

MAKING THE BEST OF DOWNTIME

As discussed in last month's issue, we are experiencing a complete shutdown of all dance activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, the entire world is without dancing for seven weeks with no clear path or timeline when dancing may resume, but rest assured, square dancing will come back. Until it does, this article is offering suggestions for dancers, callers, and club leaders for making this downtime, productive.

Dancers, keep dancing. Right now, there are on-line resources that you can play from your computer or smart phone, enabling you to dance at home. For example, Bob and Dorothy Simpson along with Darby Love from British Columbia, Canada have done a great series of videos for dancing with one couple only. Their videos can be found through Facebook. Also on Facebook, are a number of virtual dances where you are dancing with a pretend square. Great for spacial thinkers.

The web site buddyweavermusic.podbean.com, in addition to a ton of recorded dances, now offers studio quality audio of one-couple dancing tips. Called by Buddy Weaver, these tips are designed for one or two people, without having to visualize an entire square. There are also fan-made videos to go along with the audio that can be found on YouTube.

As discussed in last month's issue, we are discovering that square dancing is much more than the calls and costumes, it is the social connections that we make at each dance. While we are at home without dancing, please be sure to keep your social contacts going through phone calls, texts, and emails. Another great resource is setting up Zoom meetings where a group of dance friends can visit online with video and audio. Especially remember those dance friends who don't have someone at home right now. Keep in touch, keep active.

Callers, keep practicing and learning. Whether you are a journeyman or master caller, you must allot time to practice calling with music. Experience has shown us that callers who don't call or practice calling, lose lung capacity and vocal tone. Their delivery and timing also suffer. Nothing replaces practicing your calling but it should be noted that practice does not make perfect; practice makes permanent. Work on getting your mouth to move around the many syllables, in time with the beat of the percussion, in proper pitch with the musical chords. If you are one of those who only call extemporaneously, then this is a great time to really learn how to call by practicing stringing calls together in a smooth, cohesive manner.

Learning proper calling techniques has been made easier during this shutdown by caller education presentations recorded via Zoom meetings. There is a growing number of online learning resources being put together by people like Jeremy Butler, Ted Lizotte, Dan Lyke, and others. Whether you are a journeyman caller or a master caller, learning new techniques or working on improving existing techniques is an absolute must. Again, experience has shown the caller who stops learning and improving, often falls from popularity with the dancers.

If you are thinking about getting into calling, now is a great time. While we don't know what the square dance landscape will look like when we return to dancing, we do know that some callers will not be coming back. We need new callers. If this idea speaks to you, then right now, you can reach out to work with master callers, themselves with downtime, to get you started. In fact, you

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may find yourself with a lot of downtime due to your workplace being closed during the COVID-19 pandemic, if so, now is really a good time to learn to be a square dance caller. While this shutdown is a real challenge to our activity, it can also be an opportunity for growth and growing new callers is a great start.

Dance leaders, now is the time to plan for a successful return to square dancing. Attributed to Ben Franklin, "if you fail to plan, you are planning to fail". Many leaders have multiple plans for our return to dancing; a primary plan and secondary plan when our first set of expectations are not met. For example, a club may plan to announce they are resuming dancing. What if only half of your membership returns? Can your club exist on half of it's usual attendance or less? Have you thought that through and made a contingency plan?

Frankly, if we re-open square dancing and everyone returns, then I would expect clubs and callers to go back to business as usual – the status quo. However, if we do see a loss of dancers, then we must re-grow our clubs or those clubs will die. Right now, there are clubs and callers planning for an entry level of square dancing in their area that can be taught in weeks rather than months. What this means is that a whole new bunch of folks craving our social contact, but unable to commit a year to enter, can now be full members, dancing at club dances in a matter of weeks. If an avid dancer wants more, there will be an allotment of thirty or so minutes after the dance for them. For example, you could see a ninety-minute dance of SSD (50 calls) followed by thirty or forty-minutes of Plus dancing. A plan like this is a road-map to steady, solid growth, which is something we haven't had in our activity for a long while.

In closing, let's stay active, stay connected, stay energized, and stay grounded. This is our challenge and we will grow from it. Please send your comments to buddy@buddyweaver.com. 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

I CAN HELP

Arrowhead Recordings 1141 by Scott Bennett

Tempo: 126 Rhythm: Shuffle

Good dance beat. The tune is out front with strong leads played by synth, guitar, and piano. In the background is more keyboard, piano, and guitar. A seventies pop song (Billy Swan) that is done in a contemporary pop style. Middle of the energy chart.

Heads Promenade Halfway – Square Thru – Right & Left Thru – Pass Thru – Trade By – Touch a Quarter – Scoot Back – Swing

DOWNTOWN

Chic Recordings 1067 by Jimmy Mac

Tempo: 126 Rhythm: Shuffle

Good dance beat. A familiar tune that is easy to follow with clear leads played by various keyboard instruments. Lots of piano, guitar and keyboard work in the background. A full sound – well done

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on this sixties pop song (Petula Clark). Callers could really lift the floor with this song. Tracks include music with and without melody/harmony.

Heads Promenade Halfway – Square Thru – Right & Left Thru – Veer Left – Ferris Wheel – Square Thru Three – Swing

DOWNTOWN

Chic Recordings 2067 by Shauna Kaaria
Tempo: 126 Rhythm: Shuffle

Musically very similar to Chic 1067 except in a key better suited for female voices. The leads are played by guitar and keyboard – more subdued on this version. Tracks include music with and without lead/background vocals.

Heads Promenade Halfway – Square Thru – Right & Left Thru – Veer Left – Ferris Wheel – Square Thru Three – Swing

EVERY DAY I HAVE TO CRY

Chinook Records 245 by Doug Davis
Tempo: 126 Rhythm: Shuffle

Danceable beat. Strong leads played by fiddle, acoustic and steel guitar push the tune out front. The same instruments provide the fills. Also known as “Every Day I Have To Cry Some”, a sixties pop song that is played in a relaxing country style. Track include music with and without background vocals.

Heads Square Thru – Do Sa Do – Swing Thru – Boy Run – Half Tag – Scoot Back – Boy Run – Slide Thru – Swing

I'LL BE THERE

Chinook Records 246 by Doug Davis
Tempo: 126 Rhythm: Shuffle

Good dance beat. The tune is out front with strong leads played by piano, fiddle, and steel. The same musicians provide lots of fill notes. Also known as “I'll Be There If You Ever Want Me”. A fifties country hit for Ray Price is played in a country style. Mid-way up the energy chart.

Heads Promenade Halfway – Pass the Ocean – Extend – Recycle – Sweep a Quarter – Boy Walk – Girl Dodge – Split Circulate – Scoot Back – Swing

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

Coyote Records 846 by Don Coy
Tempo: 124 Rhythm: Boom-Chuck

Good dance beat. A familiar tune clearly played by piano, fiddle, and guitar. Lots of fill notes from the same. A sixties pop song that is gets another version, this time with boom-chuck rhythm. A sing along for dancers and crooner for callers.

Heads Square Thru – Do Sa Do – Swing Thru – Boy Run – Couples Circulate – Ferris Wheel – Double Pass Thru – Leaders Trade – Swing

QUARANTINE CRAZY

ESP 1184 by Elmer Sheffield

Tempo: 124 Rhythm: Shuffle

Good dance beat. A mix of strong and clear leads played by piano, accordion, and guitar make the tune easy to follow. Lots of fill notes from the same musicians. The song, written about the current COVID-19 shutdown is a country song done by Terry Bradshaw of football fame. Music is done in an exciting country style.

Heads Pass the Ocean – Extend – Swing Thru – Boy Trade – Boy Run – Bend the Line – Pass the Ocean – Circulate – Slide Thru – Square Thru Three – Swing

HEY, GOOD LOOKIN'

Rawhide Music 1242 by Sam Tajima

Tempo: 132 Rhythm: Shuffle

Good dance beat. Two musical versions included, one with clear leads and another strong leads. The familiar tune is played by fiddle, acoustic and steel guitars. The same instruments play lots of fills. A Hank Williams classic played in country style will be an excellent sing along for the dancers. From Rawhide studio tape. Adjust speed.

Heads Promenade Halfway - Square Thru – Right & Left Thru – Veer Left – Ferris Wheel – Square Thru Three – Swing

LOVE BOMB

Rhythm International 929 by Nao Nittono, Masumi Nishinaka, Wade Driver

Tempo: 126 Rhythm: Shuffle

Good dance beat. Two musical versions are included, one in a male key and another in female key. Both versions have clear leads played by guitar, piano, and harpsichord. Lots of fills from keyboard. The tune is "Sex Bomb", a Tom Jones hit from the nineties. Music is done in an exciting pop style. Key change on close adds energy. Tracks include music with and without background vocals.

Heads Promenade Halfway - Square Thru – Right & Left Thru – Pass Thru – Trade By – Star Thru – Square Thru Three – Swing

THIS OLD HEART OF MINE

Royal Records 289 by Tony Oxendine

Tempo: 126 Rhythm: Shuffle

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Good dance beat. The tune is easy to follow with clear leads played by saxophone, keyboard, and guitar. Lots of fills from the same instruments. A sixties pop song (Isley Brothers) that is played in an exciting country/pop style.

Heads Pass Thru – Heads Promenade Halfway – Sides Square Thru – Right Hand Star Half – Veer Left – Ferris Wheel – All Veer Left – Extend – Half Tag – Swing

IN MY LIFE

Sting Productions 21705 by Jack Borgstron

Tempo: 130 Rhythm: Shuffle

Good dance beat. A familiar tune clearly played by harmonica, guitar, fiddle, dobro, steel, and piano. Lots of fills from the same instruments. The Beatles classic is played in a lively country style. Dancers will sing along. Harpsichord on ending adds a nice touch. Adjust speed.

Heads Square Thru – Touch a Quarter – Scoot Back – Boy Run – Right & Left Thru – Dixie Style – Boy Trade – Boy Run – Half Sashay – Promenade

MISSISSIPPI

Sting Productions 21710 by Tommy P. Larsen

Tempo: 129 Rhythm: Shuffle

Good dance beat. A different sound for Sting. A mix of strong and clear leads played by various keyboard instruments. Some nice fills from keyboard. A seventies pop song from a Dutch group, the Pussycats, that is played in a relaxing pop style. A relaxing singing call. Tracks include music with and without harmony/lead. Adjust speed.

Various figures

HOEDOWNS

NATIVE SPIRIT, Arrowhead Recordings 910

Tempo: 126 Rhythm: Shuffle

Good dance beat. A contemporary sounding hoedown with music from keyboard, piano, and guitar. A tune is lightly played. Musical drops add a nice touch. An exciting hoedown.

HEY GIRL, ESP 467

Tempo: 124 Rhythm: Shuffle

Good dance beat. Modern sound with music from keyboard, piano, and guitar. The tune clearly played is "Le Freak", a disco-era hit (Chic). Lots of musical drops for interest. An exciting hoedown.

I LIKE IT, Throw Back Tunes 917

Tempo: 128 Rhythm: Shuffle

Good dance beat. Modern sound with music from keyboard, piano, and guitar. The tune clearly played is "I Like It" by Enrique Iglesias. A lively hoedown with musical drops and add vocal fills. May need to adjust speed.

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BAD GUY, Throw Back Tunes 918

Tempo: 128 Rhythm: Shuffle

Good dance beat with added snapping. Modern sound from keyboard, piano, and guitar. The tune for Billie Eilish is clearly played. Musical drops for a great sound. Two great hoedowns from Throw Back Tunes. May need to adjust speed.

DREAMER HOEDOWN, Rawhide Music 1686

Tempo: 132 Rhythm: Boom-Chuck

Good dance beat. Music is done in country style. Tune lightly played is "I Am The Dreamer". Instruments played are banjo, piano, steel and acoustic guitars. A fast-moving piece of music with musical drops every stanza. Extracted from Bogan Records vinyl and now available for 99¢

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AS Records (dealer)	asrecordshop.com
Arrowhead Recordings	arrowheadrecording.com
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Chinook Records	callerdoug.com
Coyote Records	coyote-tnt.com
ESP Records	esprecordings.com
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