no change to any figure but did swap the order of two figures after they were all completed. The one obvious advantage is that I had more thinking time at the beginning of the figure and more time deciding what GetOut to use than I would normally get in real life. I have tried to show a variety of GetIns and GetOuts and enough variety in traffic patterns to demonstrate a number of techniques which are described above.

Building the Progression Plan

The first overall judgment is deciding the competence of the dancers – the target audience. I will admit that I completed this assignment with a tip I felt good about and then called it to a square of angels at club lessons. The result was that I still felt it was interesting material, but probably one notch too hard for the purposes of this paper. So I threw it out and started over with a second tip which is just a little easier. This judgment of what material fits best with a target audience is an important part of the ART of calling, not the science.

The progression plan is the potential problem material which can be helped by a wise choice of introduction. One source of these problems is the singing call figures, special GetOuts, or challenging choreo mods that we may want to use. I have decided to do one call in this tip from an unusual arrangement: I will call PASS THE OCEAN from half sashayed couples. First I will look at the sing call figures. Analyze the following two singing call figures for potential trouble spots.

Singing Figure A HEADS RIGHT & LEFT THRU, PASS THE OCEAN, EXTEND, SPIN THE TOP, MEN RUN, COUPLES HINGE, COUPLES CIRCULATE, TAG THE LINE, LADIES GO LEFT, MEN GO RIGHT, ALLEMANDE LEFT NEW CORNER, COME BACK AND PROMENADE	Singing Figure B 4 LADIES CHAIN, HEADS GO FORWARD & DOSADO IN THE MIDDLE, FACE YOUR CORNER SLIDE THRU, RIGHT & LEFT THRU, ½ SASHAY, PASS THE OCEAN, 8 CIRCULATE, SWING CORNER, PROMENADE
--	---

While neither of these is among the best singing call figures I have written, note that they meet the characteristics I laid out in the singing call section above:

- Only one has a corner swing, the other avoids a swing.
- They both meet the corner past the home position, avoiding a potential traffic jam by slam-on-the-brakes dancers.
- They both contain something a little different although neither is very challenging.
- They both avoid starting with HEADS SQUARE THRU 4.

What are the trouble spots which I should add to the progression plan? Figure A has a SPIN THE TOP with the men doing the ¾ turn. It is more common for the women to do that turn. I think COUPLES HINGE is a potential problem since I find that many dancers want to bend the line here rather than hinge. Perhaps TAG THE LINE, LADIES GO LEFT, MAN GO RIGHT is a problem for less experienced dancers. Figure B is a little harder. That is why it is not Figure A. It is pretty vanilla until we get to PASS THE OCEAN from ½ sashayed couples followed immediately with an 8 CIRCULATE with the men in the center loop. This combination starting with the ½ SASHAY is my interesting choreo mod for this figure.

Moving on with the Progression Plan, I think about any killer GetOuts which may require some preparation. One GetOut which I think hope to use has a TURN THRU and has a SAME SEX ½ SASHAY, so add that to the list. My Progression Plan list looks like this

- Same Sex ½ SASHAY
- TURN THRU
- SPIN THE TOP (men ¾ turn)
- COUPLES HINGE
- PASS THE OCEAN from ½ sashayed couples
- 8 CIRCULATE (men center)
- TAG LINE, LADIES LEFT, MEN RIGHT (Getout).

Now this is plenty of material for a tip with the challenge being in how we can rationally package it. In the figures below italics denotes helping words. The letter markers like “(A)” are reference points for the commentary. The “(#)” marker shows the first time I look at partner and sequence for GetOut.

Opener BOW TO PARTNER AND CORNER, ALLEMANDE LEFT LIKE ALLEMANDE THAR, MEN BACK UP STAR, SHOOT THE STAR FULL AROUND TO PARTNER, WRONG WAY RIGHT & LEFT GRAND, MEET PARTNER AND PULL BY, ALLEMANDE LEFT AND	I always begin the patter with a circle figure. It provides a warm-up period and lets the dancers get familiar with the personality of the tip including music style and tempo.
---	---

PROMENADE	
<p>Figure 1 HEADS PASS THRU, SEPARATE @ 1 TO LINES, FWD & BACK, 2 MEN TOGETHER ½ SASHAY, 2 WOMEN TOGETHER ½ SASHAY, CENTER 2 HALF SASHAY, ALL TOUCH 1/4, CIRCULATE, CENTER 2 TRADE & ROLL, (A) CENTERS SQUARE THRU WHILE OUTSIDE WOMEN RUN RIGHT, (B) CENTERS IN CASTOFF ¾, (#) BOX GNAT, RIGHT & LEFT THRU (C) TURN ¼ MORE, COUPLES CIRCULATE, TAG LINE, LADIES GO LEFT, MEN GO RIGHT, ALLEMANDE LEFT, PROMENADE HOME</p>	<p>I am working on same sex half sashay from the list. At (#) I recognize we are close to a Partner Line GetOut from the list so I transition to it. I am using the FWD & BACK for preparation period before an unusual call. In general I don't use LINES FWD & BACK unless I have a reason, but there are three or four good reasons.</p> <p>Note I have a tension cycle which starts at (A) with the outsides not sure what is coming. Tension increases (B) when outsides are facing out and finally resolves at (C) with normal couples.</p>
<p>Figure 2 SIDES BOX GNAT, SQUARE THRU WHILE HEADS ½ SASHAY, ALL DOSADO TO WAVE, SWING THRU, SPIN THE TOP, MEN RUN, COUPLES HINGE, FERRIS WHEEL, (A) CENTER SLIDE THRU, BOX GNAT, SQUARE THRU WHILE SIDES ½ SASHAY, ALL DOSADO TO WAVE, SWING THRU, SPIN THE TOP, MEN RUN, COUPLES HINGE, FERRIS WHEEL, CENTERS PASS THRU (#), SLIDE THRU, PASS THE OCEAN, WOMEN RUN, COUPLES CIRCULATE, TAG THE LINE, MEN GO LEFT WOMEN GO RIGHT, <i>FIND PARTNER</i> RIGHT & LEFT GRAND, PROMENADE</p>	<p>I am working on COUPLE HINGE from the list. I notice at (A) that I have brought the Sides into the center, so I just repeat the whole sequence with each couple doing the other part. This works because the material is a little different. I like the fact that SWING THRU, SPIN TOP is normally a dancing cliché which I try to avoid but from a different starting arrangement, it looks fresh.</p> <p>Note that the GetOut is a variation on the GetOut in Figure 1. This was not planned ahead of time. I had no particular GetOut in mind but the Zero Box setup at (#) made me think of it following the first figure. Working similar, but different material in the figures gives a sense of cohesion to the tip as a whole.</p> <p>Note that this figure could be called in a Non-Stop dancing style because there are no breaks in the flow. However, this figure has a small Perceived Set Size which is unusual for Non-Stop.</p>

<p>Figure 3 HEADS SQUARE THRU 2, SPLIT 2@1 TO LINES, (A) FWD & BACK, <i>CAREFULLY</i> PASS THE OCEAN, SPIN TOP, RIGHT & LEFT THRU, (B) PASS THRU, WHEEL & DEAL, CENTERS PASS THE OCEAN, THOSE WOMEN RUN RIGHT, (C) TAG LINE SPLIT THE OUTSIDES, MAN GO LEFT LADY GO RIGHT@1 TO LINES, FWD & BACK, <i>CAREFULLY</i> PASS THE OCEAN, SPIN TOP, (D) SINGLE HINGE, CIRCULATE, MEN RUN (#), SLIDE THRU, PASS THRU, TAG THE LINE, FACE RIGHT, FERRIS WHEEL, ZOOM, ALLEMANDE LEFT, PROMENADE HOME</p>	<p>I'm working on the most unusual item on my list – the half sashayed PASS THE OCEAN. I am looking for two different ways to setup half sashayed lines for practice. I am using FWD & BACK for stability prior to the PASS THE OCEAN.</p> <p>There is tension all thru this figure. I purposely use the cliché RIGHT & LEFT THRU prior to (B) to close the first tension cycle. The second tension cycle starts at (C) and continues to (D), maybe even (#), depending on the dancer.</p> <p>I had no preconceived idea about the GetOut and recognized IN sequence partner boxes at (#) which is a GetOut target for me. So I proceed with the first GetOut which comes to mind from here.</p>
<p>Figure 4 HEADS RIGHT & LEFT THRU, ROLL AWAY, SIDES FACE YOUR PARTNER, ALL PASS THRU, SAME SEX PARTNER TRADE, TOUCH ¼, CIRCULATE, 4 MEN TRADE & ROLL, 4 MEN SQUARE THRU WHILE OUTFACING LADY RUNS RIGHT, MEN SPLIT THE WOMEN@1 TO LINES, FWD & BACK (#), PASS THRU, TAG THE LINE, FACE RIGHT, COUPLES CIRCULATE, BEND THE LINE, (A) PASS THE OCEAN, 8 CIRCULATE, RIGHT & LEFT GRAND, PROMENADE</p>	<p>I began with an interesting GetIn and just followed where it wanted to go with no particular objective. I thinking I was working toward half sashayed lines again when I noticed at (#) that everyone had their opposite, so I bailed out with a GetOut which I seldom use. The sequence from (#) to (A) is navigational to get half sashayed partner lines out of sequence.</p>
<p>Figure 5 SIDES PASS THRU BOTH GO RIGHT SINGLE FILE, LADY @2, MAN @1 TO LINES, FWD & BACK, PASS THRU, WOMEN RUN, MEN FOLD, DOUBLE PASS THRU, CLOVERLEAF, (A) ZOOM, MEN SQUARE THRU 3 WHILE WOMEN ½ SASHAY, LEFT TOUCH ¼ LADIES <i>JOIN RIGHT HANDS AND</i> CHAIN DOWN THE LINE (#), PASS THRU, BEND THE LINE, RIGHT & LEFT THRU, ½ SASHAY, (B) PASS THRU, TAG THE LINE, CLOVERLEAF, CENTERS ALLEMANDE LEFT, ALL RIGHT & LEFT GRAND, PROMENADE</p>	<p>This is my favorite figure of the tip. It has a moderate tension cycle right from the start with the unusual GetIn. The tension gets higher at (A) because a number of short calls are coming fast even though they are not hard. In fact, the tension does not release until (#) which is probably too long. Then a second tension cycle starts at (B) and holds to the end.</p> <p>I see at (#) that the setup is best suited for a Zero Box GetOut. Frankly I am looking for that GetOut with same sex half sashay, but this GetOut seems a better choice to me now, so I go with it instead.</p>

<p>Figure 6 – Closer HEADS LEAD RIGHT, VEER LEFT, WOMEN TRADE, WOMEN RUN, WOMEN CIRCULATE WHILE MEN TRADE, LEFT SWING THRU, WOMEN RUN, COUPLES CIRCULATE, BEND THE LINE, (A) PASS THE OCEAN, SPIN CHAIN THRU, WOMEN CIRCULATE ONCE, SPIN THE TOP, RIGHT & LEFT THRU (#), PASS THRU, BEND THE LINE, SLIDE THRU, 8-CHAIN-4, (B) DOSADO TO A WAVE, 8 CIRCULATE ONCE-AND- 1/2, MEET PARTNER, SLIDE THRU & ROLL, HONOR PARTNERS ALL</p>	<p>I start off thinking that we need some counter clockwise traffic. Since it is the last figure, I want a high success rate so the material is pretty vanilla. As such I think that a Non-Stop dancing delivery style would be nice for the last figure.</p> <p>I want to use a particular GetOut which “resolves to home” with automatic “stir the bucket.” This is a Zero Box target but the #4 couple must be in the #3 spot. So I start early to set this up. For example, I check partners at (A) to see if I have a Zero Box type setup. Since I do, I have the women circulate only once. If they went twice, the setup would shift to a Partner Line type setup. From (#) to (B) is navigational to get my target setup. Then I finish with the GetOut.</p>
---	--

Looking back at my Progression Plan, I covered everything but TURN THRU. A GetOut that I initially thought I would use did not actually get used. The point of noting this is to demonstrate that the Progression Plan List serves its purpose to structure the Figures even if you don’t follow it legalistically. To be honest it is rare when a tip works out exactly as I had planned. The planning gives me some direction which promotes interesting, successful dancing, but there is a lot of flexibility within this framework.