

Teachers' Pet Dances: Pat Coyle

[Set & Link has asked teachers to name, and explain, their favourite 3 - 5 dances. As the 2020-21 programme devisor, Pat Coyle was asked first. Dance titles are linked to Toronto videos; book references are linked to instructions and diagrams.]

I have been asked to name three (or five?) of my favourites dances, which is difficult as I have dozens, both RSCDS and those by all the many clever devisors. However, I shall settle for a few which immediately popped into my head and are, of course, well known.

First, there is [Fair Donald \(Book 29\)](#) because strathspey is my favourite tempo. Could we have an all strathspey programme? Probably not anyone else's idea of fun! This dance allows so much interaction with my partner as the music carries us smoothly through our 64 bars.

A jig would be [Hooper's Jig \(Miscellany 2\)](#) which lifts everyone into the air with enthusiasm as, like many jigs, it is a wake-up call.

Another exciting "old" dance is that perennial favourite [Maxwell's Rant \(Book 18\)](#) — a joy to phrase, with music which carries you through even at the end of a long programme.

Finally, between three and five, I love [The Hunting Horn \(SCD Archives\)](#), a jig devised by Peter McBryde of Kitchener/Waterloo, the music for which, although seemingly galloping along, allows the double triangles to slip gently and smoothly through into the reels and onward into a second turn.

As I read through the above I see that, as for all of us, the music is the dance — be the pattern simple or challenging.

I hope to meet you dancing some of my many other favourites. Late next year perhaps? Meantime, enjoy the music!

... Pat Coyle, Uxbridge



Writing a Winning Programme

[For several years RSCDS Toronto had a contest for members to submit a programme of dances for the April Volunteer Appreciation Dance, in accordance with guidelines from the Teachers' Panel. May Webster won the last contest with her programme.]

When I decided to try my hand at devising a programme, I did two things that gave the task direction: I picked brains (a resounding 'thank you!' to those whose brains I picked), and I referred to old programmes I still had.

I was advised that besides the usual numbers of jigs, reels, and strathspeys, I also needed to think of variety in terms of difficulty and document my choices. The documentation part was relatively easy, I had those old programmes and a version of MiniCrib on my computer. However, I had no instructions so I couldn't include dances I learned at the Demo Pool or social groups.

My main criterion in devising the programme was: What dances did I really enjoy dancing? I also thought of dances that hadn't been on programmes for a while.

By good fortune, while I was choosing dances, an article about figures appeared in *Set & Link* discussing what constitutes a difficult or basic figure, and what is in-between. I applied the knowledge I gained to classify the dances I wanted to include. I was told there could be only so many easy dances, and so many difficult ones, and most should fall into the intermediate group.

So I definitely had my terms of reference, and I did my best to adhere to them. I also kept in mind that variations in difficulty would work best if I did not group difficult or easy dances together. Few things are more frustrating than having to sit out several dances in a row because one is not comfortable doing them correctly! My aim was to keep sitting-out to a minimum.

I was certainly pleased to hear that my programme had been selected – though (perhaps to make sure I heard it right) I didn't say anything to anyone until the choice was made public.

I hope my programme will be danced sometime at a dance so I can enjoy the dancing as much as the devising. ... May Webster



[Editor's Post Script ~ May recently received an award from the Anglican Diocese of Toronto in recognition of her half century of service in choir, altar guild (doing, training, sewing), and organizing. Congratulations May.]

May's Volunteer Appreciation Dance Programme

1. The Wild Geese	J8x32	RSCDS Book 24
2. Seann Triubhas Willichan	S8x32	RSCDS Book 27
3. Crom Allt	R8x32	RSCDS Third Graded Book
4. Muirland Willie	J8x32	RSCDS Book 21
5. City of Belfast	S3x32	RSCDS Book 48
6. Shifftin' Bobbins	R8x32	30 Popular Dances, Vol 2
7. Cutty Sark	J8x32	RSCDS Book 40
8. 1314	Med (S64+R64) sq set	Drewry, Rondel Book
9. Catch the Wind	R8x32	RSCDS Book 45
10. The Gilly Flower	J8x32	RSCDS Book 36
11. Balquidder Strathspey	S8x32	RSCDS Book 24
12. The De'il Amang the Tailors	R8x32	RSCDS Book 14
Extra: Reel of the 51st Division	R8x32	RSCDS Book 13

The Zoomers

A 32-bar Strathspey for three couples in a four couple set

Devised by Ann Campbell on July 3, 2020, for Keith and Deirdre Bark to thank them for their Zoom classes.

(Notice the dancers never touch each other.)

Arlene Koteff recently taught the dance for one of the Erin Mills / Bloorlea Tuesday evening Zoom classes.

- 1-8: 1s+2s dance Double Figures of 8, 1s cross down as 2s dance up to begin.
- 9-12: 1s, dancing in to acknowledge one another, Cast 1 place (2s step up #11-12).
- 13-16: 2s+1s+3s dance Back to Back.
- 17-24: 1s+3s dance Double Figs of 8, 1s dance down as 3s dance up to begin. Finish: 2s facing at the top, and 1s facing 3s on the sides.
- 25-32: 2s+1s+3s dance a Grand Chain without giving hands. (2s cross to begin)

Repeat from new places.