

2006 Class Descriptions - Christmas Country Dance School

Period I 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

1. Extraordinary Contras

These contras will thrill and challenge the most experienced contra dancer with wild geography, surprising figures, tricky transitions, and new time signatures. Each day will feature a crooked contra, a chestnut, an almost impossible dance, and a miscellaneous dance you won't likely see at home. No-walkthrough dances will fill in when brains just can't stand any more boggling. Not for the faint of heart.

2. Beginning Appalachian Clogging/Quick Learner

It has been said of Malke that she could teach even a rock to dance – so why not give it a try?! Come learn basic steps and how to move them around and call it dancing. Or come refresh the basics and add to your repertoire. Either way, it'll be a lot of fun!

3. Morris For All

Whether you're an old pro or a complete novice, come jump, leap, clash sticks and wave hankies in this centuries-old dance tradition from England. Depending on class member interests, we'll do a variety of dances, new and old.

4. Callers Workshop

This workshop in calling skills for beginning and intermediate level callers will feature a special focus on calling for one-nighters (parties and similar events primarily for nondancers) and family dances and on troubleshooting. Noncallers are welcome to sit in and to dance during the calling exercises.

5. Sacred Music for Consort Playing (Recorder)

This course will focus on Sacred works arranged for recorder-and voice-ensemble. Special pieces will be highlighted for these playing sessions. The Ainsworth Psalter, the earliest printed music in America, were sacred hymns that traveled via France to England and finally New England in the early 17th Century. We will also focus on the late Renaissance English Church music, still a mainstay in contemporary church, but rarely performed on the recorder scene. Finally we will look at the latest arrangements from the instructor's printed collection, The Sacred Recordox.

6. Harmony Singing

An opportunity to develop harmony singing in an informal but informative way. Aubrey and Elwood will present intuitive, by-ear techniques to work out harmony parts, encouraging participants to tap into what they already know about harmony singing. They will provide simple folk songs to get started and get more complex as the group wishes. Participants can also bring their own songs and musical questions. (All Levels)

7. "Finding the Storyteller's Voice"

Telling a story is as simple as opening your mouth and talking, right? Well, right, but there is so much more to the richness of this most simple, elegant, and ancient of art forms. Come and discover the riches you have to offer as a storyteller.

8. Woodcarving (\$10 material fee payable at class)

Lewis has been carving for over 35 years and has done all kinds of birds and different kinds of animals. Come and have a lot of fun with wood. There will be a \$10 materials fee payable in class.

9. Beginning Rapper

This class will focus on very basic figures meant to orient a person to the form of the rapper set. We will work on how these figures come together to form a cohesive dance. The class will

be flexible to the attendees' skill level and desires.

Period II 10:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

1. Advanced English Country Dance

Expect to explore modern and historic English dance gems and to explore dance styling and nuances (because even the simplest of English country dances offers joy when well-danced). Participants should be able to: 1) dance standard English country dance figures without a second thought; 2) dance to a variety of tempos and time signatures; and 3) should be able to walk through unusual or complex figures after hearing a description of the figure.

2. Intermediate English Country Dance

For those who know the basic English country dance figures and are familiar with a variety of the standard dances. We'll look at style and musical connections and will build repertoire, aiming to enhance the dancing experience for yourself and those you're dancing with.

3. Beginning English Country Dance

This class will introduce dancers to English Dancing, stressing social pleasure, basic recurring figures and style. Through easy dances, we will progressively build a repertoire during the week. Basic waltz will also be taught.

4. Beginning Mountain Dulcimer

The many possibilities of the mountain dulcimer are part of the beauty of this extraordinary Appalachian instrument. Moving at a comfortable pace, the dulcimer will be approached from a number of angles during this exciting class: singing and playing simple chords, basic tunings, using the traditional noter, strumming and fingerpicking, and any other topics that may "happen" as a result of group chemistry. Participants will leave the class amazed with themselves and able to play! Please bring a dulcimer in good playing condition.

5. Songs From The Past To The Present

This class will be a sharing time for old and new folk songs and bluegrass. Come all and have fun with singing. If you play an instrument, bring it along

6. Harmonica

Students will learn how to play notes, chords, and tunes on the 'D' harmonica. We will also explore four positions on the harmonica. 'D' harmonicas will be available for \$10. or students may bring their own. This class is for Beginner/Intermediate.

7. Intermediate Appalachian Clogging

Back to basics first, then on to more complex combinations of footwork and rhythm. We'll learn some fun and challenging new steps, build rhythmic integrity, and explore group choreography.

Period III 11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

1. Morningsong & Stories

This is a time for the entire CCDS community to gather together for music and fellowship. Participants are welcome to share songs or stories, or just come for the joy of singing together.

Period IV 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

1. Beg/Int Contras & Squares

Learn the basics or polish your skills in the American tradition of contra and square dancing. In addition to mastering the common figures and enjoying a savory sampling of dances, you'll also learn the secrets of the dancers everyone wants to dance with.

2. Kerry/West Cork Sets

The traditional set dances of south-western Ireland are exciting, wild and free. The border between counties Cork and Kerry witnessed the rise of a unique style of Irish music and

dance. Here the polkas and slides still dominate the dance tune repertoire, and musicians trace their roots to music masters Padraig O'Keefe or Tom Billy Murphy, active a century ago. Though vigorous, the dances are very accessible and fun from the start.

3. Appalachian Square Dance

Appalachian Squares are a unique American tradition that adapted to meet the needs of the pioneer community. Based on a circle, any number of couples can join in. The figures can be easily followed without formal teaching, thereby letting the dancers focus on the fun and satisfaction of dancing together. This class will present the common elements of traditional squares of the region, and also explore several localized variations.

4. Advanced Dance Band

For musicians of intermediate to advanced standard. Come and enjoy a very different approach to 'band class'. Improvisation will be looked at, arrangements from Scotland will have been imported. Fun will be had! Laughter, merriment and just perhaps a little music may be made too. Aidan teaches at all levels of ability and age in the UK, and is looking forward to sharing his music and knowledge with you all, whilst hopefully learning something too.

5. Beginning Recorder: The Ideal Entry Level

This course fits two needs:

1. For newcomers who want a great start on the instrument.
2. For recorder players who want a musical makeover.

One of the things you'll notice in this class is how easy it is to learn. I use a method combining good body posture, basics to reading music and easy to understand techniques to get you up and playing with good results. The key to great playing on any level is to live with a concept, make it simple to understand and consistency in the execution so that playing well becomes automatic. This course is also open to players who want to touch up their techniques to obtain faster reading and greater ease in playing.

6. "The Heights and Depths of Storytelling"

Once you have mastered the basics of learning and retelling a story, what is the next step? How do you find your own individual artistic voice? How do you stretch yourself to develop your abilities with various aspects of storytelling repertoire? Through discussion, demonstration, exercises, and individual coaching, we'll explore these and other issues facing the storyteller looking to reach the next plateau in their development.

7. Calling Beyond the Basics

This intermediate workshop for contra callers and English leaders assumes basic calling skills and some experience. We will look at the big picture, and explore ways to build on what we already know. Every dance we call packs opportunities for data collection, and good analysis of the data makes for better calling. How to collect good data, and how analyze it well. Lots of thinking and lots of doing. Curious and supportive dancers welcome, too.

8. Basketry (\$10 material fee payable at class)

We will make a small egg basket (approximate size – 8x8x8). We will use many native materials including hickory bark, white oak, and honeysuckle to make this spoke constructed egg basket. Many techniques will be covered, including side lashing, crossed-turn backs, addition and subtraction of spokes, and tapestry methods of filling in a basket.

9. Intermediate/Advanced Rapper

For this class we will focus on non-traditional figures. In addition we will work on style points such as sword handling, footwork, and deconstructing the movements of figures. The class will be flexible to the attendees' skill level and desires.

Period V 3:15 – 4:15 p.m.

1. Dance Through Time

Era-a-day approach to understanding the origins and evolution of our dances. Each class session will present fun American and/or English dances from a different (and earlier) period.

We'll start in New Hampshire just prior to the contra diaspora of the 1970's, and work our way back to the late 18th Century, focusing on the devolution of steps, figures and styles.

2. Kentucky Set Running

Moves beyond Appalachian Big Set. We shall review Big Set figures and add other movements suitable for four-couple squares. We use a smooth gliding step instead of running. Experience with Big set figures is helpful, but not required. Age is not a factor.

3. Longsword Dancing

For centuries in the northern English villages of Yorkshire, villagers marked the winter solstice with longsword dances. Longsword dances use rigid wood or metal swords to connect six or eight dancers as they dance a series of interweaving figures that culminate in the formation of a star-like 'lock'. Sue expects to teach one of the sword dances from the villages of Ampleforth, Bellerby, Flamborough, Haxby or North Skelton. No experience is necessary but be prepared for stepping that may range from a smooth walk to a slow run to a step-hop, depending on the dance that is chosen.

4. Beginning Dance Band

Dance Band Bonanza! All instruments and abilities welcome! We'll play reels, jigs and waltzes and discover what makes dancers want to move. In between playing tunes, we'll develop creative and exciting arrangements. Most learning will be by ear, but sheet music will be provided.

5. Intermediate Mountain Dulcimer

Moving at a comfortable pace, the dulcimer will be approached from a number of angles during this exciting class: singing and playing chords, trying different tunings, using the traditional noter, strumming and fingerpicking, and any other topics that may "happen" as a result of group chemistry. Please bring a dulcimer in good playing condition.

6. Shape Note Singing

Experience why 200-year-old American songs are still sung and loved today, as we sing the haunting and powerful harmonies found in The Sacred Harp tunebook. With roots in Revolutionary War-era New England, shape note singing spread down the Appalachians during the 19th century and flourished in the rural South. Assigning shapes to notes has survived as a great way to teach sight-singing to singers of all musical abilities. All materials provided from the Sacred Harp.

7. Square Dance Calling

Calling squares well is one of the greatest pleasures in life. From choosing appropriate dances to getting all those words out without tripping over your own tongue, from communicating with the band to improvising breaks, we'll attempt to cover it all! By the end of the week, you'll be ready to call a dance or two.

8. Temari Craft (\$10 material fee payable at class)

Temari is an ancient Japanese handcraft of first thread-wrapping a ball and then embroidering colorful designs across the surface. You will learn to create the base, some basic stitching techniques and different patterns that can open up endless design possibilities.

9. I. Mummers Play

We will be learning and performing a mummers play using traditional sources as our base. I hope to involve all the elements; sword dancing, singing, fights to the death, resurrection and tom-foolery to create an entertaining show – all are welcome.

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