

# A Collection Of Dances

Suitable For The Beginning Dancer

*Compiled by Lorenzo Petrucci (ben@houseofpung.net)*

*October, mmvii*



## English Country Dances

*For Two Couples*

Heart's Ease

Rufty Tufty

*For Three Couples*

Scotch Cap

Upon A Summer's Day

Chestnut

Jenny Pluck Pears

*For Four Couples*

If All The World Were Paper

*For As Many Couples As Will*

Gathering Peascods

## Bransles

*Simple Bransles*

Simple/Single Bransle

Double Bransle

Gay Bransle

Burgundian Bransle

*Mixed Bransles*

Charlotte Bransle

War Bransle

Cassandra Bransle

Pinagay Bransle

*Mimed Bransles*

Washerwoman's Bransle

Pease Bransle

Clog Bransle

Horse's Bransle

Official's Bransle

Montarde Bransle



## 15th Century Italian

Rostiboli Gioioso

Amoroso

Petit Vriens

Improvised Piva & Saltarello

Lauro

Anello

Chirintana

## Basse Danse

Casuelle La Nouvelle

Danse de Cleves

## 16th Century Italian

Ballo del Fiore

Contrapasso in Due

## The Gresley Manuscript

Ly Bens Distonys

## The Old Measures

Queen's Alman

Old Alman

Black Alman

## How do I get started dancing?

First, find one or more other people, ideally with an even balance of genders. Next, you will need music, either played by live musicians or recorded (a list of sources for easily accessible recorded music is included at the end of this book). Finally, you will need to learn and practice the steps to the dances you want to do. Don't get discouraged if you don't pick up the steps immediately; nobody does.

In period, people hired dance masters to help them learn dances. In the SCA we have local dance teachers to serve the same purpose. If you don't have anyone available locally to help you get started, contact the kingdom dance guild or talk to your A&S officer to help you find a teacher. Once you get a few dances under your belt, you can begin teaching others. Every dance teacher started out as a student.

There are many good sources for further dance instruction, both online or through your local library or dance master. Many of the available online sources are linked through the Renaissance Dance Database (<http://www.rendancedb.org>)

Dancing, or saltation, is both a pleasant and a profitable art which confers and preserves health; proper to youth, agreeable to the old, and suitable to all...

Thoinot Arbeau, *Orchesographie*, 1589

## The First Steps

Virtually all of the steps used in these dances are based on two basic steps: the single and the double. A single is just what it sounds like: a single step. It may be forward, backward, or sideways.

A double, despite the name, is three steps. Since you take two steps on the foot you start out with (left, right, left), we call it a double. Again, it may be forward, backward, sideways, or even in a circle.

All dances begin on the left foot, and generally alternate between left and right as the dance progresses (e.g. left single, right single, left double). Here is a period explanation of why this was done:

Capriol: Why do you start off with the left foot?

Arbeau: Because most men are right footed and the left foot is the weaker, so if it should come about that the left foot were to falter for any reason the right foot would immediately be ready to support it.

Thoinot Arbeau, *Orchesographie*, 1589

## The Dance Hall

The direction of the dance is described relative to the room where it is being performed. The "head" of the hall is generally wherever the King and Queen (or their thrones) are located. If there is no royalty or other such figure present, then the head of the hall is wherever the musicians are located. The "foot" of the hall is the end opposite the head, and the "walls" are the walls on either side. Movement toward the head of the hall is said to be "up the hall", while movement toward the foot is "down the hall". These designations are SCA conventions, loosely based on period practices.

Be aware of the size of the hall as you are dancing, to avoid running out of room. If you have a long line of dancers, you may need to curve around or even form a circle to have enough room to perform the dance. When making a processional line into a circle, the couples should be oriented like spokes of a wheel, facing counterclockwise, with the man toward the center of the circle.

...you must take extreme care in calculating the surface where you will perform the steps of the dance that you plan to execute. You must partition it well from your teacher's advice and own experience.

Antonio Cornazano, *Libro dell'arte del danzare*, 1455

## Dance Partners

Many of these dances are set for one or more couples. Unless otherwise stated, the couple will begin facing toward the head of the hall, with the woman standing to the right of the man, and they should hold hands at a height comfortable for the woman. Communication between partners is important, whether through words, subtle guidance through joined hands, or eye contact. Flirting with your partner is natural and fun, but be mindful of your partner's comfort level and the boundaries of good taste.

When requesting a dance of a partner, be courteous and respectful. If you refuse a request, do so gracefully and politely, and do not accept another offer for the same dance unless it was previously arranged. If your request is refused, withdraw with similar good grace and seek another partner. It is perfectly acceptable (not to mention historically accurate) for women to ask men to dance.

As dancing is a social activity, dancing with a variety of partners is encouraged. Also, experienced dancers should be sure to dance with newer dancers, both to help them learn and to make sure that the available experienced dancers are well distributed throughout sets.

I much enjoyed fencing and tennis and this placed me upon friendly terms with young men. But, without a knowledge of dancing, I could not please the damsels, upon whom, it seems to me, the entire reputation of an eligible young man depends.

Thoinot Arbeau, *Orchesographie*, 1589

## Variations

It is inevitable that you will discover different ways to do the same dance. Some variations are based on differences in recorded music. Other times a dance has been reconstructed in different ways based on the same period source. In some cases, two period sources (even those by the same author) may differ on how to do the same dance. Usually you will see these differences as you travel to different areas; the further you travel, the more likely you are to see regional variations.

Which version of a dance you do is up to you, but there are some guidelines that will help you make a wise decision. If you are a visitor to another place, it is best to adapt to whatever version of a dance is prevalent in that area, unless you can find an entire set of dancers who prefer the same version you do. Keeping an open mind and trying new ways of doing old dances is a good way to improve your own repertoire. Feel free to mention the differences to the local dance master after the dance is over, but be respectful of local traditions and do not expect everyone to prefer the same things you do.

When choosing which variation of a dance to do, there are many considerations. It may be that you prefer the sound of one recording over others. There may be a movement that feels more natural in one reconstruction than another. When in doubt, it's always a good idea to go back to the original dance manuals. Many are available (in translation, for those not originally in English), either online or in inexpensive paperback editions.

The reconstructions listed in this book are the ones I personally use, and have been acquired from many different places. I have attributed the reconstructions whose sources I know; the others are common versions found in the SCA or slight variations thereof.

So have I imitated [the mother bear with her cub], by searching my wits day and night, correcting my first work which I brought to light many years ago, according to the laws of symmetry and perfect theory. As I will show you clearly, wherever it was imperfect I have rendered it truly perfect.

Fabritio Caroso, *Nobilta di Dame*, 1600

## English Country Dance

The primary source for the English Country Dance (ECD) style is John Playford's *The English Dancing Master*. Many editions of this book were printed, beginning in 1651. There are references to "English country dance" in various late 16th century sources on music and dance, and the dances in Playford's book are used as our best guess as to what was actually done during SCA period.

Many of the dances in Playford's first edition seem to be in a style (long sets for as many couples as wanted to dance) that, while having roots in the 15th century, only really became popular during the Baroque era. However, a handful of dances from the first few editions appear to be in an older style--somewhat reminiscent of 16th century Italian dance--featuring fully choreographed dances for small sets of between four and eight dancers.

Many of these dances follow a verse/chorus structure using the figures of "up a double and back", siding, and arming as the verses. All of these dances are done to music with a consistent 4/4 beat, and virtually all figures are done in multiples of 4 beat measures.

As Playford was a bookseller and publisher, not a choreographer or dance master, the dances as he recorded them are simple listings of steps, and are sometimes confusing or ambiguous to the modern reader. He also fails to describe step units like siding and arming, so we are left with the reconstructions of later centuries and conjectures based on contemporary Continental dance styles as our guides.

## Definitions

### Up a double and back/In a double and back

Taking hands with your partner, go a double forward (either "up" toward the head of the hall or "in" toward the center of a circular set), then go a double backward to where you began.

### Siding

Face your partner and go a double toward each other, angling slightly so you end up meeting side-by-side, then go a double back to place. "Side right" by meeting with right shoulders together, and "side left" by meeting with left shoulders together.

### Arming

To "arm right", take your partner by the right hand (or wrist, or forearm) and circle all the way around with two doubles. To "arm left", do the same with the left.

### Set and turn single

Take a single step sideways ("set") to the left, then step to the right, then turn all the way around with a double. If it is repeated, start the next figure to the right.

### Hey

In its most basic form, this figure involves a line of people switching places with each other, passing first by right shoulders, then by left shoulders, turning around at the end of the line and continuing to weave back and forth until they get back to their place. For example, a three person hey:

Person 1 faces down the hall, while 2 and 3 face up the hall.

1 and 2 switch, passing right shoulders.

1 and 3 switch, passing left shoulders, as 2 turns around.

2 and 3 switch, passing right shoulders, as 1 turns around.

1 and 2 switch, passing left shoulders, as 3 turns around.

1 and 3 switch, passing right shoulders, as 2 turns around.

2 and 3 switch, passing left shoulders, and all are back to place.

### Contrary

In some of the two couple dances you will be instructed to do a figure with your contrary. This is the person of the opposite sex in the other couple.

## Dances For Two Couples

### Heart's Ease (for two couples facing)

In a double and back; that again.

*Chorus:*

Men fall back a double from your partner.

Men go forward a double and turn your contrary by the right hand.

All fall back a double from your contrary.

Come back together a double and turn your partner by the left hand.

Side right with your partner.

Side left with your contrary.

*Chorus.*

Arm right with your partner.

Arm left with your contrary.

*Chorus.*

### Rufty Tufty (for two couples facing)

In a double and back; that again.

Set and turn single; that again.

*Chorus:*

Take hands with your partner and go a double out from the set.

Switch hands and go a double back in.

All turn around.

Take hands with your contrary and go a double out.

Switch hands and go a double back in.

All turn around.

Side right; side left.

Set and turn single; that again.

*Chorus.*

Arm right; arm left.

Set and turn single; that again.

*Chorus.*

## Dances For Three Couples

### Scotch Cap (for a longways set of three couples)

Up a double and back; that again.

Woman 1 and 2 fall back a double.

Man 2 and 3 fall back a double.

Woman 1 and 2 exchange with man 2 and 3.

Man 1 and woman 3 exchange.

All do the same back to place.

Side right; side left.

Men and women each take hands in a line and fall back a double.

All go back in a double.

Man 1 and man 3 arm, woman 1 and woman 3 arm, and couple 2 do two hands around.

All fall back a double from the one you just turned.

Go a double toward your partner.

All go two hands around with your partner.

Arm right; arm left.

Men go 4 slips up the hall.

Women go 4 slips down the hall.

Starting with man 3 and woman 1, do a half hey back to place starting with right hands.

Women go 4 slips up the hall.

Men go 4 slips down the hall.

Starting with woman 3 and man 1, do a half hey back to place starting with left hands.

## Dances For Three Couples (cont.)

### Upon a Summer's Day (for a longways set of three couples)

Up a double and back; set and turn single.

That again.

*Chorus:*

Men and women each take hands in a line and fall back a double.

All go forward a double back to place.

Women 2 and 3 make an arch, and men 2 and 3 make an arch.

Couple 1 goes down through the middle of the set, separates and goes through the arch on their side, and meets at the bottom of the set.

Repeat two more times, with the top couple going under the arch made by the bottom two couples (it may help to move the set up the hall as you go).

Side right; set and turn single.

Side left; set and turn single.

Chorus.

Arm right; set and turn single.

Arm left; set and turn single.

Chorus.

### Chestnut (for a longways set of three couples)

Up a double and back; that again.

Fall back from partner a double.

Come back together a double and trade places.

Men take hands in a circle and go halfway around so that men 1 and 3 trade places, as women do the same.

Fall back from partner; come together and trade places.

Circle again back to place.

Arm right; arm left.

Fall back from partner; come together and trade places.

Men do a half hey, as women to the same.

Fall back from partner; come together and trade places.

Half hey back to place, with couple 1 leading as before.

Side right; side left.

Fall back from partner; come together and trade places.

Couple 1 cast down the inside of the set to the bottom; all follow.

Fall back from partner; come together and trade places.

Couple 1 cast up the outside of the set back to place; all follow.

### Jenny Pluck Pears (for three couples in a circle)

2 doubles around the circle to the left; set and turn single.

2 doubles around the circle to the right; set and turn single.

*Chorus:*

Man 1 puts his partner into the circle.

Man 2 the same.

Man 3 the same.

Honor all.

Men circle around the women with 4 doubles to the left.

Men go back to place with 4 doubles to the right.

Man 1 takes his partner out of the circle.

Man 2 the same.

Man 3 the same.

Honor all.

Side right; set and turn single.

Side left; set and turn single.

Chorus as before, with women placing men in the center and circling.

Arm right; set and turn single.

Arm left; set and turn single.

Chorus as before, with men placing women in the center and circling.

## Dances For Four Couples

### If All The World Were Paper (for a square set of four couples)

*Couples are numbered 1 through 4 so that couples 1 and 3 face each other across the set, as do couples 2 and 4.*

In a double and back; set and turn single.

That again.

*First Chorus:*

Men 1 and 3 change places.

Women 1 and 3 change places.

Couples 1 and 3 hey back to place, first passing your contrary across the set by right shoulders, then your partner by left shoulders and back to place.

Couples 2 and 4 do the same.

Side right; set and turn single.

Side left; set and turn single.

*Second Chorus:*

Couples 1 and 3 go a double into the center and meet.

Man 1 takes woman 3 out between couple 2, as man 3 takes woman 1 out through couple 4.

Couples 1 and 3 cast off back to their original places.

Couples 1 and 3 take both hands and circle around back to place.

Couples 2 and 4 do the same.

Arm right; set and turn single.

Arm left; set and turn single.

*Third Chorus:*

Couples 1 and 3 change places across the set with their contraries by right shoulders, then change with their partners by left shoulders.

Couples 1 and 3 hey back to place, taking right hands across the set with their contraries and left hands with their partners back to place.

Couples 2 and 4 do the same.

## Dances For As Many Couples As Will

### Gathering Peascods (for a circle of couples)

Two doubles clockwise around the circle; turn single.

Two doubles counterclockwise around the circle; turn single.

*Chorus:*

Men go into the center of the circle and form a ring.

Men go two doubles clockwise around the circle.

Men fall back into the circle (anywhere).

Women go into the center of the circle and form a ring.

Women go two doubles clockwise around the circle.

Women fall back into the circle (next to their partners).

Men double in and clap.

As men double out, women double in and clap.

As women double out, men double in and don't clap.

Men fall back into place.

Repeat the clapping section, with women going first.

Side right; turn around.

Side left; turn around.

Chorus, with women going first.

Arm right; turn around.

Arm left; turn around.

Chorus, with men going first.

## Bransles

These dances are found in Thoinot Arbeau's *Orchesographie*, first printed in 1589. Bransles ("brawls") are simple dances done in lines, often not requiring partners. The basic step is a sideways single, closing the feet at the end. There are three types of bransles. Simple bransles are just what the name implies, repeating a single sequence continuously. Mixed bransles have two alternating sections, usually involving more complicated sequences of steps and kicks. Mimed bransles are meant to imitate some person, thing, or activity, and are often done with partners.

### Simple/Single Bransle

Double left, single right.

### Double Bransle

Double left, double right.

### Gay Bransle

Kick left, kick right, kick left, kick right, pause.

These kicks should be done so that the dancers move to the left with each step.

### Burgundian Bransle

Double left, double right.

At the end of each double, instead of closing the feet, raise the trailing foot in the air with a little kick (*piéd en l'air*).

### Charlotte Bransle

*Part A:*

Double left, kick left, kick right.

Double right.

Repeat.

*Part B:*

Double left, kick left, kick right.

Single right, kick left, right, left.

Single left, kick right, left, right.

Double right.

### War Bransle (*Bransle de Guerre*)

*Part A:*

Double left, double right (repeat 4 times).

*Part B:*

Double left, double right.

Single left, single right.

Double left.

Single right, single left.

Double right.

Single left.

Kick right, left, right.

Capriole (hop in place).

### Cassandra Bransle

*Part A:*

Double left, double right.

Repeat.

*Part B:*

Double left, double right.

Single left, double right.

Repeat.

### Pinagay Bransle

*Part A:*

Double left, kick left.

Double left, kick left, kick right, kick left.

*Part B:*

Double left, double right.

### Washerwoman's Bransle (*Bransle des Lavandières*) (for couples)

*Part A:*

Double left, double right.

Repeat.

*Part B:*

Turn to face your partner.

Men single left, single right, shaking a finger admonishingly.

Women do the same.

Turn back to original positions.

Double left, clapping.

Double right.

Double left, clapping.

Kick left, kick right, kick left, using these kicks to turn around over the left shoulder.

### Pease Bransle (*Bransle des Pois*) (for couples)

*Part A:*

Double left, double right.

Repeat.

*Part B:*

Men hop toward their partners.

Women hop away from their partners.

Men make three small hops toward their partners.

Women hop away from their partners.

Men hop toward their partners.

Women make three small hops away from their partners.

### Clog Bransle (*Bransle des Sabots*) (for couples)

*Part A:*

Double left, double right.

Repeat.

*Part B:*

Men single left, single right, stomp three times with the right.

Women do the same.

### Horse's Bransle (*Bransle des Chevaux*) (for couples)

*Part A:*

Double left, double right.

Repeat three more times.

*Part B:*

Men paw the ground twice with the right.

Men single right.

Men turn over the left shoulder with a double.

Women paw the ground twice with the right.

Women single right.

Women turn over the left shoulder with a double.

### Official's Bransle (*Bransle l' Official*) (for couples)

*Part A:*

Double left, double right.

Repeat.

*Part B:*

Six singles to the left.

Kick left, kick right, turning to face your partner.

Men place their hands on the women's waists, and women place their hands on the men's shoulders.

Women jump.

All turn back to the center and repeat part B.

### Montarde Bransle (for a line of four)

*NB: Some versions of the music may be arranged for more dancers and/or a different number of singles. Listen for where the music changes to start part B.*

*Part A:*

8 singles to the left.

*Part B:*

The first person in line turns in place with four kicks. Each person down the line does the same in turn.

As the singles begin again, the first person weaves through the others to the end of the line.

## 15th Century Italian Dance

There are many extant dance manuals from 15th century Italy, the earliest by Domenico da Piacenza (1425), and later ones by his students Guglielmo Ebreo (aka Giovanni Ambrosio) and Antonio Cornazano throughout the rest of the century. There are several other fragmentary sources as well.

These manuals go into great detail about the theory of dance and the specific ways in which it should be performed. Graceful motion of the body, both up and down and side to side, is encouraged. The step vocabulary of these dances is fairly consistent, though there is still some ambiguity that must be accounted for when reconstructing these dances.

There are two types of choreographed dances in this style, *bassedanze* and *balli* (singular *bassadanza* and *ballo*), in addition to more informal improvised dances. *Bassedanze* (“low dances”) are slow, graceful dances that maintain a consistent beat (slow 6/4) throughout the dance. *Balli*, on the other hand, are more animated dances that often involve leaps and hops. They also often involve changes in the beat of the music. The four meters (*misure*) encountered in *balli* (from slowest to fastest) are *bassadanza* (6/4), *quadernaria* (4/4), *saltarello* (6/8), and *piva* (quick 6/8 or 2/4).

## Step Descriptions

### **Doppio** (“double” – pl. *doppi*)

This step takes a full measure of music. In *quadernaria* time, this is a simple double. In *bassadanza* time, the steps fall on beats 1, 3, and 4 of the measure, and the second step is somewhat shorter and quicker than the first and third.

### **Sempio** (“single” – pl. *sempi*)

This is a single step that takes half a measure of music. Do not bring the feet together at the end of this step.

### **Ripresa** (pl. *ripres*)

This step is reconstructed as a double sideways.

### **Continenza** (pl. *continenze*)

This step is a single sideways.

### **Saltarello** (pl. *saltarelli*)

This step is a double with a small hop at the end. It may occur in either *saltarello* or *quadernaria* time.

### **Piva** (pl. *pive*)

This is a very quick double, and usually occurs in *piva* time.

### **Voltatonda** (whole turn)

This is a turn all the way around, taking a full measure of music, usually with two singles or a double. When starting on the left foot, turn to the left, and vice versa.

### **Mezavolta** (half turn)

This is a turn halfway around, often happening on the last beat of another figure.

### **Movimento** (pl. *movimenti*)

This is a small movement of some sort, and is a good opportunity to strut or flirt.

### **Riverenza**

This is a bow or curtsy (reverence), done by moving one foot backward slightly and bending at the knees, keeping the torso upright.

## Rostiboli Gioioso (for couples)

*Bassadanza Time* (slow 6/4):

A: Riprese left and right.

Man leaves with two singles and two doubles, turning to face the woman at the end.

Riprese left and right.

Man returns with two singles and two doubles.

A section repeats, with the woman leaving and returning.

B: Riprese left and right.

Together, go forward with two singles and three doubles.

Drop hands and do a voltatonda over the left shoulder with two singles (right and left).

Ripresa right.

B section repeats.

*Saltarello Time* (fast 6/8):

Do 16 saltarelli, together or apart, as you choose.

*Quadernaria Time* (fast 4/4):

Man does a movimento.

Woman does a movimento.

Man goes a double (in whatever direction he chooses).

Woman does a movimento.

Man does a movimento.

Woman goes a double.

This section repeats, with the couple coming back together with the last double.

Entire dance repeats, with the woman doing each figure first.

## Amoroso (for couples)

*NB: There is another version of this dance with 8 pive at the beginning and no repeat of the last section. Listen to the music you have to determine which version of the dance to do.*

A: 12 pive forward.

B: Man leaves with 2 singles, a piva, and 3 more singles.

Woman catches up with the same.

Man leaves with 3 pive and a single.

Woman catches up with the same.

C: Man leaves with 2 singles, a piva, and 3 singles, turning around at the end.

Both do a brief riverenza.

Man returns with 3 pive and a single.

C section repeats, with the woman leaving and returning.

Entire dance repeats three more times, with the woman going first on the second and fourth repeats.

## Petit Vriens (for sets of three dancers)

16 pive forward.

Person 1 does 4 pive.

Person 2 catches up with 4 pive.

Person 3 the same.

Person 1 does a double.

Person 2 catches up with a double.

Person 3 the same.

1 and 2 riverenza.

2 and 3 riverenza.

All riverenza.

Take hands and double left backwards.

Double right forward.

Continenze left and right.

Voltatonda left.

Repeat until music ends, usually 2 or 4 times.

## Improvised Piva & Saltarello

These are unchoreographed dances using steps appropriate to the music. Improvisation and creativity is encouraged. May be done alone, or in groups of two, three, or more. Turning by one or both hands, circling in groups, underarm turns, and similar figures are appropriate. Have fun!

### **Lauro (for couples)**

Continenza left, continenza right  
Single left, single right, double left, double right  
Riverenza left  
Ripresa left, ripresa right  
Single left, single right, double left  
Ripresa right  
Continenza left, continenza right  
Single left, single right, double left (circle by right hands)  
Single right, single left, double right (circle by left hands)  
Ripresa left, ripresa right  
Single left, single right, double left, double right, double left  
Volta del gioioso (turn over the left shoulder with two singles (right and left), then ripresa right)  
Riverenza left  
Dance repeats.

### **Anello (for two couples)**

Couples face each other and take hands.  
8 Saltarelli in a circle, clockwise  
Men movimento, women movimento  
Men trade places with 2 saltarelli  
Women movimento, men movimento  
Women trade places with 2 saltarelli  
Men movimento, women movimento  
Men voltatonda  
Women movimento, men movimento  
Women voltatonda  
Men go around their partners to the other man's place with 4 pive  
Women go around their partners to the other woman's place with 4 pive  
Men movimento, women movimento  
Men movimento, women movimento  
Men ripresa right, take hands with partner  
Riverenza left  
The dance repeats, with women doing each figure first.

### **Chirintana (for a line of many couples)**

*Reconstruction by Mistress Judith de Northumbria*

*Procession:*

Continenze left and right.  
Left double forward.  
Continenze right and left.  
Right double forward.

A section repeats until the lead couple decides to stop.

All remaining sections are done with piva steps.

*Snake Hey:*

The lead couple goes around the couple behind them, with the man leading. They continue to weave between couples until they reach the end of the line. Each couple falls in behind them, weaving through the line to the end. As each couple reaches the end and stops, the next couple should do their last weave in front of the stopped couple and fall in behind them.

*In-and-out Hey:*

When the snake hey is almost finished, the lead couple turns around (half circle counter-clockwise) and goes between the couple below them, then around the next couple, alternating going between and around each couple until they reach the end. As each couple reaches the top or bottom of the set, they turn around and continue the hey until all get back to place.

*Circles:*

When the in-and-out hey is finished, the lead couple will give an indication to begin the next figure (calling out "circle" works well). All take right hands with their partners and circle around back to place with four pive, then do the same by the left hand.

*Brigomania:*

The entire set forms a single line, with each man taking the free hand of the woman in the couple in front of him. The leader of the line goes around the hall, curling about like a snake until the music ends.

## **Basse Danse**

The basse danse is a 15th century style that originates in France. There are several manuscripts that list steps for basse dances, the earliest being the Brussels Manuscript (1445). Arbeau also discusses basse dances as a dance form from his youth in *Orchesographie* (1589).

It is a slow, stately dance, done exclusively in a steady triple meter (3/4). There are only a few steps in the repertoire, and each dance is built of patterns of these steps in a particular formula. Each of the step units below takes a full measure of music.

### **Step Descriptions**

#### **Reverence/Congé (R)**

This is a bow or curtsy to your partner. Bend at the knees, lowering the body but keeping your torso vertical.

#### **Singles (SS)**

These are single steps, and always occur in pairs. The first step happens on beat 1 of the measure, and the second step comes on beat 3 ("step, pause, step"). Do not close the feet at the end.

#### **Double (D/Db)**

A double is three steps forward (D) or back (Db), in time with the three beats of the measure ("step, step, step"). Do not close the feet at the end.

#### **Branle (Br)**

This is a sideways movement that is more a shifting of weight than an actual step. On the first beat, step to the left. On the second beat, shift your weight back to the right foot. On the third beat, bring your left foot back together with the right.

#### **Reprise/Demarche (r)**

This is a single slow backward step. If it helps you to keep time with the music, you may want to step backward on beat 1, shift your weight to the front foot on beat 2, then shift weight to the back foot on beat 3 in a rocking motion. Do not close the feet at the end.

### **Casuelle la Nouvelle (for couples)**

R Br  
SS DDDDD rrr Br  
SS D SS rrr Br  
SS DDDDD rrr Br  
SS D SS rrr Br  
SS DDD rrr Br  
R

### **Danse de Cleves (for couples)**

*Honors and Procession:*

R Br  
SS DDD SS Db

*"Flowers" (man and woman move at the same time):*

Man: SS Db

Woman: SS D (in a clockwise circle back to place)

Man: SS D (in a counterclockwise circle back to place)

Woman: SS Db

*Procession:*

SS D r Br

*"Hearts":*

SS (up the hall and apart) D (down the hall and back together)

SS (down the hall and apart) D (up the hall and back together)

*Procession and Honors:*

SS DDD SS Db Br C

## 16th Century Italian

In the late 16th century, the Italian dance masters Fabritio Caroso and Cesare Negri published manuals that were filled with dance theory and rules of etiquette as well as music and choreographies. Their step vocabularies are greatly expanded relative to their counterparts of the previous century, and many of the dances are quite complex.

The complexity of some of these dances is mitigated by a strong verse/chorus structure similar to that found in English country dances.

### Ballo del Fiore (for couples)

The dance begins with the men lined up on one side of the hall and the women on the other. One (or more) dancer will begin the dance holding one or more flowers. They will perform the opening sequence and choose a partner. When they finish, each will go and find a new partner, and so on until all are dancing.

*Intro (first dancer(s) only):*

Riverenza.

Two doubles, turning in place.

Four doubles to a partner.

Continenze left & right, riverenza.

Two doubles, processing with your partner.

Two scorsci (8 quick steps each).

Continenze left & right, riverenza.

Four doubles in J figure away from your partner.

Mezavolta to face partner.

Continenze left & right, riverenza.

Four flanking doubles back together.

Continenze left & right, riverenza passing the flower.

Repeat, with each dancer holding a flower finding a new partner.

### Contrapasso in Due (for couples)

Riverenza, continenza left, continenza right.

*Procession:*

Go forward together with two singles and a double.

Go backward with two singles.

Do 2 riprese right. (NB: the 16c ripresa is a single sideways step)

Repeat this section.

*"Circles":*

Take right hands and circle around with two singles and a double.

Take left hands and circle back with two singles and a double.

*"Figure 8":*

Both circle counterclockwise with 2 doubles.

As you come back together, do a quick riverenza.

Circle clockwise with two more doubles and end facing.

Circle as before, taking forearms instead of hands.

Both do the "figure 8" as before.

Circle as before, taking both hands.

The woman does the "figure 8" as before, while the men go backward with two doubles, flanking first to the left, then the right, and forward back to place with two more flanking doubles.

*Second Procession:*

Take hands and go together 8 doubles forward.

*"Honors and Chase":*

Continenze left and right, and a long riverenza.

Both do "figure 8" as before.

Facing each other, the man does 2 singles and a double forward (starting on the left foot), as the woman does 2 singles and a double backward (starting on the right foot).

Do the same figure back to place, with the woman going forward on the left and the man going backward on the right.

Both do "figure 8" as before.

Man does a long riverenza.

Woman does a long riverenza.

Woman does "figure 8" as the man does flanking doubles as before.

## The Gresley Manuscript

This manuscript is a personal journal found in England and dated to around 1500. It contains choreographies and music for a number of dances, though they are somewhat confusing to reconstruct. This is one of the simpler dances from the manuscript.

### Ly Bens Distonys (for couples)

*NB: There are many different reconstructions for this dance. I learned this one from Mistress Judith de Northumbria, though I don't know its original source.*

A: 2 doubles forward.

B: 3 singles, Men going forward, women going backward.

Man turns around.

Both come together with a double.

Take hands and turn clockwise back to place.

B section repeats, with women going forward and men going backward, and turning counterclockwise at the end.

C: Both do a single forward and a single backward.

Drop hands and turn in place to the outside with a double.

The dance repeats until the music ends.

## The Old Measures

The Old Measures are a set of eight dances performed at the beginning of revels at the Inns of Court in London. The extant sources describing these dances cover a span of over a hundred years, the oldest being from 1570. These dances are fairly simple and reserved, beginning with very easy dances and becoming progressively more complex. The Black Alman is the last dance of the Old Measures, and even it is not very difficult.

The alman double is not described in the Inns of Court sources, but based on the contemporary description of alman steps in *Orchesographie* (Arbeau, 1589), it is reconstructed as a double with the foot held in slightly off the ground rather than closing at the end of the figure.

### Queen's Alman (for couples)

Double forward; double backward.

Face partner; set left, set right, turn around with a double.

Face forward; double forward; double backward.

Face partner; set right, set left, turn around with a double.

4 doubles forward.

Repeat entire dance until music ends.

### Old Alman (for couples)

Face partner and take both hands.

Change places with 2 singles and a double.

Change back with 2 singles and a double.

Face forward and process with 4 doubles.

Repeat until music ends.

### Black Alman (for couples)

4 doubles forward.

Turn to face partner, back away a double.

Come together with a double and turn to the left.

Go a double away from each other, turning around at the end.

Come back together with a double and turn to face again.

Man does a set and turn single (step left, step right, turn around).

Woman does the same.

Take both hands and change places, circling clockwise.

Slip up the hall 4 steps (to the man's right).

Change places again.

Slip back down the hall 4 steps.

Back away with a double.

Come together with a double, take hands, and face forward again.

The dance repeats 4 times. On repeats 1 & 3 the man does the set and turn single figure first. On repeats 2 & 4, the woman goes first.

## Music For The Included Dances

Below is a list of some sources for music for the dances in this book. In many cases there are several other versions not listed here (often better ones), but these should all be available either for download or ordering via the Internet. In almost all cases sheet music is also available for these tunes if you have access to musicians.

Heart's Ease	Companions of St. Cecilia Vol. 1 *, Ansteorran Dance Symposium *, Toons and Trips *, Tape of Dance Vol. 2 *, Musica Subterranea/Musica Subterranea **
Rufty Tufty	Companions of St. Cecilia Vol. 2 *, The Dragonscale Consort/A Consort of Dances †
Scotch Cap	Musica Subterranea/Cornucopia **
Upon A Summer's Day	Companions of St. Cecilia Vol. 1 *
Chestnut	Companions of St. Cecilia Vol. 1 *, Musica Subterranea/Cornucopia **
Jenny Pluck Pears	Companions of St. Cecilia Vol. 2 *, Ansteorran Dance Symposium *, Toons and Trips *, Musica Subterranea/Cornucopia **, The Dragonscale Consort/A Consort of Dances †
If All The World Were Paper	Tape of Dance Vol. 3 *, Ansteorran Dance Symposium *, Toons and Trips *
Gathering Peascods	Companions of St. Cecilia Vol. 2 *, Ansteorran Dance Symposium *, Toons and Trips *, Musica Subterranea/Cornucopia **, The Dragonscale Consort/A Consort of Dances †
Simple/Single Bransle	Incomplete Arbeau *
Double Bransle	Incomplete Arbeau *
Gay Bransle	Incomplete Arbeau *
Burgundian Bransle	Incomplete Arbeau *
Charlotte Bransle	Incomplete Arbeau *, Tape of Dance Vol. 4 *, Wolgemut/Tempus Saltandi ***, Musica Subterranea/Incantare **
War Bransle	Incomplete Arbeau *, Musica Subterranea/Incantare **
Cassandra Bransle	Incomplete Arbeau *, Tape of Dance Vol. 4 *, Musica Subterranea/Incantare **
Pinagay Bransle	Incomplete Arbeau *, Tape of Dance, Vol. 4 *, Wolgemut/Tempus Saltandi ***, Musica Subterranea/Incantare **
Washerwoman's Bransle	Incomplete Arbeau, Companions of St. Cecilia, Vol. 2 *, Wolgemut/Tempus Saltandi ***, Musica Subterranea/Incantare **
Pease Bransle	Incomplete Arbeau *, Wolgemut/Tempus Saltandi ***, Musica Subterranea/Incantare **
Clog Bransle	Incomplete Arbeau, Tape of Dance Vol. 4 *, Musica Subterranea/Incantare **
Horse's Bransle	Incomplete Arbeau, Companions of St. Cecilia Vol. 2, Tape of Dance Vol. 4 *, Wolgemut/Tempus Saltandi ***, The Dragonscale Consort/A Consort of Dances †, Musica Subterranea/Musica Subterranea **
Official's Bransle	Incomplete Arbeau *, Companions of St. Cecilia Vol. 2 *, Tape of Dance Vol. 4 *, Musica Subterranea/Musica Subterranea **
Montarde Bransle	Incomplete Arbeau, Tape of Dance Vol. 4 *, Wolgemut/Tempus Saltandi ***, Musica Subterranea/Incantare **
Rostiboli Gioioso	Accademia Viscontea i Musicanti/Mesura et Arte del Danzare ****, Musica Subterranea/Musica Subterranea **
Amoroso (8 piva version)	The Dragonscale Consort/A Consort of Dances †, Musica Subterranea/Musica Subterranea **
Petit Vriens	Accademia Viscontea i Musicanti/Mesura et Arte del Danzare ****, Tape of Dance Vol. 4 *, The Dragonscale Consort/A Consort of Dances †, Musica Subterranea/Musica Subterranea **
Improvised Piva	Wolgemut/Shauspeluden II *** ("Cantiga No. 119") or any version of Petit Vriens
Improvised Saltarello	Richard Searles/Dance of the Renaissance ****
Lauro	Companions of St. Cecilia Vol. 2 *, Musica Subterranea/Incantare **
Anello	Tape of Dance Vol. 3 *, Accademia Viscontea i Musicanti/Mesura et Arte del Danzare ****, Musica Subterranea/Musica Subterranea **
Chirintana	Wolgemut/Shauspeluden II *** ("Cantiga No. 119") or any version of Petit Vriens
Casuelle La Nouvelle	Companions of St. Cecilia Vol. 2 *, Musica Subterranea/Incantare **
Danse de Cleves	Companions of St. Cecilia Vol. 1 *
Ballo del Fiore	Tape of Dance Vol. 1 *, Tape of Dance Vol. 2 *, Lacrimae Ensemble/Celeste Giglio ††, Wolgemut/Tempus Saltandi *** ("Touche Brawl")
Contrapasso in Due	The Dragonscale Consort/A Consort of Dances †
Ly Bens Distonys	Misericordia & Gaita/Eschewynge of Ydlenesse †††
Queen's Alman	Companions of St. Cecilia Vol. 2 *, Tape of Dance Vol. 4 *
Old Alman	Companions of St. Cecilia Vol. 2 *
Black Alman	Companions of St. Cecilia Vol. 2 *, Tape of Dance Vol. 2 *, Toons and Trips *

\* Available as free MP3 downloads from Eric Praetzel's dance webpage (<http://ieec.uwaterloo.ca/praelzel/mp3-cd/index.html>).

\*\* Available on CD or MP3 from CD Baby (<http://www.musicasub.org/order.html>) and from iTunes.

\*\*\* Available on CD or MP3 from CD Baby (<http://cdbaby.com/all/wolgemut>), and from iTunes.

\*\*\*\* Available from iTunes.

† Available on CD from the Dragon Scale Consort website (<http://www.dragonscaleconsort.com/>).

†† Available on CD from Dorthée Wortelboer (<http://utopia.knoware.nl/users/dorothee/lacrimae.htm>).

††† Available on CD from the Gaita Medieval Music website (<http://www.gaita.co.uk/cd.html>).