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Cover Image: *Swinging at Toronto Contra Dance. Photo: Simon Chambers.* *See p. 13.*

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Editorial

by Dorothy Archer

In this issue we celebrate the diversity of dance. It may be of a country or region, an era, a type of music or dance pattern. Nancy Nies writes about Filipino dancing, especially the type done with the clicking of wooden poles. You have probably seen this in real life but have you tried it? A local folk dancer did and limped for several weeks afterwards. Many of you will have tried Scottish country dancing and some will go regularly to sessions. It requires concentration so one can only imagine what it was like dancing with 511 other people at the same time. Folk dancer Nora Brett took part in this event. Many of us will have been introduced to Scandinavian dancing by Roo Lester at the Waterloo Camp. She also is active in the Scandia Camp mentioned in the article in this issue. However, you can do more than read about the dancing here because it is going to be virtual and you can participate. The details are in the article.

Maxine Louie is a dedicated contra dancer. She has even been known to go contra dancing rather than to an international folk dance party! While I have never been to the Toronto Contra Dancers' annual Spring Thaw, I am told it is the best time of all. Swing dancing is not something we do in international folk dancing but surely we have all tried it. If you are of a certain age, you danced it at every opportunity when you were a teenager. Even now, if you go to a community dance with big band music, you will see older couples doing a slow jitterbug – nothing like they did when they were young. Check the web for locations to dance or learn – the information in the article is dated.

There is a link in the Grapevine to read the latest about our local celebrity, Rita Winkler. Another link will take you to news about a new star, Gabe, who was featured in *Jake's Jam* in the last issue.

Are you interested in teaching folk dancing? Be sure to read Karen Bennett's article about Dutch training and Tineke van Geel and Bianca de Jong's plans for online teaching.

Thanks to Zoom, there was a rare opportunity in April to participate in the National Folk Organization's annual conference . Maybe you are like me and were not aware of this body so we are grateful to Karen Bennett for her report on it. Bev Sidney also watched several of the events and reports on the interesting speculation for life after COVID.

I wish you a happy and safe summer.

Dorothy

CONDOLENCES

to folk dancers and their families...

A donation has been made by OFDA to its Bereavement Fund in memory of:
Conner Vella,
grandson of Roz and Allen Katz.

WEBPAGES WORTH VIEWING

Helen Winkler came across music videos created by a Russian group called Otava-yo and has shared the following link. She says, "As usual it is charming and there is some dancing in it towards the end. They also acknowledge cats, goats and other creatures in the ending credits which is so like them."

https://otava-yo.spb.ru/en/video

The group started as a street band playing Celtic rock, of all things, in Russia. The tall lead singer/instrumentalist Alexey Belkin was an office worker who decided as an adult to follow music and left the office behind. A couple of them are formally trained musicians but the others are not trained. The band leader comes up with these wacky ideas for videos and then he goes about writing the script, scouting locations, doing whatever needs doing. The results are videos with attractive music and visuals and a hit of humour. Their website, which includes other videos they've created: https://otava-yo.spb.ru/en/

In the April issue of this magazine, the last paragraph of the Grapevine should have read "An Annual General Meeting of the OFDA was held on Zoom on March 6, 2021, with 26 people attending."

WEBPAGES WORTH VIEWING

Karen Bennett provided a link to a Qashqai Scarf Dance that has a few similarities to what was taught at the National Folk Organization Conference in April (see her review on p. 22): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aks4-hZIsok>. The Qashqai nomads are the second-largest Turkic-language-speaking minority in Iran (Persia).

• •

These are the talented Rosen Sisters, Ariana and Amberly, playing Alunelul. They were also seen on Murray Spiegel's Morristown, N.J. Zoom playing and dancing Dospatsko and a Syrtos.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGmdURUe-iA

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Philippine Weekend Celebrates Filipino Culture

by Nancy Nies

A princess is abducted by guardian spirits who take her into a forest. There is an earthquake; trees fall and winds blow. Soon after, a prince arrives on the scene and rescues the princess. In an agricultural town here in California's great central valley, you would likely not expect to see this story, from an ancient epic poem with origins halfway around the world, told through dance.

Yet that is what I saw recently when, thanks to YouTube videos and online newspaper articles, I "virtually" attended the 2019 Philippine Weekend held in the town of Delano (pronounced duh-LAY-noh), located 50 kilometres north of Bakersfield, known for being the centre of the farmworkers' movement and the Delano Grape Strike of the 1960s. About one-sixth of the town's population of 53,000 is of Filipino descent. The year 2019 marked Delano's 45th annual celebration of Filipino culture and heritage.

Food, Faith, Fun and Fireworks

The festivities began on a Friday evening, with an *adobo* cook-off; the popular Filipino dish is made with chicken or pork cooked in a marinade. Other specialties available all weekend were *lumpia* (Filipino spring rolls) and *pancit* (noodles cooked with meats, vegetables, and soy sauce). A refreshing dessert called *halo-halo*, made with condensed milk, crushed ice, yams, fruit, and coconut, was no doubt very welcome, since summer highs in California's central valley typically reach 40 to 45 degrees Celsius.

Photo: Judge Florentino Floro, Wikimedia Commons.

Queens of Santacruzan, San Sebastian Parish Church, Lumban, Laguna, Philippines, 31 May 2019.

The Saturday events began with a morning parade down the town's main street, featuring young women participating in the *Santacruzan*, which is described as "a religious-historical beauty pageant," a celebration in honor of the Virgin Mary that takes place in nearly every town in the Philippines in May. In Delano, however, the tradition is observed as part of the Philippine Weekend in July. Wearing formal gowns and

riding on a float were the event's *reynas* (queens), who represented the virtues of faith, hope, and charity, as well as other symbols and characters associated with the celebration.

Following the parade on Saturday were the opening ceremonies, basketball and tennis tournaments, dance and singing competitions, and the performance of a Philippine-born rap star. Historical and cultural displays were also a part of the festival. As it was the event's 45th anniversary, there was a fireworks show on Saturday night. Sunday was mostly devoted to live cultural entertainment, including Filipino folk dances – which brings us back to the dance featuring the abducted princess.

Photo: Bulaclac Paruparu, Wikimedia Commons.

Postcard featuring the Singkil dance of the Philippines.

The Darangen, the Dance, and the Delano Festival

One of the oldest and most popular Filipino dances, often performed during celebrations, is the one mentioned above, Singkil, portraying the rescue of Princess Gandingan by Prince Bantugan of the Kingdom of Bumbaran. There are some interesting facts associated with the dance.

It originated with the Muslim Maranao people of the Lake Lanao region of Mindanao, the southernmost island of the Philippines. It is based on one episode of the Darangen - an ancient epic poem consisting of 72,000 lines - which has been transmitted orally through the centuries and depicts what has been called "a wealth of knowledge" about Maranao law, values, history, mythology and more.

In Singkil, the *diwatas* (guardian spirits) abduct the princess to teach the philandering prince a lesson. Her faithful female servant stays with her throughout, shading her with a parasol. The dance, always accompanied by an ensemble, begins slowly and becomes increasingly fast-paced.

The dance is named for the heavy, belled ankle rings worn by the Muslim princess, who gracefully steps through the fallen trees (represented by bamboo poles, criss-crossed and rhythmically clacked together

by kneeling ensemble members.) The princess and female ensemble dancers each skillfully manipulate two fans, called *apir*, representing the winds. The prince, carrying his shield and sword, also deftly weaves his way through the poles, which symbolize the obstacles the royal couple must overcome before returning home together.

To view an impressive, colourful performance of Singkil by the Kalahi Dance Company in 2018, go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ccqi46zQH9w.

The Darangen epic, added in 2005 to the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity list, is thus represented at Delano's annual celebration of Filipino culture. The central California festival, one of the largest in the U.S., brings together friends and family from across the country. According to its Facebook post, a "reunited, reinvented" festival is currently scheduled for October 2021. The many locals and out-of-towners who make it a point to attend the event are no doubt eagerly anticipating the opportunity to attend the Philippine Weekend in person--as am I.

History of Swing Dance

by Michael Wagner

Reprinted from Folk Dancer*, March 1997. This is the second in a series of three articles. The first article is an introduction to Swing and the third deals with its revival.*

Swing has roots going back to the turn of the century or before. Most people though, trace its origins to the Roaring Twenties. The War to End All Wars had ended. America had entered the war late, but mobilized a lot of people. Woman had worked alongside man in factories, black had fought beside white, and farm hands had come to the big city. America, disgusted and discouraged by the war, attempted to turn inwards and "return to normalcy."

It was, though, a different normalcy. The social changes necessary for the war effort were not easily reversed. Radio and motion pictures helped forge a national culture, more urban than rural. Cars enabled a mobility never before seen. Women went to work in ever-increasing numbers, started to smoke and drink, and wore flapper costumes, binding their breasts to hide their femininity. Women gained the right to vote and everyone lost the right to drink. The old rules didn't work, and yet no one had any good new rules.

Clubs were operating, people needed to get away from it all and relax, and music (and illegal alcohol) were all a part of it. In New York and Chicago, a style of music influenced by ragtime music and Dixieland jazz was springing up. Harlem, a mostly black, mostly poor neighbourhood in New York, was the location of the Cotton Club, where Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington was playing. Fletcher Henderson, Chuck Webb, and many other bands played at dozens of other clubs throughout Harlem. The music they played was characterized by improvisation, riffs (repetitions of a phrase, either by the same instrument or a different one) and syncopation (playing with the rhythmic structure of the music). So it isn't surprising that a style of dance evolved to match the music – improvised and syncopated. Dancers and musicians described a form of interaction between them; the band would play a "crazy lick" and the dancers would dance the rhythm back to the band – kind of a "Hey, can you do this?", "Yes, I can" conversation. Dancing was a way of getting away from your troubles (and in Harlem, troubles, financial or racial, were not far away).

Some say that the dance started in the fancy ballrooms of Harlem such as the Savoy, a large dance hall with live music that could accommodate 2,000 people dancing. Some say that the smaller, darker clubs played a role. And some say that it started at "rent parties," small parties that people threw to raise money just before the rent was due. However

it started, the dance existed for several years without a name – it was just the dance you did when the band played Swing music.

On March 20, 1927, Charles Lindbergh flew his plane The Spirit of St. Louis from New York to Paris, "hopping" the Atlantic for the first time by airplane and winning a substantial prize. He returned to America a hero and was given a ticker-tape parade up Broadway. Some time later, during a dance marathon, "Shorty" George Snowden broke away from his dance partner and improvised some steps on his own. A reporter who was there to cover the marathon asked Snowden what he had done, and, thinking about Lindbergh's flight, he replied , "The Lindy Hop." The dance now had a name – not just the breakaway that Snowden had done but the entire dance became Lindy Hop.

The Roaring Twenties ended with a whimper in the stock market crash of 1929 and the subsequent economic depression. A kid in Harlem didn't have a lot of chances. Fun as it was, it was hard to come up with 75 cents to go dancing, so kids would hang out on the sidewalks outside and dance to what music they could hear on the street. Money was where you made it and some of the better dancers started making money by entering the dance contests inside. If you were good enough, you could get in to practise your dance steps for free during band rehearsals and other "off" times. The best dancers formed a clique who [sic] would hang out in the "cats corner" (near the band) and have informal "cutting contests" to see who had the best moves. These became a kind of practice session for the dance contests that got them a little spending money and a lot of attention. This developed into a different style of Lindy – one couple at a time doing flashy, aerobic, acrobatic moves – very different from the slower, social dance being danced at the same time on the rest of the dance floor.

After a while, the attention paid off. In the mid '30s, a performance group, "Whitey's Lindy Hoppers," selected from the best dancers in Harlem, toured the country and danced in a number of movies, including Hellzappopin' (1941) and the Marx Brothers' A Day at the Races (1937). The tours, and especially the movies, spread the idea of Lindy Hop around the country. At the same time, Swing music was moving downtown and becoming acceptable. Racially integrated and white Swing bands such as Benny Goodman, the Dorsey Brothers, Glenn Miller, Artie Shaw and Charlie Barnet started to appear, play in the bigger venues, get recording contracts, get on the radio, and so on. Where the music went, the dancers followed. The highly energetic Lindy Hop, as performed by Whitey's group and others, wasn't accessible to the masses who generally did the lower-energy social Lindy style.

In Toronto you could go dancing at a number of big ballrooms. Some are gone, but a few still stand. Some dance halls were free-standing:

the Palace Pier burnt down many years ago (a condominium and some memorial plaques stand there now) but the Palais Royale ballroom still hosts big band dances once a month in Sunnyside. Some ballrooms were part of a larger building and some have survived: Casa Loma, the Oak Room in the King Edward Hotel, the Royal York's Imperial Room, the Masonic Temple. The Maple Leaf Ballroom building sits on St. Clair near Bathurst, but I think it's used for bingo games now.

In the '40s, America went back to war (in Canada, we'd already been involved for some time). Swing music (by then often called Big Band music because of orchestration) became a patriotic form. In some ways, though, Swing was already in trouble. Musicians could make more money in broadcasting and in the recording studio than they could at dances. Then came a lengthy musicians' strike. Between the various pressures – the war, the strike, the economics – most of the ballrooms faltered. By the end of the '40s, Big Band dancing as the mass phenomenon it had been for the past 20 years was dead.

But somehow, Swing dance never died completely. Some people continued to dance it, either to recorded music or to live music in vastly smaller venues. When Rock 'n' Roll started appearing in the '50s, it shared some of the same musical ancestry as Swing – black musicians singing "the blues" – and picked up on some of the same rhythms. No one called it Lindy – no one called it anything as far as I can tell – but while some of the figures are different, much of the feel was the same. At some time, regional variants (including a Toronto variant) developed. Since our [North American] society doesn't seem to find dance very important, it's hard to find good research information on how and when these variants developed.

Contra Dancing

by Maxine Louie

My intro to contra was in 2007. I was desperate to get out of the house, and the Toronto Star entertainment page had a notice about a contra dance at St. Barnabas Church, no experience needed, and only a 10 minute walk from home. I made it at the last minute, into the 30 minute intro session held just before the 7:30 p.m. dance. Toronto Contra Dancers have experienced dancers help in their intro session, and I found the instructions easy to learn (almost like square dance moves in elementary school). They also said that it was normal to get a little dizzy from the swinging, but one can control that with keeping an eye on the person, or some part of the person's chest (not hard for me as I am short). It was perfectly acceptable, and encouraged, to ask any other dancer for a dance, male or female, and not sit there and wait to be asked. In fact, it was encouraged for all to keep changing partners throughout the dance. This was a wonderful custom that I had not experienced in other dance classes that I had taken, where once the class was finished, everyone mostly danced with friends that they came with.

Photo: Simon Chambers.

The caller keeps everyone dancing the same pattern.

To make contra even more accessible, all the dances were "called", that is, the dance steps were first explained at the start of the dance. Most dances were only 5-10 steps, which are repeated over and over until the end, from 5 to 15 minutes, so contra dancing is a good cardio workout. The caller calls the moves throughout the dance, to keep everyone dancing the same pattern. The caller will stop calling when he/she feels that the dancers know the dance routine. I had taken previous dance lessons where one learned to be a leader, usually the man, or a follower, usually the woman. Dancing was fun if I had a good leader, not fun if I didn't. This contra dance did not require this leader/follower relationship. For leaders, this is a wonderful

invention, as to become a good leader is very difficult for many and takes time, as you have to do the choreography as well as keeping the beat, etc.

Photo: Simon Chambers.

Swing your partner.

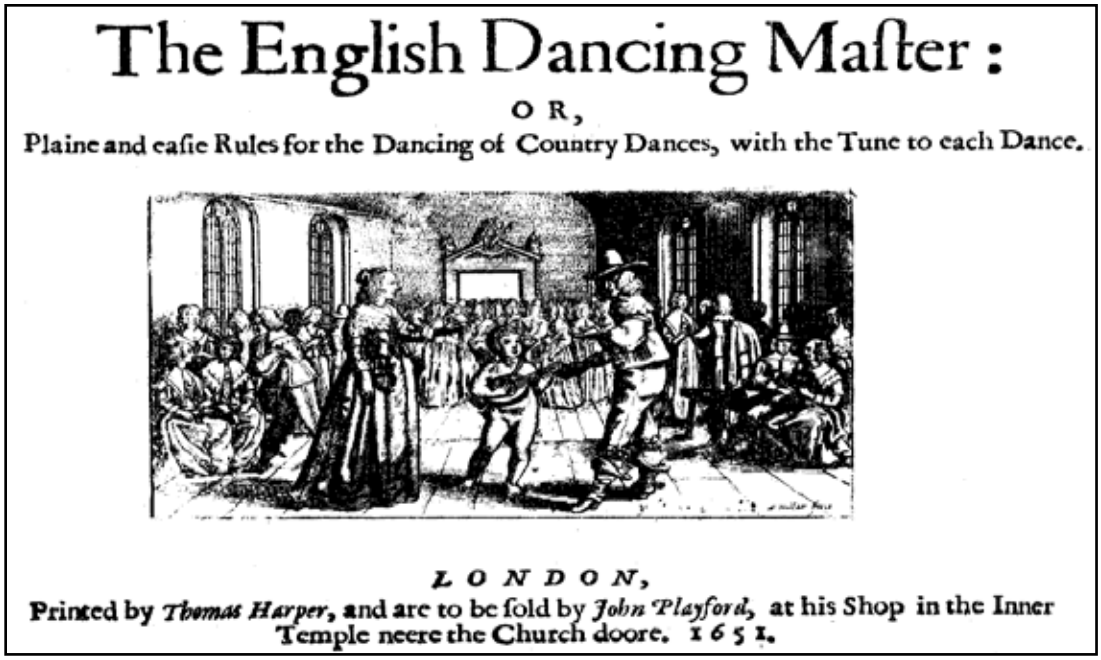
Another thing I noticed was that many women had long flared skirts which made a beautiful sight with everyone swinging. I also noticed that a few men wore skirts but nobody thought it was strange. Nowadays there are fewer long skirts for the women, and more for the men (they said it was cooler than wearing pants). There is more changing of roles now, so that you might see a petite woman dancing the role of the "gent" and a much bigger male dancing the role of the "lady". Recently, callers have taken to referring to the dancer on the left as the lark, and the person dancing on the right as either the raven or robin. The contra dance community is very open to queer folk, transgender, and all manner of straight folks, new comers, all ages.

There are many contra dance organizations throughout North America. Some dance once a month, others twice a month, and a few dance weekly. Toronto Contra Dances are on the 2nd, 4th, and 5th Saturday evenings from September to June. Many organizations host weekend events. Toronto has Spring Thaw every April (view a clip at https://youtu.be/iUBfeLjLvTo). Ottawa has Hey Fever in late October, and Quebec has Oohlala in July. There are many dance weekends across the border – Rochester, Ann Arbor, Maine, Saratoga Springs, etc. One could literally dance at a different event every week of the year. These weekend events usually have a well-known caller, an excellent band, and a host of avid dancers, so the quality of the dance gives you a feeling of "blissed out".

How did this contra dance come to be?

I attended David Millstone's lecture on "350 years of Country Dance History" presented by the New Mexico FolkMADS (Folkmusicanddancesociety) this March 2021. Much of the following information comes from the lecture. The YouTube link is: https://youtu.be/YFG6TSuFAo0

The origin of English Country dance occurred in England, with the first edition of the *English Dancing Master* by John Playford in 1651. It contained 104 dances of which one-third were in the longways style, which is the most common line up in contra now, with a long line of


The English Dancing Maſter:

OR,

Plaine and eaſie Rules for the Dancing of Country Dances, with the Tune to each Dance.

LONDON,

Printed by *Thomas Harper*, and are to be ſold by *John Playford*, at his Shop in the Inner Temple neere the Church doore. 1651.

Title page of the 1st edition of The English Dancing Master *(1651).*

couples. English Country dancers continue to use this formation, but in the "proper" arrangement of all the gents on the left line, and all the ladies on the right line. The couple with their backs to the music is couple one, and the couple facing the music is couple number two. A line of 20 couples would be 10 sets. In contra, the "improper" formation of gent on the left, lady on the right, is most common. In both contra and English Country dance, there is a progression so that each couple one progresses away from the music, interacting with the next couple two, and so on down the line until they reach the end, when they wait out a turn and re-enter the line as couple number two, working their way up the line towards the music. Couple twos work their way up the line towards the music until they reach the top, when they wait out one turn and re-enter the line as couple number one.

The English Dancing Master also had three couple longways, four couples in a square, three couple rounds, patterns which today are still used in English Country Dance. Four couple square sets led to the quadrille and square dancing.

The English Country Dance culture spread to France, being called contredanse. And from England and France, the contredanse spread to the Americas. It is easy to see that contredanse became contra dance.

Playford dance books and dance masters who taught the dances became common in the Americas amongst the largely English colonists. John Griffiths published *29 Country Dances* in the U.S. in 1788. Dance masters were employed to teach dances to the upper and middle classes.

The white settlers who owned black slaves did not just use them for farm labour. Black musicians played at early balls and social gatherings

for both white and black dancers of all classes, as early as 1690 on plantations in Virginia, and by the mid-18th century, enslaved musicians were common throughout the colonies. The black musicians learned the dances at the white balls, and when playing for the poorer whites and blacks, one of the musicians would call the moves as these people could not afford dancing masters. Thus, the dance caller, hitherto unknown, came to be.

While the music and the instruments originated in Europe, the African influence was substantial, especially with the violin/fiddle. The banjo and the tambourine also had their origins from African instruments.

Interestingly, in my limited experience, I feel that contra dance nowadays has few African American dancers, musicians, or callers.

The longways dances had competition with other dances, the Quadrille, the waltz, the polka, the jazz age and ragtime era, from the 1800s to the 1900s. Contra dance all but disappeared, except in the New England States.

How did contra dance resurface?

There are many important individuals and much mixing of contra dance, square dance, folk dance, and English country dance forms.

Cecil Sharp who became fascinated with English dance history, started collecting and reconstructing old dances, and formed the English folk dance society (EFDS) and then went to the U.S. where he was influential in the start of the Country Dance and Song Society (CDSS) and research into the Appalachian songs and dances.

Elizabeth Burchenal introduced folk dance (which included contra and square dance) into the physical education curriculum in schools. Dr. Luther Gulick, who helped found Boy Scouts of America, published The Healthful Art of Dancing while he was the head of physical education in New York City schools.

Henry Ford, of Ford Motor fame, was not pleased with the "unwholesome, decadent" influence of jazz. The culture of drinking and sensual dancing in bars would lead to moral decay in the country. He felt that country dancing, including square dancing, waltzing, quadrilles, contra, fiddle music, was much more wholesome. He provided financial support for dance teachers and helped to get contra music recordings published. Fiddle contests were popularized. He funded the building of Lovett Hall in Dearborn specifically for country dancing.

Ralph Page, from New Hampshire, where contra dance had remained strong, published the Country Dance Book in 1937, and taught/called in Boston, and folk dance camps.

Dudley Laufman incorporated English country dance tunes in the contra repertoire. His booklet *Let's Try a Contra* in 1973 helped spread contra dance from the northeast of the U.S. to all parts of the country.

Herbie Gaudreau conceived the concept of Beckett formation in 1958 where the couples face each other along the lines, rather than the more familiar longways formation of couple facing couple.

Ted Sanella introduced Petronella spins (dancer moves one place to the right in the square of four couples, often with a twirl) in 1983, and now there are more than 200 petronella spinoffs. He also created the hey for four movement (4 dancers weave in and out with each other via alternate shoulders) in 1974.

Dancers perform a right-hand turn within longways formation.

Photo: Simon Chambers.

Carl Wittman started exploring gender free dance roles in the 1970s.

1974 was the first time that a poster advertised a "contra dance". It was in the Boston area.

Gene Hubert published three volumes of *Dizzy Dances*, all contra, and added in more heys, and gypsies (walking around the other dancer, usually keeping eye contact), now called walk arounds to be politically correct.

Contra dance today continues to evolve. Techno contra is a fusion of electronic music, disco lights, darkened dance floor. It draws the younger crowds in.

With the COVID pandemic, contra has continued via Zoom. Hopefully, late 2021 or early 2022 will see the safe resumption of dance.

Many dancers venture further into other dance styles after being exposed to contra. My personal story is from contra to English Country Dance, to Irish set dancing, to Modern Western Squares, to International Folk dance. Morris and Scottish dancers often come to contra dances, because of the ease of entry and fun from the start, without all the lessons.

Check out the website of Toronto Contra Dance www.tcdance.org for more information.

Scandinavian Dance and Music Goes Virtual

by Fred Bialy

Since its founding in 1980, Scandia Camp Mendocino (SCM) has offered a yearly week-long immersive experience in the folk dance and music culture of Scandinavia, primarily of Norway and Sweden. The week includes daily dance and music classes, culture sessions, singing and craft classes as well as music ensemble sessions (Allspel) to practise commonly known tunes to play at every evening's dance party. The redwood forest of the Mendocino Woodlands has always provided a magical setting for learning from master teachers from Scandinavia as well as from American experts. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Scandia Camp Mendocino will go virtual this year, with a shorter, four-day program via Zoom, June 11 to 14, 2021.

Norway has two main fiddle traditions: the regular fiddle and the unique Hardanger Fiddle (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hardanger_fiddle.) Gudbrandsdalen (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gudbrandsdalen) is in the regular fiddle region and its *springleik** is very popular among dancers and musicians alike. SCM Virtual will feature *springleik* in its Norwegian dance sessions taught by Øyvind Sandum and Karin Brandsbol. Astrid Garmo will take charge of the fiddle instruction as well as offering sessions on the Hardanger Fiddle and the traditional singing from Gudbrandsdalen.

Photos: Dick Rawson.

Live music is a feature of Scandia Camp Mendocino.

Sweden's dance and music traditions are rich and varied and have captured American attention particularly since the release of Swedish Folk Fiddling by Nonesuch in the 1960s. Among all the counties in Sweden, Dalarna is known for having a particularly strong folk tradition where almost every village has its own unique dance and music style. Britt Mari Westholm Dahlgren and Eric Dahlgren will teach some of the

most favorite dances from Dalarna. Bengt Jonsson, who will be teaching the Swedish music classes, is well versed in the music of Dalarna and is one of the leaders of his local *spelmanslag* (musicians' club). He is also a decorated player of the cow horn, which will be one of the offerings among the many music classes at SCM.

The Nyckelharpa, or keyed fiddle, the national folk instrument of Sweden, has been played in Upland for centuries. Its modern form, with four bowed and 12 resonance strings, has captivated musicians throughout Sweden, Scandinavia and in many parts of the world. Petrus Dillner, steeped in the nyckelharpa folk tradition from a young age and a graduate of the Swedish Royal College of Music, will be at SCM to share his knowledge.

Since the 1970s, America has its own growing group of accomplished Scandinavian musicians and teachers. Among them are Peter Michaelsen, who will lead ensemble classes for commonly known tunes (Allspel) and Loretta Kelley, who is one of the premier American Hardanger Fiddlers as well as a sought after regular fiddle teacher. She will be offering classes on both instruments. Roo Lester, a highly respected American teacher of Scandinavian dance, will be on hand to help people learn the fundamentals of Scandinavian dancing.

Come learn more about the richness of Scandinavia's music and dance traditions at SCM Virtual, June 11 to 14. It's free, but you need to register. To do so, and for more information, go to the SCM website: http://www.scandiacampmendocino.org/

* A couple dance that has both open positions and a closed position.

[Ed. note] This article was submitted simultaneously to other magazines.

Five Hundred and Twelvesome Danced in Toronto:
A World Record in the Guinness Book of World Records

by Douglas Worling

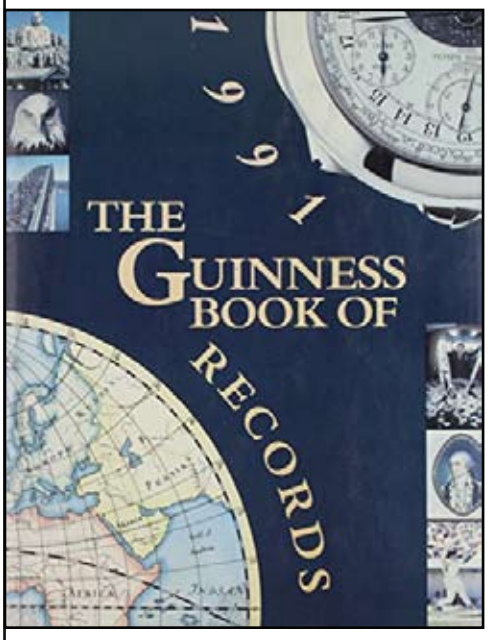
Reprinted from Ontario FolkDancer, *October 1991.*

Eight rows of thirty-two dancers in each row march on from the east; eight rows of thirty-two dancers in each row march on from the west. As they march forward alternate rows march to the sides to form two large circles with thirty-two dancers in the centre two hundred and eight in the inner circle, two hundred and seventy-two in the outer circle.

As the dancers join hands in the two large circles, a fully accredited entry into the Guinness Book of World Records is established. Never before have 512 dancers come together and danced to the same dance, in the same place at the same time. Fabulous!

When the march stops the dancers take their places and form square sets of 32, 16, or 8 dancers. In the centre 32 dancers dance a 32some or a quadruple eightsome. Here, instead of the dancer dancing to their partner as in a normal eightsome, four dancers are dancing to their partners at the same time. In the inner circle two hundred and eight dance 16somes or a double eightsome. Here two dancers are dancing to their partners at the same time. And in the outer circle two hundred and seventy-two dancers dance 34 'normal' eightsomes. Everyone starts dancing at the same time and ends at the same time. The whole dance lasting a brief seven minutes. It was moving, it was majestic, it was magnificent.

This feat was accomplished by the Toronto Branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society. Dancers came not only from Toronto but from all over Ontario, Winnipeg, Vancouver; the States of Florida, California and Virginia; and one former Torontonian all the way from New Zealand.

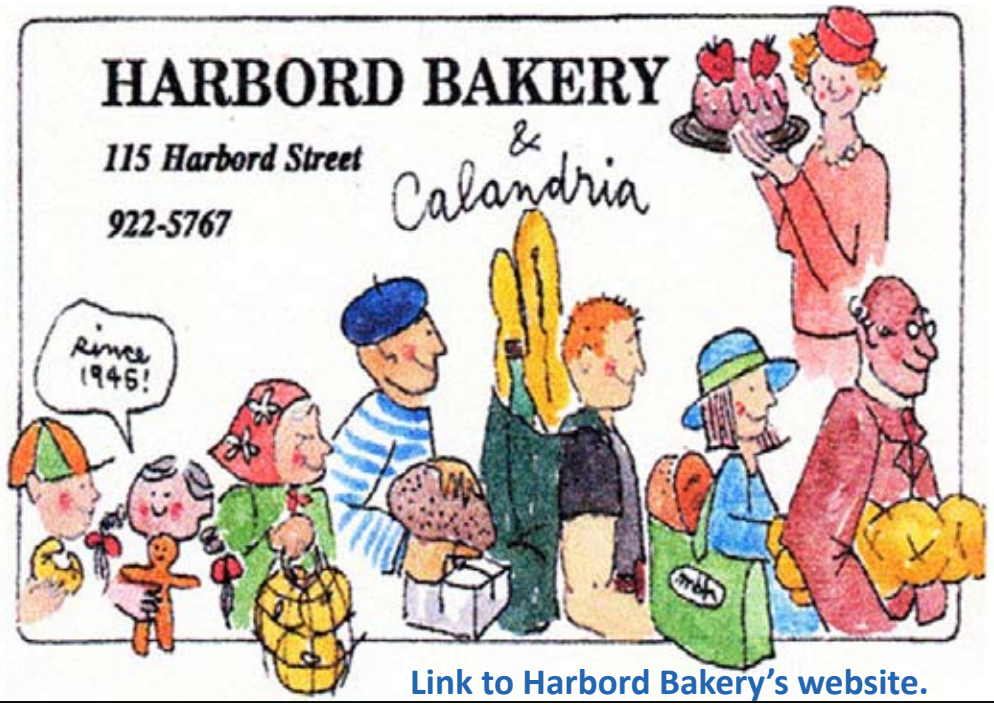


The record was set in Toronto on August 17 th as part of the Warriors' Day Parade at the Grandstand at the Canadian National Exhibition. This 512some broke the 1988 record set by 256 dancers in Vancouver, B.C. and was the culmination of an event which took place in the Libian desert in 1946. Here a visiting Highland General who was inspecting a Scottish Regiment found to his surprise that the soldiers were excellent dancers. After the 8some went so well he tried a 16some. After a couple of large whiskies, you guessed it, he cajoled the men

into a 32some. Now there was no holding back. From 32 he went to 64 and the final culmination of the night was a 128some. To accomplish this, trucks were rounded up with their headlights on so there was light to dance. Everyone available was pressed into the service. There were Highlanders, Fusiliers, Arabs, the military police, three German prisoners, and an Italian café proprietor all dancing. It was a sight to behold.

Now a new record has been set and like all records is there to be broken*, however, please don't call me about my plans for the one thousand and twenty-foursome. They are on hold.

*The Toronto record held until 2004 when 1254 students and staff of the Ellon Academy of Aberdeen danced together.

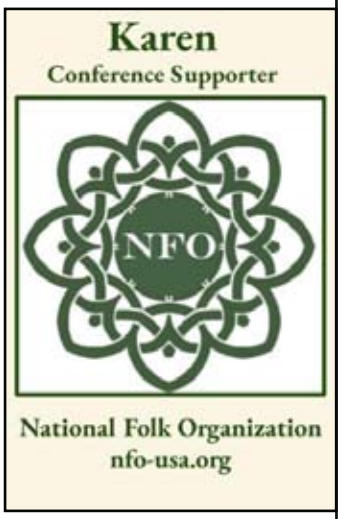


Link to Harbord Bakery's website.

A Firehose of Content: The National Folk Organization Conference, April 7–11, 2021

by Karen Bennett

I'd been aware of the existence of the (U.S.) National Folk Organization (NFO) for years, and even contributed to their magazine, without feeling an urge to join or to use my limited vacation to attend an in-person event (held every year in a different location). But in April 2021 the NFO staged a blow-out five-day event entirely on Zoom, and from the firehose of programming I emerged concussed, drenched and tired but carrying a headful of dances and extremely varied experiences.



Karen's NFO badge. This was an image she could use as a placeholder (as opposed to just a black screen with her name superimposed) when her camera was turned off, or as a background when her camera was turned on.

On April 7th, I attended Steve Kotansky's session on Moldvai/Moldova/Moldavian dances, only one of which I had in my repertoire (Vert Kezes, a Moldvai Csango dance; the Csangos are ethnic Hungarians living outside of Hungary). Steve had thoughtfully structured his session to start with a basic dance and then show what had evolved from/was related to it. As usual, he crammed a lot of dances in (six, by my count), and clearly possessed dozens more that he could have shared. I always find his generosity astonishing. Two days later, he had another session, this time on Vlach dances of eastern Serbia, and managed to cover nine of them! He was pleased to tell us that although he had collected these dances from villagers more than 40 years ago, nowadays, young Serbian Vlachs have "rejoined" their culture by returning to their ancestral villages and learning the dances, thus keeping them alive in their natural settings. I was delighted to add to my repertoire a wedding dance that all Serbian Vlachs know, called simply Dancu (Dance). In his second session, Steve had also started with basic dances—always village dances, not choreographed ones—and progressed to more "evolved" ones.

On April 8th, I joined a session on Peruvian dance taught by Rubén Pachas, whose website is at <http://peruvianfolkdance.com/general-artistic-directors>. He's a genial man who springs from the Indigenous Quechua people of Peru and has been based at the University of Chicago for 16 years. At only a half-hour, his session was much too short. He presented a fertility dance from eastern Peru, near the Amazon jungle, called Shanganakuy (a word for which there are many spellings; it describes a dance movement). Here's a choreographed version (narration in Spanish only, but there is a section on the costume): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p639Sh_LB1k>; and a video on the musical instruments: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L4cxl8sXs6U>.

The NFO conference featured a number of fertility dances/rituals held either at spring or summer solstice, including a Persian dance called the Qashqai Scarf Dance (on April 9th) choreographed and taught by Farima Berenji, and she gave the same explanations for the rainbow colours of the scarves as Rubén Pachas did.

Still on the topic of solstice: Just before Rubén came on, I caught the end of Ahmet Lüleci's session on Turkish wishing trees and the ritual of jumping over fires. While Ahmet *has* jumped over fires, he has never made wishes, he told us. (I admit that if I throw a coin in a fountain, I never make a wish; nor do I bother when blowing out birthday candles.)

Screenshot: Karen Bennett.

Rubén Pachas and Jessica Loyaga bidding farewell to us at the end of their session on the Peruvian dance Shanganakuy.

Back to Peru: Rubén was assisted by Jessica Loyaga, who not only danced but did her best to don the entire costume over her dance clothes towards the end of the session. (Rubén taught in his costume.) I'd recommend Rubén and Jessica (who is also a highly educated and qualified teacher) for anyone looking for Peruvian dances/folklore for adults or children. And—unfortunately, I felt—their session was the only one on folklore from South America, or even folklore from south of the Rio Grande.

Moving to the Pacific Ocean, we had another charming presentation, this time from Kau'i Mailelauli'ili'i Tu'a (the session MC made a point of asking Kau'i to say her name) teaching Polynesian songs from Hawai'i, Aotearea (New Zealand) and Samoa. These three songs are taught to children in their native setting, but they work beautifully for non-native adults. From Hawai'i, we had a song welcoming the sunrise: E Ala E. Video of the melody with the song words and translation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJeJodoZgew>; video with voice harmony: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ddu4tqqJDhM>. I asked Kau'i (via the chat function) if these songs had harmonies, and she said yes, that people sang whatever harmonies sounded good, but as she only had one voice and was alone in the room... From the Maori of Aotearea, we had Haere Mai Te Manuhiri E, a song describing the legend of how the first seven canoes carried the Maori across the ocean. All these songs had hand motions, and sometimes dances too, but Kau'i had no time to do dances other than a basic swaying one in response to a chat question.

Video for Haere (song only, with harmony; dance not shown): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AmVGA-FdVC0>. Finally, we had what turned out to be my favourite: Savalivali, a Samoan song which explains what various terms mean in English (for example*, "Savalivali* means *go for a walk*"). A video of Savalivali with words and guitar chords notated: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W2zczp6JqjU>; and with hand gestures (not always identical to what Kau'i showed us) and voice harmony: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AFOsqJLBngQi>. It was a really feel-good session, and although Kau'i did not have a trained singing voice, her good humour, calm, warmth and kindness shone through. Her personality reminded me of Lucia Cordeiro's. To the joy of all of us, she was allotted a full hour.

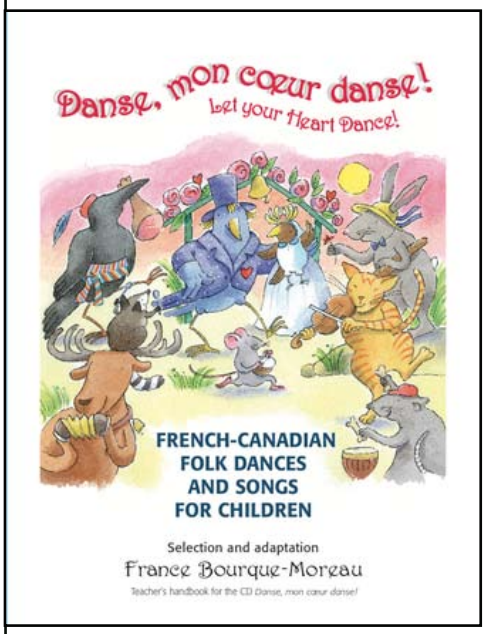
Screenshot: Karen Bennett.

Kau'i Mailelauli'ili'i Tu'a.

On April 10th was a two-hour session with Caspar Bik wherein he taught four dances. Kost ar c'hoat from Brittany has a name that is spelled many different ways, even by Bretons. All the videos I found online left out the second figure that Caspar taught (and I had been taught, many years ago), so I cannot provide a link. Perhaps the dance has now "evolved" (or "deteriorated") in Brittany so that it has now only one figure. Second was Ceamcu, a Vlach dance from Dobrogea, Romania. There are many dances with that name, as it's not just a dance but a family of dances; nothing that I found online resembled Caspar's presentation. Next was a lovely, relaxing Russian round dance choreographed by Hennie Konings (who's half-Russian, half-Dutch) called Tuman Yarom. Alas, I could find no video of it being done correctly. But fear not; we'll be more in luck link-wise with the last dance, the extremely energetic Horlepiep (Hornpipe), whose melody and dance steps (well, an approximation thereof) were appropriated—er, borrowed—by the Dutch from English sailors centuries ago: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fG9QF1_m-qM>.

One of the sessions the same day, led by Carol Silverman, was about cultural appropriation, but Horlepiep was not the kind of thing that raised hackles; the "correctness" of the Roma/Gypsy/Cigany name and the appropriation/monetarization of their music by non-Roma *without compensation to the not-exactly-rolling-in-wealth Roma* dominated the part of the discussion I had time to watch. Carol mentioned that the Roma she knew were happy and surprised that non-Roma appreciated their music, but when she told them how much money people made using Roma music, they were angry. Carol also mentioned that work

presented by Roma can itself be morally questionable, with a case in point being the 1993 film *Latcho Drom*: Although directed by a Romani, it was staged and therefore not a documentary, as it purported to be.



A few hours later I watched the session that I originally pitched to the Editor of this newsletter as the single, solitary topic from the conference that I wanted to report on. (Ha, ha; put me in front of a keyboard and watch what happens!) It was by France Bourque-Moreau, on the translation of her handbook of French-Canadian children's dances and songs—*Danse, Mon Coeur Danse!*—into English: *Let Your Heart Dance*! (The CD of the same name was originally released first, in 1999, and the French-only handbook appeared later, at the request of teachers.) With the assistance of a grant in 2020 from NFO, the book's translation into English was largely done by Yves Moreau (whose English skills, he having attended an English-speaking high school, are better than France's). But it was still very much a collaboration between Yves and France, one that included discussions/arguments about the best way to rewrite and illustrate dance descriptions to make them clearer (such as for phys-ed teachers who aren't dancers, like the one I had in high school), or to translate song words/expressions. France noted that the songs should still be *sung* in French, despite the translations, as the English often doesn't fit the metre, the length and the stress of the words being different. Yves was in the room as France's tech assistant; he presented his face to the camera and then retired to the right of his wife so all our attention could be on her. In one completely adorable moment (unrelated to discussion of the book; I wished I could have gotten a screenshot but couldn't since the window showing France "live" was sized very small at the time), France reached for Yves's disembodied left hand to demonstrate the movement of making an arch, and talked about why arches could no longer be taught, as the kids would either refuse to hold hands or yank down the hands, causing injuries. The book, finally printed in April after a delay caused by COVID, is now on sale at <http://www.bourque-moreau.com/danse-mon-coeur-danse-2.html>. France also talked about the possibility of a DVD of her dances. She has films of at least some of them, but making a DVD is an aspirational goal for her at the

Screenshot: Karen Bennett.

France Bourque-Moreau with her tech assistant, Yves Moreau. France had beckoned to Yves to appear on camera because she said she was more nervous about the "tech" aspect of Zooming than about giving her talk.

moment. Even pre-COVID, making a DVD was not possible because of the difficulty of getting permission and releases from schools, parents/guardians, etc.

Before I watched a session entitled "Zooming After the Pandemic" (see Bev Sidney's report on p.27 of this issue), my blood pressure rose precipitously during a dance workshop taught by French Balfolk "expert" Lynn Baumeister. I cannot count the number of ways Lynn did things wrong, and I don't just mean "taught things I wouldn't have, in her place and with her time pressures." Like too many presenters, she was only allotted half an hour. She chose to teach three partner dances, with a masked musician present but no partner: Rondeau en couples; a two-count bourrée, done in two facing lines, that she called Bourrée Droite (I've never heard anybody, in France or out of it, call it that); and a Schottische. All of these dances have variations and improvisations, and there was no time to get into them or even *explain* that in the poorly-chosen Schottische video clip, the couple was improvising rather than doing the basic sequence. The dance Rondeau en couples, although its footwork is simple, can be turned into an interesting dance with improvisation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wMxRDAq0Pbk>.

I appreciate the enormous amount of work (including by the tech people) that went into this conference, but it was NFO's *choice* to be over-the-top with the programming (sometimes 12 hours a day, including the evening parties) over five whole days, and it required a huge investment of time by attendees, especially those like me with wide interests—and even so, my interest in costumes was uncatered-for except fleetingly in the Peruvian session and in Maurits van Geel's stunning presentation on April 10th on the professional folk dance company he ran in the Netherlands before he retired in 2011. I wouldn't recommend that anybody be this ambitious (or perhaps "competitive with other Zoom events" is the wording I'm aiming for). All too often, NFO's effort to cram in so much content resulted in the short-changing of presenters, to the detriment of the quality of their presentation and the frustration of the attendees (typical chat questions: "What was the name of that dance again? What's the arm position? Which way are people facing?"). Instead of getting up and doing the dances, I was writing notes like mad on a clipboard on my knee while trying to keep up with the distracting chat on screen (because sometimes I could answer a question) and also trying to take screenshots to illustrate this article during the unpredictable moments devoid of pop-up chat comments. (Two weeks later, at the Lyriads/Kyklos festival, I learned how to "tame" pop-ups.) It was not a good way to lose the COVID weight I've unwillingly put on; it *was* an excellent way to be tired at the end of a conference instead of energized.

Zoom After COVID?

by Bev Sidney

This year, the National Folk Association (NFO)* held its Annual Conference, freely available in a virtual format, including dance workshops with master teachers, live music, cultural focus and folk craft sessions and a number of moderated panel discussions. The subject of one of the discussions was "Zoom after COVID"; about 300 people tuned in as three panelists called upon their varying experiences to consider the benefits that Zoom has delivered during the pandemic and what the transition back to in-person dancing might look like.

There are acknowledged negatives about online dancing classes/ workshops, a lack of interpersonal social connection sitting at the front of the list. For the teachers, there are other drawbacks; teaching in a vacuum, they are unable to tap into the immediate feedback which comes from observation of the dancers, and so cannot assess how well the material is being picked up and where corrections might be necessary. The large global events are technology and labour intensive, with those providing the tech services being unable to participate in the events they monitor. As well, the events – which were free and fully conducted by volunteer labour at the outset – do have costs involved; also, there is a desire to pay the teachers and musicians in order to mitigate a year without income from dance activities. The compromise has been to depend on donations, thus allowing participation by those whose finances have also been influenced by the year of COVID.

However, because of Zoom (referred to by some as the "Zoom magic carpet") there have also been unanticipated benefits, including the ability:

- to attract many more participants to events than would be the case for in-person attendance
- to hold events, without the interference of inclement weather conditions
- to provide accessibility to those who, for diverse reasons (mobility

issues, costs of travel, etc.), would not normally be able to attend in-person events

- to break down the barriers of distance and multiple time zones, enabling global reach.

It has certainly helped to keep the folk dance community active, albeit not in the traditional way. Aside from the chance to dance in one's own space, to learn new dances and enjoy old favourites, there have been opportunities for online socializing to help bridge that gap.

*Symmetry ECD (*https://symmetryecd.com/) bills itself as "A VIRTUAL DANCE COMMUNITY – Born in Cyber Space". Over the past year it has grown, from a small group of 12 beginner English Country dancers with one teacher/caller, to now having dances three days each week, with live music, a corps of eight callers, and participants from multiple states. Unlike local dance groups whose dancers are waiting for the time that they can meet in person again, the idea of disbanding this online entity is unattractive to its participants because the physically wide-spread community has forged meaningful social connections which they wish to maintain.

Although opinions are on both sides of the divide, there have been thoughts of continuing to make use of Zoom and its benefits once dancing can resume its in-person format. Wishing to retain the best of both worlds, some organizations have been contemplating the idea of "combination" or "hybrid" events which would include live and Zoom components. The components might not necessarily run concurrently and there would be other issues to resolve in order to successfully organize such events (for example, willingness of in-person participants to be on camera, placement of cameras for optimal online views, fee structure to cover expenses, and so on), but it looks like Zoom dancing will be another permanent cultural change falling from the current pandemic.

* The National Folk Organization of the United States of America (http://nfo-usa.org/) "... was formed in 1986 to preserve, promote and provide opportunities in the folk arts. The NFO was organized to unite individuals and organizations that support folk arts in the United States. Membership includes individuals of recreational folk dance and music groups, performing ensembles, researchers, choreographers, managers, teachers, foundations, institutions, camps, community ethnic festivals, and international festivals that host folk ensembles from abroad."

Why Are So Many Great Folk Dance Teachers Dutch?

by Karen Bennett

Before the January 2021 Stockton Virtual Camp, I looked at the list of faculty and said to myself, "We have three teachers from one small country – the Netherlands. They're all lovely people and great at what they do, but why so many, when other countries – not to mention continents – aren't represented at all?" The question of representation isn't what I want to discuss, and besides, I've always had complete confidence in the excellent "Dutch brand" of teachers. But the question of "Why is there a Dutch brand?" had begun to niggle at the back of my mind. (And, according to Tineke van Geel and Bianca de Jong, they have often been asked, when teaching abroad, "How is it that Dutch teachers do such a good job and are so clear to follow?") A few months later, a member of the January Stockton faculty satisfied our curiosity.

On Saturday, April 24, Tineke van Geel gave a presentation via Zoom called "Folk Dance Teachers from the Netherlands" at the Lyrids/Kyklos festival. The history of organized folk dancing in the Netherlands began in 1918, with folk dancing forming a portion of what was taught by a movement that translates as "the laborers' youth movement." In the 1950s, training for folk dance teachers was developed by an association funded by the Dutch government. It was a two-year part-time education, with 360 hours' training plus a 60-hour internship with a certified teacher. Tineke took such a course at the age of 19. By the early 2000s, interest in folk dancing itself as well as in such exhaustive training for teachers had waned, along with support from the government. In 2019 a much-pared-down two-year course was organized with Bianca de Jong as lead teacher, financed mainly by crowdfunding. Tineke went on to enumerate 35 graduates of Dutch training programs; I estimate that I've been taught by 13 of them. "Cheese is not our only export article," said Tineke. (There's also beer, Friesian horses...)

After showing us the dance-analysis form that aspiring teachers fill in as part of prep work, Tineke asked us to get up and pretend we'd never learned the beginner Israeli dance Zemer Atik, devised by Rivka Sturman from a more complicated choreography called Nigun Atik. (A chat commenter noted that the auto-generated transcript had rendered the dance name as "zoom erotic," a chuckle I would not otherwise have gotten as one of the first things I do is turn off the subtitles.) Tineke demonstrated one way that someone with Dutch training could teach such a dance. With the "B music" the same length (8 measures) and rhythm (4/4) as the "A music" in Zemer Atik, it's not necessary to stop the recording after the A music. The footwork in both dance figures is a combination of quick and slow steps: The A music has four quick steps followed by two slow ones, and the B music has the opposite. After

practising the combinations while the music ran uninterrupted, Tineke started showing what footwork went with what melody, and added the raising and lowering of arms for the B music. Eventually, she stopped the recording. At that point, if teaching for real, she would have taught the unusual handhold for the A music and the combinations of finger-snaps and claps for both parts. Her analysis of the dance had led her to use a teaching method suitable to it: one that got people dancing to music right away and was much faster than, "Learn the steps hearing my voice only, and then we'll put the music on, and then we'll stop the music so you can learn more steps."

Next, Tineke introduced Bianca de Jong "live." They told us they were hoping, with the aid of a grant from the National Folk Organization, to start an online introductory course in early 2022, taught in English and consisting of three Zoom sessions of three hours each, backed by written materials, video footage and feedback on assignments. Sessions will be spread over three or four months. The course is meant for anybody who would like to start teaching or improve their teaching skills. In order for the course to be viable, it will need a minimum of 12 participants and a maximum of 15. Bianca and Tineke are hoping that when travel restrictions are gone, they'll be able to offer a live training weekend for those who took the Zoom course.

The pdf for Tineke and Bianca's proposed course is at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QkwM4CO-YWKIEmccYYgLStodf_Hb82dE/view>. But first they'd like to gauge interest by means of a survey at <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSce6f-LaJb1NSl3OkHq8pWSuVw0ffI6BkYOpTmA5kAfvzCmNA/viewform>. One of the survey questions is, "In case the content of the course would match your expectations, what would you consider to be a suitable price?" Applications for partial scholarships will be available. Tineke said that she has already received many expressions of interest via her email at vangeel@xs4all.nl. Bianca can be reached at bedejong@xs4all.nl.

Screenshot: Karen Bennett.

Tineke van Geel, left, introduces Bianca de Jong to talk about their proposed teacher training course.

The Grapevine

A message to our Folk Dance Family

Your kind messages of condolence were greatly appreciated and we received comfort and strength from your support.
With thanks Roz & Allen Katz.

In the April issue, Gabe was introduced in the article *Jake's Jam*. He has now been named Ambassador for Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital. Read about him here https://ritawinkler.blogspot.com/2021/04/each-month-project-give-back-highlights.html

Rita Winkler has added to her YouTube collection. An architect, who is part of the Jake's Jam community, asked Rita to paint her dream home which turned out to resemble an ice cream cone. This led to the following video https://youtu.be/s0OXDte6gVk.

Dorothy Archer reports she tuned in to the NFO Conference the last day for a talk by Yves Moreau about folk dancing in Japan. Olga Sandolowich has told us about her visit to Japan and the repertoire of over 100 Macedonian dances they do. They also sing in Macedonian. It seems it is the same for Bulgarian dances and singing and presumably for other cultures. Needless to say, folk dancing is very popular and taken very seriously. Yves said he told a senior member of one of the organizations that numbers were dropping in North America. The person said it was the same in Japan, they were down to 40,000 members from 50,000. Yves said he managed to keep a straight face.

Anna "Ania" Latus died on April 9th in her 59th year. She was a popular member of the Hamilton Folk Dance group. Our condolences to Ania's family and friends.

English Morris dancers responded to the desire to stamp out societal racism. This news item appeared following 2021 May Day celebrations: "English folk dancers change face paint after racism concerns." https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7IHkpJ6MAN4