

Let's Dance

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DEVELOPING FOLK DANCE LEADERS

By
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Because of the tremendous growth in the number of people active in folk dancing, a great demand has been made for leaders to conduct various groups-- both those that are organized and those in a stage of formation. In view of the fact that the need is a present one demanding immediate solution, folk dancers must solve the situation from within their own ranks. All groups have folk dancing enthusiasts capable of becoming folk dance leaders. What could be more natural than initiating leaders from among interested active participants? The key to our present dilemma in securing leaders is included in each group of dancers. A further solution lies in these individuals being recognized and being given the opportunity to become experienced leaders.

Experience is a pre-requisite to success in any endeavor and certainly is vital in dancing. Since gaining experience occurs in the process of actually directing dance activities, various individuals should have the opportunity to assume the responsibility of leadership.

Where a group has a capable leader, opportunities should be given for other members of the organization to become active leaders under the guidance of the experienced director. Where a group does not have a permanent director, they should arrange to have different individuals assume charge of a program over a period of time. The drawing force in the success of folk dancing lies in a democratic framework where the group interests are shared by the group as a whole. The following are offered as suggestions for developing new leaders.

1. Interest members in calling squares.
2. Have individuals plan and direct a part of an evening's program.
3. Have individuals serve on a teaching committee to teach beginners.
4. Provide the opportunity for experienced dancers to teach new dances.
5. Provide pertinent information giving helpful hints on teaching dances and steps. (Either orally or in sheet form.)
6. Encourage members to plan and direct folk dancing activities at churches, lodges, etc.

For the benefit of those interested in planning an evening's dancing for their fellow members the following suggestions are given:

1. Start off an evening with a simple moving dance as: a. Farandole, b. Shoo Fly, c. Wooden Shoes, d. Circle Schottische, e. Badger, f. a serpentine waltz (use a Scandinavian waltz), g. Progressive Schottische.
2. Provide couple dances where couples may dance together as: a. Hopak, b. Fado Blanquita, c. La Varsouviana, d. Highland Schottische, etc.
3. Provide variety in tempo and national background of dances as: a. Triple Schottische, b. Dashing White Sergeant, c. Scherr, d. Rye Waltz.
4. Use progressive dances in each set of dances or placed frequently in the program as: a. Wooden Shoes, b. Korobushka, c. Csebogar, d. Little Man in a Fix, e. La Varsouviana, f. Progressive Schottische.
5. Follow a pattern of sequential formation providing variety as: a. Begin with a sarba (single circle), b. Move to a double circle with Jollity, c. Advance to groups of four as Sicilian Circle or others, d. Move to a long group dance as Waves of Tory or Comical Fellow, e. Form Squares.
6. Provide for a change in dances over a period of meetings so as not to use certain dances too often.

The basis for a successful folk dancing group lays in the shared responsibility of a successful complete program. The organizing and directing force for all groups lies within each group. The flame of success should be kindled by helping hands.

VIVA LA FIESTA!

By
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In this glorious land of ours, so rich in its cultural heritage, folk dancers are continually making exciting discoveries--discoveries which suddenly make our history come alive and reveal to us some of the many threads woven into our American fabric. The answers to such questions as, "Where did this dance come from?" "What accounts for the differences in eastern and western squares and the Kentucky running set?" "How did play party games get started," lead folk dancers down trails to mountain cabins, back country barns, homes of new citizens and even to foreign ships docked in our harbours. The desire to know more about our Spanish-Colonial dances was the impetus which led one researcher to Santa Fe, New Mexico at fiesta time.

New Mexico is a land of beauty and contrasts, where the new mingles with the old, where three cultures blend, yet retain their individual characteristics. It has beckoned in turn to the conqueror, the pioneer, the home seeker, and the traveler. As early as 1536 Cabeza de Vaca and his three companions crossed the mountains of New Mexico and heard from Indians intriguing stories of golden cities lying to the north. The circulation of these stories brought adventurous leaders to this region so Coronado's army entered New Mexico in the summer of 1540. The fabled cities which they hoped would return gold and silver turned out to be the seven Indian villages of the Zuni. Here on the mesas of New Mexico the first battle between invading white men and Indians entrenched in fortress homes was fought in North America. Coronado's explorations and conquest contribute a long story of daring and bloodshed. With the arrival of Joan de Onate in 1598 the direction of things changed. He set up his capitol at an Indian village which he renamed San Juan de los Caballeros and Spain ruled it as a settled community. He was succeeded by Peralta as governor who made Santa Fe the capitol and built the Governor's Palace. The portico provides a favorite place for the Indians to display their arts and crafts at fiesta time. By 1680 the Spaniards had taken root in New Mexico, laid out farms, and built missions at the pueblos.

But the Indians resented the presence of the white men who had taken much of their land and imposed restrictions upon them so it was natural that they should rise up against them. In a surprise attack they succeeded in driving them out of this region. After sending the Spaniards southward the Indians of Santa Fe and the Pueblos found old troubles on their hands. Their enemies of long standing, the nomad Apaches and the Navajos, again raided their towns and pueblos and killed their people. The Indians probably decided that the Spaniards in their midst would serve as a protection so in September, 1692 when Don Diego de Vargas rode into Santa Fe with all the pomp his rank afforded he was welcomed by the Indians who submitted without bloodshed to either side.

To commemorate this bloodless victory, each year in Santa Fe a fiesta is held. The Governor issues a proclamation setting the date which always includes Labor Day. Last September 2-3 the 232nd Annual Santa Fe Fiesta was held. It is America's oldest community festival. This is the historical background and occasion for holding the festival.

Now, what are the delights which a folk dancer finds in this ideal setting? The city with its art and anthropological museums, its centuries old plaza and historic buildings is in holiday mood. Luminaria^s outline the flat roofed adobe buildings at night while banners and music from bands and tipica orchestras give color and gaiety to the day. It is the custom for old and young to appear in fiesta dress so pseudo Western, Spanish, and Mexican costumes merge with present day Western and Indian attire and the old Spanish and early Colonial costumes taken from treasure chests.

The re-entry of Vargas into Santa Fe, the welcome by the Indians and the candle procession from the Cathedral to the Cross of the Martyrs on the hill are all reenacted in realistic pageantry. The street dancing, the grand ball, the special programs which all include Spanish Colonial dances accompanied by tipica orchestras, provide a hey day for the folk dance seeker. Indian dances both at the festival and as a part of ceremonials at nearby pueblos reveal a rich American treasure that is fading all too fast. Throughout his dance the American Indian shows his relationship to nature and all created things. It is a form of dance expressing religious feeling and faith in the answer to the ritualistic prayer being offered. It is a harmonious blending of dramatic action, music and dance movement with every part of his costume contributing to the meaning and significance of the dance. It is a dance of interpretation and a dance of power.

What are the Spanish Colonial Dances of New Mexico? Many of them were European dances which were brought to New Mexico by the early settlers and underwent a definite transformation because of the Spanish, Mexican, Indian and so-called Western influences focused in this region. For example, La Raspa with a changed step pattern and danced to music with a Spanish quality, no doubt stemmed from the Hungarian Czardas. One version has certain movements imitative of an Indian dance. La Camila, both in step pattern and music, shows a definite connection with an Austrian dance, Der Krebs Polka (The Crab Dance.) The Polish Varsouviana which has been adopted and adapted by so many countries in Europe and in the Americas has its special versions in New Mexico. It traveled the route of some of the other Spanish Colonial dances going from Poland to Mexico and then to New Mexico, making changes in the dance pattern and the music all along the way. The beautiful group Varsouviana made popular by demonstration groups in Texas and Colorado and the lovely Cowboy Varsouviana are the two most popular versions seen in Santa Fe. La Indita (The Little Indian) and El Vaquero (The Cowboy) are classified as native Spanish Colonial folk dances but some of their roots no doubt were planted in foreign soil several hundred years ago.

So to the folklorist the Spanish Colonial Folk Dances trace the many interesting threads which interwoven and blended in color and design give a glimpse of the Spanish Colonial folk pattern and even point the way to present day changes. Santa Fe is but one of the many rich historical regions in our country which await the exploring folk dancer.

*Luminaria are brown paper bags partly filled with sand to support a lighted candle which is inside the bag. It is a form of native lantern.

FOLK DANCERS AT THE MUSEUM

Three folk dance programs will be presented by members of the Folk Dance Federation of California on Fridays, February 23, March 2, and March 9 at 8:30 p.m. at the San Francisco Museum of Art, Civic Center, San Francisco. Walter Grothe, coordinator for the programs, announces three evenings of colorful international dances, in costume, as follows:

Friday, February 23--Berkeley Folk Dancers, Eleanor Wakefield, Director
 Friday, March 2 --Festival Workshop Dancers, Madelynn Greene, Director
 Friday, March 9 --Chang's International Folk Dancers, Grace Perriman
 and Marvin Hartfield, Directors

We are very proud the Folk Dance Federation of California has been asked to participate in the cultural activities of the Museum. These programs are free to the public.

MARCH FESTIVAL

The Albany Folk Dancers (also known as the Marin Folk Dancers) cordially invite you and your group to attend the MARCH FESTIVAL to be held on Saturday evening, the tenth of March from 8:00 to 12:00 p.m. in the Albany High School Gym, Albany, Pomona Avenue, near Thousand Oaks Blvd.

GALA FEBRUARY FESTIVAL

The Gate Swingers of the Central Y.M.C.A., San Francisco were hosts to the Folk Dance Federation of California at their monthly festival on Saturday, February 17. Milly Rossbach was program chairman for the affair. The decorations were outstanding, and the waltz exhibition was the highlight of the evening's program. We thank the Gate Swingers for providing an enjoyable evening for the large number of dancers attending. Ken Wade announced a new beginner's course to start Thursday, March 1, to run for twelve weeks.

USO FESTIVAL

The San Rafael USO Club was the setting on February 6 for a successful party under the direction of Dan McDonald, who has been directing dancing here on Tuesdays for several months.

Joining the 200 Bay Area folk dancers and USO guests were dancers from the Middle Mountaineers of Upper Lake, California (an achievement in this day of gasoline rationing.) Jack Adams and his Hi Neighbor Club orchestra furnished music for the squares, with Jack, Doc Riggles from Texas, and Dan McDonald calling the dances. The evening ended with a delicious spaghetti supper.

YOUR CLUB AND MINE

OAKLAND FOLK DANCERS

The Park Boulevard Club House was beautifully decorated for the Valentine Party held on Wednesday, February 14, under the direction of Harold Pearson and Ruth Beck. During the course of the evening, special entertainment was provided and refreshments served. The highlight of the evening was the announcement of the date for the wedding of the dance director, Miss Ruth Beck, and Mr. Carlos Ruling, Sunday, February 18. Mr. Ruling has just returned from 20 months overseas duty in the Pacific Area, and will be stationed in Oregon. The new Mrs. Ruling plans to stay in the Bay Area for the time being. We wish them every happiness for the future.

SCANDINAVIAN FOLK DANCERS

Miss Judy Olsen and Mr. Nicholas Benzetti were married at the Trinity Episcopal Church in San Francisco on Sunday, March 4 at 3:30 p.m., with Dan McDonald as best man. Mrs. Benzetti is the popular director of the Scandinavian Folk Dancers.

VALLEJO FOLK DANCERS

St. Valentine's day was the incentive for a gala party on February 13. Features of the evening were a waltz elimination contest won by Mim Robinson and Ralph Lloyd and an exhibition Tancuj by Harry and Betty Wessenberg. The club on February 15 presented an exhibition of squares, Hambo, Hopak, and other dances for the Sons of Norway, Vallejo Chapter.

The group extends congratulations to Audrey Jeffers and Don Bricker who were united in marriage at a lovely home wedding recently.

The new officers are: Bill Robinson, President; Fred Nottleman, Vice-president; and Joyce Hebb, Secretary-treasurer.

BERKELEY FOLK DANCERS

This organization announces another beginner's night--Fridays at Willard School, Telegraph Avenue and Ward Street, Berkeley. Over 50 attended the first class with Ruth Ruby as director. Advanced Berkeley members will instruct the class, changing directors every four weeks.

SIERRA CLUB FOLK DANCERS AT NORDEN

If you or your friends plan to visit Norden, let Ruth E. Prager, 131 A Pfeiffer Street, San Francisco, EXbrook 6728 know, as she wants news of your ski and dance activities. Ruth is a Sierra Club news reporter.

U.C. FOLK AND SQUARE DANCE GROUP

On February 7, the last meeting of the fall semester, the U.C. Folk and Square Dance Group held a dinner and dance program under the leadership of Frank Haubrock. Dinner was prepared entirely by club members. Alleen Graves brought forth a wonderful main dish of clam chowder--Marjory Klahn whipped up an attractive and tasty fruit salad, and Frank and the boys mixed punch, while a delicious variety of cakes were brought by other members. After dinner there was dancing for those who could move! The "guess the dance" elimination contest was won by Bernice Stuart and Jimmy Klein, while the prize for the best Hambo was split three ways among Alleen Graves and Frank Haubrock, Agnes McKechnie and Bob Storer, and Frances Lichtenstein and Jimmy Klein. Jimmy and Bernice won the prize (a badge about ten inches in diameter, similar to those given at State Fairs) and wore it for the remainder of the evening. It was a marvelous evening of food, dancing, and fun.

Our next meeting will be on March 7 and our "open house" soon after.

GOLDEN GATE FOLK DANCERS

A house warming party in their new quarters at 1441 Franklin Street, Oakland was held on Sunday, February 18. Dancing, games, and entertainment were enjoyed, and following the evening's activities the folk dancers and service men enjoyed a midnight supper in the form of box lunches. The lunches were auctioned and sold to the highest man bidder, who then shared his box with the girl who brought it. Among those participating in the evening's entertainment were: Margie Lervik, Bill Door, Maria Rothschild, and Ethel Turner.

The officers are: Ralph Lloyd, President; Arthur Braitto, Vice-president; Marjorie Castagnetto, Treasurer; Marion Murray, Secretary; Kent Yarnell, Club Reporter; Ethel McCutcheon, Publicity Chairman; Paul O'Bryne, M.C., and Ethel Turner, Dance Director.

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