

STYLING

Often we hear callers and dancers discussing the definition of a call. How a call is done; where the call may be executed from; what the square will look like at the end of the call. CALLERLAB, through decades of committee work has done an incredible job of defining the calls we use and continues to refine those definitions.

How a call is done, while important is only one component of dancing. It is the dancers movement from one call to the next that is the fundamental of styling.

When dancers learn styling, they learn how to hold hands. For example, in a circle of dancers, it is man with his palms facing up toward the ceiling while lady with palms facing down toward the floor. Lady is resting her hand in the man's hand and thumbs are in a neutral position; not squeezing or grabbing. Styling teaches us that when dancers grab hands, at the very least there will be fellow dancers who cannot "shake loose" to do the next call so the square breaks down; more severely, dancers get injured.

When dancers learn styling, they learn to keep arms bent at the elbow as it keeps squares small while allowing the arms to act like shock absorbers when dancers transition from one call to the next. An elbow pointed down to the ground will avoid injuries like an accidental elbow to someone's face. Also when the elbow is down, it prevents a dancer from torquing another dancers' shoulder.

When dancers learn these techniques, they create dance formations like lines, waves, with ease. They move from formation to formation with confidence. When dancers learn styling AS THEY ARE LEARNING THE CALL, it is part of their definition. In this way, dancers see calls as more than a disconnected actions, rather they see the movement of the call and it's connection to other calls.

When dancers learn styling, it is not by accident. It is taught by an experienced, master caller/teacher or it is shown by a competent, graceful dancer. When styling is taught as part of learning a call, it is permanent. The new dancer will master the smoothness of the call and when they move smoothly from one call to another, they will stay in square dancing because they know they are graceful – they are good dancers.

As we get closer to re-starting square dancing, now it the time to re-think how we teach square dancing. If you'd like to learn more about the topic, please write to me at buddy@buddyweaver.com

If you haven't read my previous articles on SSD, please visit buddyweaver.com and click on the "articles" link. Find me on facebook on the following pages: Buddy Weaver, Blue Star Square Dance Music, New Hi Hat Square Dance Music, and Rawhide Square Dance Music.

Singing Calls

GOODBYE STRANGER

Arrowhead Recordings 1147 by Dean Singleton

Music Review December 2020 by Buddy Weaver

Tempo: 126 Rhythm: Shuffle

Good dance beat. Easy to follow tune with leads clearly played by keyboard, guitar, and piano. The same instruments play lots of fill notes. Kettle drum rushes add a nice touch. A seventies pop song (Supertramp) that is played in an exciting pop style. Additional tracks included are music with and without harmony. Dean does an excellent job of prompting the figures – a good example for callers to follow.

Heads Pass Thru – Promenade Home – Sides Square Thru – Right & Left Thru – Touch a Quarter – Split Circulate – Boy Fold – Girls Chain – Promenade

COME ON GET HAPPY

Fine Tune Recordings 211 by Denise Carbonell

Tempo: 130 Rhythm: Shuffle

Good dance beat. Keyboard is clearly playing the melody throughout. Guitar work in the background. The theme from the Partridge Family television series is made into a happy sounding pop singing call. Laid back with a key change on the close for energy. Additional tracks are music with and without melody/background vocals. Denise makes a great debut. Adjust speed.

Heads Square Thru – Do Sa Do – Swing Thru – Spin the Top – Right & Left Thru – Square Thru Three – Swing

MISSISSIPPI

Gold Wing Records 192 by Brian Freed

Tempo: 126 Rhythm: Boom-Chuck

Good dance beat. Well played music with clear leads from keyboard with lots of guitar, bass, and piano in the background. A lively pop rendition that has a key change on the close. This reviewer remembers first hearing this song on Wagon Wheel Records many years ago and how popular it was for callers willing to work at it. Additional tracks are music with and without leads/background vocals.

Heads Promenade Halfway – Sides Right & Left Thru – Square Thru – Eight Chain Four – Swing

PUFF THE MAGIC DRAGON

HappyTrax Music 105 by Brian Freed

Tempo: 130 Rhythm: Boom-Chuck

Danceable beat. Tune is unmistakable with strong leads played by keyboard throughout. A familiar sing along that is played in a lively pop style. Watch out for a key change going from middle break into third figure; a second key change on close. Vocal track cuts off vocal halfway through. A great figure which gets the dancers home without rushing. Originally released on Desert Gold Records. Adjust speed.

Heads Promenade Halfway – Pass the Ocean – Extend – Girls Trade – Swing Thru – Boy Run – Couples Circulate – Bend the Line – Slide Thru – Swing

GREAT BALLS OF FIRE

HappyTrax Music 106 by Rod Shuping

Tempo: 130 Rhythm: Boom-Chuck

Danceable beat. Strong leads from keyboard only bring the tune out-front. Breaks offer the addition of piano running the keys for a nice touch. A Jerry Lee Lewis classic that is played in an exciting pop style. Originally released on Desert Gold. Adjust speed.

Heads Promenade Halfway – Pass the Ocean – Extend – Swing Thru – Boy Run – Bend the Line – Right & Left Thru – Flutterwheel – Slide Thru – Swing

WONDERFUL LIFE

SharpShooter 1062

Tempo: 126 Rhythm: Shuffle

Good dance beat. The melody is lightly played by keyboard throughout so caller will have to know the song. Guitar work in the background. A pop song with pretty music playing in pop style. Middle of the energy chart. Additional tracks include music with and without lead/background vocals.

Heads Promenade Halfway – Sides Right & Left Thru – Heads Square Thru – Do Sa Do – Eight Chain Four – Swing

CHAINS

Sting Productions 21802 by Ralf Bender

Tempo: 128 Rhythm: Shuffle

Good dance beat. Clear leads played by harmonica, steel, and fiddle make the tune easy to follow. The same instruments play lots of fill notes. The Beatles tune gets played in a bluesy-country style. Great music.

Two figures

SOMEWHERE IN MY CAR

Sting Productions 21813 by Ingvar Pettersson

Tempo: 128 Rhythm: Shuffle

Soft introduction opens into a good dance beat. The melody is easy to follow with strong leads played by banjo, fiddle, acoustic and steel guitar. The same instruments plus piano provide lots of fills. Pretty country music playing on this Keith Urban country song. Middle of the energy scale with a key change on close for lift.

Heads Promenade Halfway – Slide Thru – Pass Thru – Right & Left Thru – Half Sashay – Touch a Quarter – Scoot Back – Single Hinge – Boys Trade – Spin the Top – Slide Thru – Swing

SUNSHINE, LOLLIPOPS AND RAINBOWS

Music Review December 2020 by Buddy Weaver

Sting Productions 21815 by Cherish Bristow

Tempo: 128 Rhythm: Boom-Chuck

Good dance beat. The tune out-front with strong leads played by piano, saxophone, fiddle, clarinet, and steel guitar. Plenty of fills from the same musicians. Really great music with lots of instruments. A classic sing-along (Lesly Gore) that is played in an exciting country style. Two key changes add even more energy.

Heads Promenade Halfway – Pass the Ocean – Extend – Single Hinge – Centers Trade – Swing Thru – Centers Run – Tag the Line – Face In – Touch a Quarter – Boy Run – Swing

HOEDOWNS

CHEROKEE SUN CHASER, Arrowhead Recordings 916

Tempo: 124 Rhythm: Shuffle

Good dance beat with an emphasis on bass. A contemporary sounding hoedown with music and fills from keyboard instruments throughout. A musical drop to feature percussion is a nice touch. The tune of “Sinner” by Klingande is clearly played. Good hoedown for anywhere in your program.

ONE NIGHT IN BANGKOK, SharpShooter 1064

Tempo: 126 Rhythm: Shuffle

Good dance beat. Great guitar work leads this contemporary sounding hoedown. Music from keyboard, bass, and guitar. Electronic “vocal” effects add a nice touch. The hoedown may be based on the title tune but music is chords with background instruments and effects. Another good hoedown.

AS Records (dealer)	asrecordshop.com
DoSaDo Music(dealer)	dosadomusic.com
Arrowhead Recordings	arrowheadrecording.com
Blue Star Music	buddyweavermusic.com
Fine Tune Music	finetunegoldwingmusic.com
Gold Wing Records	finetunegoldwingmusic.com
HappyTrax Music	finetunegoldwingmusic.com
SharpShooter	finetunegoldwingmusic.com
Sting Productions	stingproductions.co.uk