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CLIQUE IN YOUR SQUARE DANCE GROUPS

by Paul H. Hunt

ATTENTION

I wonder how many group leaders have had the disconcerting experience of organizing a new square dance group, getting it going beautifully for a little while, then seeing it fall off to a few old faithfuls that always go to any square dance anyway? I have had that experience, and I'm sure others must have had it too. In an effort to analyze it, looking for the causes, I have come to the conclusion that a lot of it is the fault of the "old faithfuls" themselves.

The music starts, the caller gives out with a "form your squares" and what happens? The "regulars" jump up, almost holding hands from the time they leave their seats until they are on the floor to prevent any outside couple from getting into their set. The newer and less experienced people are forced to form sets all by themselves, they become confused because they don't understand what it is all about, and sooner or later they become completely discouraged and just give up.

And you can't blame them, that is unless you, as a group leader, do something about it. Nor can you blame the "best dancers" for wanting to dance with the other "best dancers". It is simply just more fun to dance in a set where everyone knows what they are doing. So it is up to the caller or the leader (in most cases the same person) to take the headaches upon himself and correct the situation as best he can.

In a small and intimate group, usually all that is necessary is to say a few words in private to the ones who dance together all the time. Explain to them how necessary it is that everyone has a good time and that the best way to really learn square dancing is to dance in a set where at least half of the set is really expert at it. If they realize that you are depending on them to help you, they will usually co-operate. If that doesn't work, then it is a good idea to once or twice during the evening use a mixer dance winding up by asking the dancers to form their squares with the partners they have at the moment. They usually consider that just good fun if for no other reason than just to show their partner what it's like to dance with a real good square dancer for once. Whatever their reason, the sets are all on an equal footing and the light begins to dawn on those who had

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I had just finished introducing a visiting instructor at the Camden Y and turned away from the microphone.

"Oh," she said with a rush, "I think your group is---I'll tell you later."

Of course I was on pins and needles for the rest of the evening before I finally got her opinion.

"They're so quiet. They pay attention when you're telling them something! You don't have to shout or ask for attention!"

I hadn't noticed it. Having organized the group and sort of grown with it, I hadn't paid particular attention to see that it was any different from any other group. But when it was mentioned, I found it was true.

Now over at the University, the caller periodically bowls out the dancers for not paying attention and talking when he is trying to instruct. Or the leader will elaborately ask for silence and drop a pin to see whether it can be heard. These shenanigans bore me to distraction, and, feeling that I should do as I would be done by, I refuse to indulge when I am calling.

Can it be that the dancers appreciate my refraining from thus wasting their time and so consciously keep quiet when I instruct? This would seem a doubtful proposition.

The fact that the Camden group pays attention might be ascribed to the large proportion of new dancers each meeting thus requiring that they pay attention to learn the dance. But the same situation in the University leads the experienced dancers to converse while the beginners are taught.

Perhaps it's because I prefer to outshout opposition, which I can do with an amplifier, rather than appeal to their consciences.

Some of my acquaintances might account for the phenomena on the ground that when I teach a disturbing element is removed; I being one of the worst offenders. I dislike the waste of time consumed by elaborate instruction (mine is as brief as possible) and am likely to show it by holding conversations with my friends.

However, I feel that the attention of the dancers is in some way related to my refusal to request silence.

One night when I was doing some calling at the University, I attempted to teach "Head The Gents Forward and Back and the Opposite Six the Same" to the tune of "When the Boys All Come this Fall". However, I was glad to be interested in

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been thinking, "It's just too complicated for me."

It is well to remember that no group can survive for very long unless occasional new blood is added to it. It is equally important to remember that new blood won't last long unless it has a good time. So by hook or by crook, in the ways I have suggested or in your own way, at every square dance take care of the new people, make them feel at home, and **MAKE THEM HAVE A GOOD TIME**, or sooner or later your dance will die on its feet. Everyone had to learn sometime or other, and the more people who learn the real joy of square dancing, just that much longer are we going to have square dances to enjoy.

Editor's note:

A Paul Jones mixer has been part of our program at the Camden Y since the group started. We wind up with a grand march and when they reach eights we form a square from each line. But our "good dancers" have learned this and when I call for the grand march they proclaim themselves too tired and sit out until the square when they fill up the last set or start a new one.

The answer to this is more and unfamiliar mixers. For your use we present a number of suggestions.

LITTLE BROWN JUG

This is a good opener. I use it to teach how to swing the Biz generally explains it. Chris Sanderson uses it as an opener too, but I do it twice as fast.

Formation: large circle around the room. Women facing in and men facing out.

Position: closed or men's hands on girls' hips and girls' hands on men's shoulders.

Starting with men's left and girl's right, heel, toe, heel, toe (chasses to men's left) glide, glide, glide, pause. Reverse, men's right and girls' left, heel, toe, heel, toe, (chassez to men's right) glide, glide, glide, pause. Break holds, still facing each other, clap right hands together, clap, clap, pause; clap left hands together, clap, clap, pause; clap both hands together, clap, clap, pause, slap knees, slap, slap, pause. Swing your partners for almost the remaining time of that phase and then men move on to the next girl to the left.

VARSOUVIENNE MIXER

In describing this, I am assuming a knowledge of the peculiar varsouvienné step (put your little foot) and its division into two long and four short phases. For music use the Ford record.

Formation: large circle around the room couples facing counterclockwise.

Position: regular varsouvienné with girls' lefts in men's lefts and men's rights around girls' shoulders and holding girl's rights (hands I'm talking about).

First long: put your little foot, put your little foot, man breaks with right and turns girl counterclockwise under left hands to a place at his left side;

in learning the dance.

"Well," I said in an aside to an imaginary confidant, "if they're ready to dance, I am."

I started the phonograph and the dance. In two minutes every square was in a snarl. I stopped the music and explained the dance in complete silence and with the attention of every dancer.

I couldn't guarantee that I could improve the manner of the University dancers by my methods, but I'd like to try it.

OCT

Second long: put your little foot, put your little foot, men step in time to the left and girls to the right so that they are back in their original position.

First short: each dancer turns around in position without breaking hands so that they are facing to the rear and the girl is now on the man's left with his left arm over her shoulder.

Second short: man pivots clockwise in place sweeping girl around him so that they are facing in the original direction but she is still on his left.

Third short: break with the right and holding lefts the girl walks into the center and turns back facing man with left hands still joined.

Fourth short: girl ducks under the joined left hands and whirls back to the gentleman behind. And you begin again.

Get those figures firmly in mind before trying to teach and lead the dance.

WALTZ MIXER

I learned this at Colorado Springs with Lloyd Shaw. It is the most beautiful figure that I saw his exhibition group doing. Of course it has to be done well to be beautiful. Measures are indicated by Roman numerals; beats in the measure by Arabic.

Formation: large circle in couples facing counterclockwise.

Position: open waltz, inside hands joined.

Step: waltz: long, medium, short.

I, outside, inside, outside (swinging joined hands); II inside, outside, inside (reach behind with free hands; you are now back to back; join free hands and break with others; you are now headed back) III inside, outside, inside; IV, outside, inside, outside. (Close waltz position) V, waltz; VI, waltz. VII and VIII, men take three steps backwards into the center of the circle and three steps forward. In the meantime the girls have pivoted clockwise under the arms and continue to pivot three times on to the next man ahead. The beauty of this is the timing and if done perfectly the man will grab the girl's left with his right as she comes pivoting toward him in perfect time to go into the repeat of the dance with the new girl right on the first beat of the ninth measure.

"I called a dance for some telephone operators in New York City the other night. Man I know why we got so many wrong numbers."

PH

RECORDS

HENLEE RECORD CO. Album 1. Texas Square Dance Music. We have been waiting for some time, and usually impatiently, for records that would match the Victor, Woodhull Soldiers Joy and Blackberry Quadrille. In your reviewer's humble opinion, these do. They are fine square dance records. The instruments do not seem to be as well integrated as the Woodhull classics, but the melody is there, the bass is there and nicely balanced with the melody, the beat is there. In fact, everything is there that is necessary for a fine square dance record. The records are 12", which cuts down the number of replays to a dance. I highly recommend that every one with any kind of a record library at all add this to it. The beat is fast for eastern dancers. I have placed the metronome count, as I counted it, alongside each record. For comparison, Woodhull's Soldiers Joy is 124 by my count and his Blackberry Quadrille 128.

CHICKEN 'N' DUMPLIN'S Metronome 130. Excellent.

SOLDIERS JOY Metronome 132. The objection I have to this record is that it was made at all. This is the second Soldiers Joy without calls in six months when it is an accepted fact that Woodhull's Soldiers Joy is the best recording made. We can't use two Soldiers Joys in one evening and even if it is possible to make a better recording than Woodhull's why try? Square dance tunes for records should be chosen with a greater eye to what is already available.

UNCLE JOE & TURKEY IN THE STRAW Metronome 132. I am generally against medleys as it is impossible to use them for a singing call if one should so desire. However, this is one of the better medleys. They play Uncle Joe halfway thru the record and then switch into Turkey in the Straw for the other. If you wanted to put a touch of white paint where the change is made (there is no pause) you could pick it out and use just one tune or the other.

DURANGS HORNPIPE Metronome 134.

KEYNOTE ALBUM #130, SQUARE DANCES WITH CALLS. This album is the product of the American Square Dance Group of New York City, which is directed by Margot Mayo. The music is supplied by the American Square Dance Orchestra, and the caller is identified as Manny, but it is further explained in the text that he is "a popular member of the group whose recordings and appearances throughout the country have made him well known to square dance enthusiasts. The text in the album is by Margot Mayo and gives a brief outline of each dance and explains the calls and terminology. The records are well recorded by Keynote, and have good rhythm emphasis, the calls by Manny are clear and without much patter. However, in reviewing the records, one feels a resentment to the fact that Margot Mayo has her name plastered throughout the album, while the caller, who is the central figure in any recording, is designated only as Manny.

Many squares that have not previously been recorded are included, most being of the New England style. One record without calls is also included, a welcome addition to the growing list of records of this type. The album is recommended for more advanced groups.

K553-A CHICKEN REEL This is a simple square which has its chief merit in the fact that all of the couples are dancing all of the time. A good warmer-upper.

K553-B DOUBLE CHASSEZ Another simple dance in which the figure "double chassez" is done by head and foot couples in alternation.

K554-A SILENT COUPLE This is a more complicated square, one of the reviewers favorites, and one of the best records in the album.

K554-B PREAKNESS QUADRILLE Another fine record in which the figures are done by the head and foot couples alternately. If the directions in the text are followed, this would be a good demonstration number for a group as many fancy trainings may be performed.

K555-A SQUARE DANCE MEDLEY Without Calls. A good recording with good rhythm emphasis

K555-B THE NEW PORTLAND FANCY The formation for this is like that in the Fireman's Dance, lines of two couples facing each other. This is the best record of the album.

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<p>TEXAS SQUARE DANCE MUSIC</p> <p>without calls Without question, the best album available--see review</p> <p>SOLDIERS JOY DURANGS HORNPIPE CHICKEN 'N' DUMPLIN'S UNCLE JOE and TURKEY IN THE STRAW ALBUM \$5.00</p> <p>HENLEE RECORD CO. 2402 Harris Blvd., Austin, Texas</p>	<p>LEARN TO DANCE AND CALL SQUARE DANCES THE FOSTER WAY 25 dances on individual cards for ease in holding while calling \$ 1.00</p> <hr/> <p>Square and Folk Dances, News, Music Calls, Pictures in ROSIN THE BOW 12 issues for \$1.50 Rod LaFargo, 115 Cliff St., Halodon, N. J.</p> <hr/> <p>THE OZARK GUIDE Box 111-X Europa Springs, Arkansas is a 100-page magazine of the Ozarks for sportsmen, hikers, folklorists, etc \$1.00 a year, \$2.00 3 years, 35¢ copy</p>
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Dropping what modesty I have, I declare that we have a swell dance here. The loser is so good that from merely the contest calling it has been picked up by local callers and introduced to their groups. Yet this defeated it at Daretown 45 to 3, at Denim & Calico 23 to 2 and at the Garden Y 26-13.

Your entries should be on white paper 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ "x11" without your name on it. Send a covering letter. The prize is your choice of a year's subscription to AMERICAN SQUARES or a pack of Foster's "calling cards". As you will note, editors reserve the right to enter their own dances.

HEADS CIRCLE FOUR IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FLOOR
DROP YOUR HANDS AND STAND SOME MORE (1)
SIDE LADIES DO A THREE-QUARTER CHAIN (2)
TURN 'EM AROUND AND ON AGAIN (3)
CHAINING ALL AROUND THE TRACK (4)
WITH A GRASSHOPPER SITTING ON A RAILROAD TRACK
PECKIN' HIS TEETH WITH A CARPET TACK
(Add other patter until thru)
SWING YOUR PART A LITTLE BIT HARD
AND ALLIANCE LEFT TO YOUR OWN BACK YARD
GRAND RIGHT AND LEFT AROUND THE HALL
MEET YOUR HONEY AND PROTEGE ALL

(1) The heads circle four to place and stop and drop hands. They step back just a little into a square, to allow room for the following action.

(2) The side ladies give right hands in the center and turn three quarters of the way around so that the second lady comes out between the third couple and the fourth lady comes out between the first couple.

(3) In the meantime, the side gents have walked a quarter of the way around to right so that when their ladies come out in the places described above they can turn them around as in a ladies chain and send them back again.

(4) The ladies go into the center again and again give right hands for a three-quarter turn, the second lady coming out between the third lady and the first gent and the fourth lady coming out between the third gent and the first lady. Their partners are there to turn them around and send them into the middle again. Thus continuing on until they return to place.

(5) Everybody swing.

Repeat the dance for the head couples. Then have the gents do the chaining and the ladies the turning around for both head and side couples.

RECORD REVIEW

from page 4

and one long awaited by the reviewer. It can be successfully alternated with the aforementioned dance.

Frank Lyman

SONART FOLK DANCES This month we are reviewing Michael Herman's Album of Folk Dances. The ones contained here are: American, Mexican Waltz; Lithuanian, Kolvelis; Swiss, Weitschi Putz Di; Czechoslovak, Tancuj; Estonian, Eide Ratas; Danish, To Ting; Palestinian, Cherkessia; Danish, Masquerade; Polish Kujawiak. This is the first album of its kind inasmuch as it is a very good intergrading or cross-section of folk dances from all parts of the world. It covers a vast scope and type of dances.

The music, as played by Michael Herman's folk orchestra is very good. It has a strong beat and the combinations of various instruments make it very pleasing to the ear for listening as well as dancing to.

I think that the Mexican Waltz and Kolvelis are about the best of the whole lot. As usual in any grouping of this kind, there are always one or two records that stand out over and above all the rest.

I think it only fair to add that although most of the dances were familiar to me, there are one or two included which were not. But I think that I can safely say that judging from the fine quality of the others, with which I am very familiar, they all add up to a mighty hard job well done and should be a welcome addition to the collections of all folk music lovers whether they are dancers or not. Jinx Cole

JOE DAVIS ALBUM DA-28 IRISH BARN DANCES. I don't know the difference between Irish barn dance and others. As a matter of fact, I don't know Irish dances. But picking these up, as I have picked up other Irish numbers, for square dancing, they are lousy. I wouldn't ask anyone to dance to them. Besides, Montgomery Ward put out the same record, just another pressing, for 35¢, which is too much. Only saps like me buy them. I even got two of one record and had to go back and exchange it. 3606A STACK O' BARLEY. Pretty fair except for the rotten recording of the accordion. It vibrates badly. Metronome 102.

3606B PRILIOSE VALE and THE RHYTHLER. Probably the best of the lot. About 17/47. M 114
1281 MULLIGAN RACES. Fair playing. Rotten recording. Metronome 98

1284 MEMORIES OF SLIGO Just as bad as the rest. Metronome 118

3605A SURPLY and THE STEEPLECHASE Only fiddle and piano but still vibrates. M 122

3605B OLD TIERS FAVORITES Squeaky fiddle. Metronome 96

3603A BEAUTIFUL HIGHLAND HORNPIPE Poor recording of the accordion. Metronome 102

3603B THE FROST IS ALL OVER Swallows itself. Sounds as tho a record were rerecorded with the tone indicator over on the bass (to remove the vibration) but while there is plenty of bass there is no beat worth speaking of. Metronome 136

r. French tells us that he has endeavored to make his book a practical and systematic method for beginners. I doubt if a beginner would have much luck with this work, for having told us that this is a book for beginners, he then tells us, "This work is not intended as a treatise upon the art of dancing for it is assumed that the prompter has already the necessary familiarity with the different changes." Then he tells us that "a term with a good teacher of dancing will give the desired knowledge." The book actually is a guide to how the basic changes may be intermingled. He gives no special musical suggestions for the individual dances. He does, however, tell the student how many syllables to call per measure and gives a list of changes and the number of measures required to execute each one. All this of course presupposes a knowledge of and familiarity with typical dance music which the beginner might have. Then he lists the calls (or should I say prompts?) for a variety of quadrilles, contras, lancers and reels.

Maybe I've unconsciously degraded this work too much, but I just don't like prompting as such. To me it should be like an indifferent caller getting more and more bored as the evening wears on. Take for an example the prompter on Ford's Early American Hour (Yawn). In my opinion the caller should enter into the fun of the dance by singing the calls and adding little quips and jingles here and there to add to the fun. I don't see how the caller can really enter into the spirit of the dance by just standing up and shouting the barest of calls. Which would you rather hear: "Swing your honey around and around till your old wooden leg makes a hole in the ground," or simply, "Turn partners,"? I don't know, maybe I'm prejudiced but as little as I liked John Schell's "Prompting, How To Do It", better than this one.

Doug Durant, Jr.

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| DANCES OF OUR PIONEERS, Grace L. Ryan A fine book done in mid-western style \$2 | PROMPTER'S HAND BOOK, J. A. French. Another old-timer the Pressers say it is a steady seller. 50¢ |
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