

# COUNTRY DANCE AND SONG

June

25

1995



# Country Dance and Song

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Cover: *The Flower Dance of the Viennoise Children* is reprinted courtesy of the Harvard Theatre Collection. See "The Garland Dance in America Since 1846," p. 2ff.

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# The Garland Dance in America Since 1846

by Rhett Krause

The garland dance is found in many European countries and dates back to at least the early 15th century. Since the late 1970s there has been a surge of interest in this form of dance within the Anglo-American dance community. The garland dance is part of the repertoire of over 20 active American teams, and it is relatively common to find the garland dance at a "ritual" event such as a morris or sword ale.

I have recently discovered a number of examples of garland dance in this country that took place over a 150 year period which I believe will be of interest to current garland enthusiasts.

There are difficulties in defining what is a "garland dance". The grouping of dances under one label typically implies a commonality of historical lineage, form, or function, whereas the dances I mention are quite varied and the connections between them may be distant or unable to be determined from the limited data available. The use of the garlands, however, is such a striking and distinctive feature that I believe it is valid to use a broadly inclusive definition, basing it simply upon the dancer's use of a semi-rigid, decorated, inverted U-shaped garland. For the purposes of this article, I find this preferable to trying to define the dance on the basis of nationality, origin, style, purpose, or music. This article is descriptive of the wide variety of garland dance in America and is *not* intended to suggest a historical progression of these dances.<sup>1</sup>

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Rhett Krause is a physician, Morris dancer, and author of several previous articles in *CD&S*.

*Les Danseuses Viennoises and the Pas de Fleurs*

The earliest instance of garland dancing in America of which I am aware was in 1846 by the Danseuses Viennoises, also known as the Viennese Children (see cover photo). This was a group of approximately 48 Austrian girls aged 5 to 12, who were trained in ballet by Josephine Weiss, ballet mistress of the Josephstadt Theatre, Vienna. During 1845 and 1846 this company toured the European continent and England and was an international sensation.<sup>2</sup>

Their repertoire consisted of dances from 16 to 48 girls with the dance titles reflecting regional European dances (Pas de Hongrois, Tyrolortanz, Tarantella), popular dances forms (Polka-a-Mania), and folk dance (Pas de Moissonneurs or Dance of the Harvesters). Probably their most popular piece was the Pas de Fleurs, a garland dance for 42 dancers.<sup>3</sup>

The Viennese Children opened at the Park Theatre in New York City on December 5, 1846 and for 30 nights, one theater historian writes, "They took New York by storm. Forty eight dear little girls wonderfully drilled by Mme. Josephine Weiss, they danced their way straight into the affections of all. Their performances stand as the great novel feature of the season of 1846-7."<sup>4</sup>

Leaving New York, the Viennese Children opened in Boston and for the next seven weeks played to packed houses in "an engagement of unparalleled success in theatrical annals." The critic for the *Boston Daily Bee* was particularly impressed by the garland dance, writing:

*"Language is wanting to describe the beautiful spectacle that presented when the curtain arose and displayed this army of innocent children in the first attitude of the charming "Flower Dance", covered with wreaths and roses. A*



Wm. & Robt. J. Galt.

THE FLOWER DANCE,  
BY THE VIENNA CHILDREN.

*simultaneous shout arose from the audience, which seemed wholly carried away by the beauty and novelty of the scene!*

*And then such a series of multiform and fairy-like groupings, flowery pyramids, grottoes and arbours through which they winded with a grace that defies description."*<sup>5</sup>

For eighteen months the Viennese Children toured North America, including what was then the American West (along the Mississippi River), the deep South, Cuba, and Canada. Theater manager Noah Ludlow found that the Viennese Children packed his houses in St. Louis, New Orleans, and Mobile, even though he had specially raised his prices in St. Louis to \$1.00 for the best seats. Ludlow writes: "These charming little creatures....clad in flowers, forming graceful figures and fantastic groupings, were to me the realization of fairy dreams; nothing could be more captivating."<sup>6</sup>

The Pas de Fleurs appears to have been their signature piece. While they performed different parts of their repertoire each night, the playbills and advertisements I have seen show that the garland dance was their most frequent offering, and it is highlighted in some advertisements as the prime attraction of the evening.

The costumes and garlands of the Viennese Children are reproduced in two contemporary engravings. Unfortunately, I am not aware of any detailed description of the choreography. The few sources available only hint at intricate figures and garland work. The best of these is from Gautier, the chief ballet critic in Paris at the time of the 1845 debut of the Viennese Children at the Paris Opera. Gautier reported in *La Presse*,

*"All the things Frau Weiss' young pupils do with their garlands truly baffle the imagination. They make double, triple, interlaced arbours, clumps, trellises, arabesques, through which all these miniature Taglionis, Elsslers, and Carlottas, who, without flattering them, are fresher than the paper flowers they use in their evolutions, move around with the speed of humming birds. The concentration and skill required to know where they should be in such a variety of passes and figures is astonishing; we are sure it would be*

*difficult to present a similar pas by the Opera's corps de ballet."*<sup>7</sup>

The origin of the Pas de Fleurs is not specified. Probably much of it was the creation of the ballet instructor Weiss. It is tempting to speculate that the garland theme and some of the figures were borrowed by Weiss from folk dance, and certainly the garland dance has a strong history in her native Austria. The Viennese Children frequently performed dances meant to be typical of a specific region of Europe, for example, their "Pot Purri", a suite of ten national dances. It is unclear whether the Pas de Fleurs was intended to represent a specific area, such as Austria, or was simply a generic dance form.

The music for the Pas de Fleurs is well preserved, as it was published during the Viennese Children's American tour. It consists of four waltzes by the Austrian composer Max Maretzek (1821-1897). Maretzek would soon give up composing and move to New York to start a career as a theater manager. This move was apparently less than successful, as even his obituary states "Mr. Maretzek's biographical sketch is a compilation of operatic failures."<sup>8</sup>

As with many successful acts, the garland dance of the Viennese Children spawned imitations. At the Boston Museum, a "Favorite Wreath Dance" appeared in 1846, and, from 1849 to 1851, a "Pas de Fleurs" was intermittently presented. These were performed as entr'acte entertainments by the Phillips family mentioned in my earlier article, as among the first American professional clog dancers. Certainly the Phillips children would have been familiar with the Austrians' Pas de Fleurs when it was the talk of Boston. Adelaide Phillips, despite her job at a rival theater, had appeared on stage with the Viennese Children at a benefit performance for that group. In New York City, the house dancers at the Broadway Theater put on their own version of the Pas de Fleurs in June 1849.

While there is no surviving description or illustration of these Boston and New York dances, I think it is very likely that they were garland dances inspired by the Viennese Children. I base this on the dance's name "Pas de Fleurs", their appearance shortly after an international hit of the same name, and the fact that (in Boston, at least) no dance by that name can be found in the theaters before 1846. The production at the Boston Museum must have

been substantially different than the spectacular 42-dancer display of the Viennese Children, since the ads suggest that it involved as few as two dancers.<sup>9</sup>

In July 1860, a garland dance advertised as a "Venetian Pas de Fleurs" was performed by 18 dancers at the Melodeon, a Broadway variety hall whose gimmick at this time was having a cast consisting exclusively of 42 young women. In this particular instance, the inspiration for the garland dance is made clear in the playbill of July 26: "Beautiful Tableaux, dance, etc., originally performed by the world-renowned Viennoise Children entitled Pas de Fleurs!"<sup>10</sup>

### *Dancing Schools: 1890s*

Roy Dommett writes that in England: "In the 1840s garland dances were part of the stock in trade of the dance display choreographer." This same comment could be applied to American professional dance instructors of the 1890s.<sup>11</sup>

I have seen multiple references to dances with names such as "Flower Hoop Polonaise", "Flower Hoop Dance", "Floral March", and "The Flora Girls March" as part of the repertoire of children's dancing schools of this time. All of these were for young girls. The descriptions I have found are very brief and even the best do little but confirm that the dance would be recognized by us as a garland dance. As an example, a description of the season-ending display at the Diamond School of Dancing (location unknown) on April 30, 1897 reads: "Very picturesque and dainty was the flower hoop polonaise given by little maids from eight to twelve years, who were dressed in light costumes and who carried big hoops wound with the brightest flowers. Their dance was among the prettiest."<sup>12</sup>

At least one garland dance instructional was published during this time. This was by Horatio N. Grant (1855-1904), a prominent Buffalo dancing instructor and founder-editor of *Two Step Magazine*, a trade journal for dance instructors. Among his 60 published dance routines is the *Flower Hoop Polonaise (For Twelve Girls)* which was published sometime before 1897. However, I have been unable to find a copy of this item.

## *Physical Education in American Schools, Early 1900s*

At the turn of the century, various forms of dance were being introduced into the physical education programs at American schools and universities. "Rhythmic movement" was felt to be especially beneficial to girls for whom the traditional gymnasium training, developed for boys, was felt to be inappropriate.

I have found two complete garland dance instructions from this time. Both were original compositions by Americans for use in physical education classes. Neither publication identifies the garland dance with any particular nationality.

The first of these is the "Peasant Floral Arch Dance" (Appendix A) from a 1907 book by Jeannette E. Carpenter Lincoln, Director of the Woman's Gymnasium at the University of Illinois. Annual may pole dancing had been a tradition at the University since 1898, and by 1906 several other dances, including this garland dance, had been added to the festivities. This dance for 32 women carrying garlands with pink or white tissue-paper flowers consists of eight figures designed to be danced around the may pole. Instructions for making the garlands are included, but music is not specified. Each dancer carries her own garland except in one figure where the garlands are used to link the dancers into a ring.<sup>13</sup>

The second garland dance is from *Gymnastic and Folk Dancing, Vol. III* (1916) by Mary Wood Hinman, a prolific writer on the use of dance in physical education who was then at the University of Chicago High School (Appendix B). Her instructions provide piano music in 2/4 time. The basic dance formation is a circle, with the garlands employed in a number of ways: held by individual dancers, used to link dancers in a ring, shared by two dancers to form an arch, and used by two dancers in an unusual "tandem" position, with both garlands passed over the shoulder of the leading dancer of the pair.<sup>14</sup>

I have come across a number of photos of a 1907 May celebration by a group of young women I have determined to be the students of the National Park Seminary (Silver Springs, Maryland), performing on the grounds of their school. These photos (see pps. 9, 10) show the crowning of the May Queen, a may pole dance, and a garland dance. There are no surviving school records

mentioning this performance. We do know that the director of Physical Culture (which included dancing) was Frances A. Mooers who had studied dancing at the Gilbert School of Dancing in Boston and had taught at Milwaukee High School. This May celebration was apparently an annual event as programs from "May Day Revels" of 1914 and 1915 feature the May Queen, may pole dancing, and morris dancing, but do not mention a garland dance.<sup>15</sup>

As no record of the source of the 1907 garland dance is given, it could have come from a printed instructional or have been the creation of Mooers. One of the photos (showing half of the women dancing around their kneeling partners, p. 10) matches Figure V from the University of Illinois dance. The other photo, however, does not match the figures of either of the dances published in the Appendix of this article.

### *Ethnic Communities and International Folk Dancing*

The garland dance has a long history in central Europe and survives to this day, particularly in Austria and Germany. Some form of these garland dances can still be found in American ethnic communities from these regions, with the earliest example being the Schefflertanz (Cooper's Dance), usually associated with Munich, which was performed in New York City in 1874 by the Bayerischer Volksfestverein (Bavarian Folk Festival Association).<sup>16</sup>

On at least one occasion, an Austrian folk dance group toured the United States with a garland dance as part of its repertoire. In 1956, *Dance Magazine* published a brief article including complete instructions for the Austrians' dance and instructions for making the garlands:





*For a change from may pole dances for a spring festival, one might want to try a Garland Dance. These, too, are found in almost every country in some form or other and can be quite colorful and spectacular as well as fun to do.*

*When the Austrian Folk Dance Group from the Kitzbuhl toured the United States two years ago, they gave a dance workshop at Folk Dance House and left behind a simple Garland Dance called Hochzeits Tanz. Usually performed at weddings, it is nevertheless an exciting Spring Folk Festival dance.*

*Required are garlands of flowers on a stiff but slightly flexible half-hoop frame. These can easily be made by the group using wire hangers straightened out, built up with crushed newspapers, then covered with green crepe paper into which artificial flowers are tucked here and there.<sup>17</sup>*

In addition to the Hochzeits Tanz and garland dances from *Roy Dommert's Morris Notes*, one other detailed description of a European garland dance has been published in America. This is by Mary Effie Shaumbaugh who collected the "Dance of the Hoop-Makers" from the ethnic German community in Slovakia and published it in her 1929 book *Folk Dance for Boys and Girls*.<sup>18</sup>

I am aware of a tradition of garland dancing in Mexico, but have not found any reference to garland performances in the United States by the Mexican immigrant community.

### *George Balanchine and the New York City Ballet*

One of George Balanchine's last works was a garland dance to Tchaikovsky's Waltz from Act I of *Sleeping Beauty*. This was created as part of "Tempo di Valse", which also featured ballet dances in waltz time by two other choreographers.

Balanchine's garland dance was first performed at the New York City Ballet's Tchaikovsky Festival in June 1981 and was well received, with one

critic describing it as "a masterly orchestration of movement first by the many couples of the company's corps, and later by an additional group of little girls from the School of American Ballet, who astonished and charmed one with the fluidity and grace of their execution of the waltz steps." A photo in *Dancing Times* shows a large number of adult male and female dancers and young girls carrying flowered garlands. Videotape of the Ballet rehearsing this dance is preserved in the New York Public Library Performing Arts Division at Lincoln Center, but special written permission is required to view it. This garland dance was revived by the New York City Ballet in May 1993 at the tenth anniversary of Balanchine's death.<sup>19</sup>

### *Garland Dancing in the Anglo-American Dance Community*<sup>20</sup>

Summer dance camps run or inspired by the EFDSS (and later CDSS) began the year after Cecil Sharp's 1914 arrival in this country. I have not found any record of garland dance taught at these dance camps until the late 1970s, and this is confirmed by the memories of veteran dancers whose personal experiences at Pinewoods and other camps date back over 40 years.

One of Sharp's chief instructors did teach garland dancing over a long period in her capacity as instructor at Concord Academy, a private school in Massachusetts. Lily Roberts Conant (1887-1973) first came to America in 1915, and for many years was President of CDSS. Her son, the late Rick Conant, a long time dancer with the Pinewoods Morris Men, believed that his mother taught at Concord Academy from the 1920s to the 1950s.

Florence Warren Brown (1887-1944), the chief instructor of the Esperance Guild of Morris Dancers, who came to this country in 1910 and settled here as described in previous *CD&S* articles. Her daughters have kindly given me copies of photos from their family album showing Esperance morris events in England. In one of these, flowered garlands are seen arching over the heads of the morris dancing girls in the foreground. This indicates that Brown would have been aware of garland dancing and garland was at least occasionally performed alongside the morris at that time. However, there is no indication that she actually taught garland dancing in America, and there is no mention of it in her handwritten dance notes.<sup>21</sup>

Since the 1970s there has been increasing interest in the garland dance within the Anglo-American dance community. The first team to perform garland during this time was the Muddy River (Boston) women, beginning in 1976, including a performance at the first Marlboro Morris Ale. They were taught by team member Margie Hunt who had recently been living in England where she belonged to a team that regularly performed garland dances. Another team member, Susie Conant, donated the garland frames her grandmother had used to teach at Concord Academy a generation before. The next team to perform garland dances was the women's side of Marlboro Morris and Sword (Vermont). They were initially inspired by a 1978 workshop by Roy Dommett and subsequently taught by Tony Barrand, who would later introduce garland dancing to many Americans at dance camp workshops. Both Muddy River and the Marlboro Women were predominantly Cotswold morris teams, and their experience with garland dancing lasted only a few years.

The first team to be primarily devoted to garland dancing was Court Square (Charlottesville, VA), formed in 1978, whose initial sources of material were workshops by Tony Barrand and Roy Dommett. American and Canadian teams formed since then include Rural Felicity (Brasstown, NC), Ashgrove Garland (Asheville, NC), Arkansas Traveller Garland (Little Rock, AR), Island Thyme (Victoria, BC), Wild Rose Garland (Great Barrington, MA), Hart's Brook Garland (Hadley, MA), Briar Patch (Atlanta, GA), Old Castle Morris and Garland (girl's team) (Baldwin, KS), Berea College Dancers (Berea, KY), Shepherd Moon (Athens, GA), May Apple (Berea KY, recently defunct), Yellow Rose Garland Dancers (San Antonio, TX), and also teams from Ashland, OR, and Cave Spring, GA. In addition, garland forms part of the repertoire of the Northwest morris teams Mystic Garland (Mystic, CT), Rose Galliard (Bolton, MA), Guiding Star Morris (Greenfield, MA), North by Northwest Morris (Seattle, WA), Shepherdstown Northwest Morris (Shepherdstown, WV), and Goatshead Morris (London, ON), and is also performed by the sword team Shandygaff Longsword (Pennington, NJ), the Cotswold morris team Fiddler's Reach (Brunswick, ME), the elementary school dancers of Guilford, VT, and the elementary schoolgirls team of Hillside Morris (Hastings-on-Hudson, NY). On two occasions a Garland Dance Ale has been held, hosted both times by Rural Felicity.

I have spoken to members of several teams concerning the origin of their dance material. Much was initially obtained at dance camps and team workshops led by veteran American instructors such as Tony Barrand, Cathy Henson, Katie Kellett, Marney Morrison, Kari Smith, and Laura Sprung. A few teams have been fortunate to have been taught directly by Roy Dommett on his occasional visits to this country, and folk dance camp classes have been taught by the English instructors Elaine Ford (of the Ladies of the Green Willow garland team; taught at Berea) and Eileen Phelan (taught at Brasstown). A few American dancers saw garland dancing performed by the Scottish women's Northwest morris team Jenny Geddes during that team's two American tours in the 1980s. Frequently mentioned dance materials include *Roy Dommett's Morris Notes* and videotapes of English teams, some of which are available from CDSS. Once the teams have become established, they commonly borrow dance ideas from other teams.

The majority of garland dances performed by these American and Canadian teams are either of English origin or are newly created by the teams (either completely de novo or adapted from social dancing, such as English or Scottish country dancing, or American square dances). A smaller number of Basque, Flemish, and French dances are performed. If we ignore the new inventions, this distribution of English dances with a smattering of Basque, Flemish, and French dances (and nothing from the very strong Austrian and German traditions) is essentially the same distribution found in *Roy Dommett's Morris Notes*. This reflects the *Morris Notes'* dual role in documenting the types of garland dances performed in England (from where we have borrowed many of our dances) and serving as the primary printed source of many of our imported garland dances.

Despite the fact that there are multiple examples of men's teams dancing garland in England, in America and Canada the garland dance is almost exclusively performed by women. Exceptions are the mixed teams Guiding Star Morris, Shandygaff Longsword, and the Guilford, VT elementary school dancers. Undoubtedly, much of this is due to many men's tendency to shirk from dances with perceived feminine qualities such as those involving garlands of flowers, but there is a similar—albeit less pronounced—female predominance in Northwest Morris and (wooden shoe) clog dancing. The explanation for this is more elusive.

My initial instinct was to be impressed that the garland dance is thriving despite a sexual bias that nearly eliminates one half of available dancers. I now believe that the growing numbers of American garland dancers is actually in some part *because* of this bias. A number of dancers have told me that they perceive their garland dancing as distinctly feminine in nature, are proud of this, and manifest it in their costume and style of dance. Some have turned to garland dancing for this reason, and see it as a welcome alternative to other available forms of traditional dance, such as morris or sword, which they perceive as gender-neutral or masculine. It must be stressed that the American garland dance community is far from homogeneous, and a large number of dancers consider characterizing garland as "feminine" to be anathema. Instead, their vigorous conception of garland is seen as appropriate for either sex, and the paucity of male dancers is seen as more due to false male preconceptions rather than anything inherent in the dance form. It will be curious to see how these different views of garland dancing evolve over the next decades.

### *Miscellaneous*

I have come across a few brief mentions of garland dancing for which only the most sketchy of details are known. I print them here for the sake of completeness, and in the hope that a reader may be better able to describe their significance.

Ira W. Ford published the music for "Garland Waltz" in his book *Traditional Music of America* (1940) as a traditional fiddle tune. No details are given and the original source is unknown. It does not match any of the four waltzes of the Viennese Children.<sup>22</sup>

I have seen occasional illustrations of 18th and 19th century European ballerinas dancing with what Roy Dommett has described as a "slack garland", that is, one without a semi-rigid frame, like a decorated rope. It is not clear how, if at all, this is related to the garland dance as I have defined it. An American version of this type of dance debuted in December 1939 when the dancer Iva Kitchell performed a solo dance with a slack garland at Carnegie Hall to the music of Schubert as part of a piece entitled "Something Classic". The *New York Times* advertised Kitchell's entertainment as "an

intimate recital of dance pantomime and parodies", and it seems likely that Kitchell's dance was meant to parody the much earlier ballet dances. I have not been able to find any reviews of this performance and Carnegie Hall's archives have no pertinent records. Kitchell probably performed this on multiple occasions, as a photo of her dance appears 10 years later on the cover of *Dance Magazine*.<sup>23</sup>

Finally, there is the music "Garland Dance" by the American composer B. Eugene Koskey (b. 1930), written in 1954 as part of his work "Mystical Tecpan".

### *Garland Construction*

Garlands typically consist of three components: a semi-rigid frame to maintain the basic shape, wrapping (optional), and decorations. A surprising variety of materials has been used by garland dancers in this country.

The University of Illinois dancers (1907) recommended a frame of twisted wire with wooden handles, and *Dance Magazine* (1956) suggests using the wire from straightened coat hangers. I have spoken with members of several teams about their experience with different types of frames over the past 15 years. Examples of organic material used for frame material include tree boughs (used briefly only by Muddy River), woven cane, woven basketry reed, steamed wood, grapevine, wisteria vine, and woven willow branches. Cut hula hoops have been used, and Karin Gottier, a Connecticut teacher of German, Austrian, and Swiss dances, suggests fitting each end with a wooden dowel to serve as a handle. Roy Dommett credits Tony Barrand with first suggesting the use of flexible plastic water pipe, which Roy describes as "just about the right diameter and flexibility". This pipe is also inexpensive and relatively indestructible, making it ideal for team practices and folk dance camps.<sup>24</sup>

The use of some type of wrapping around the frame serves three purposes: it conceals unsightly wire or plastic, it builds up the diameter of the garland, and it provides a surface on which to sew or otherwise attach the decorations. Obviously, when the type of frame material is decorative itself, such as grapevine or woven cane, there is no need for any wrapping. *Dance Magazine* recommended crushed newspaper covered with crepe paper. A more

durable material is a cloth "sock" placed over the tubing, or a combination of quilt batting wrapped around the frame and a sock pulled over this (e.g. Court Square and Old Castle Garland). The most decorative (and labor intensive) example is the fresh greenery (pine, hemlock, boxwood, etc.) tied on to the pipe frame with ribbons, as done by Ashgrove Garland.

Decorations for the garlands almost invariably include flowers. The Viennese Children and the University of Illinois dancers used paper flowers, while plastic, silk, or cloth flowers are used by most current teams. I was surprised to find that a few teams such as Rural Felicity, May Apple, and Island Thyme use fresh flowers, despite the labor involved and the perishability of the final product. For the Island Thyme women, this allows the type of decoration to change with the season, and in winter native holly and ivy take the place of flowers. Ribbons are also commonly used as decorations. More unusual decorations include a Christmas performance by the Arkansas Traveller team with the garlands decorated with Christmas balls and tinsel, and an evening performance organized by Karin Gottier in which each garland was decorated with multiple "Christmas lights", powered by batteries in each garland.

Teams performing dances requiring sliding of garlands on each other or clashing of garlands may forsake flowers for decorations with a lower profile such as ribbons (e.g. Hart's Brook Garland) so that the garlands do not stick together and the decorations are not torn off.

### *Conclusion*

When the current popularity of garland dance in the Anglo-American dance community began in the 1970s, the general assumption was that we were seeing a dance new to this country. In reality, this was simply the latest manifestation of a dance form that has been intermittently performed in this country over a century and a half, in such diverse areas as classical ballet, stage dancing, dancing schools, physical education, ethnic communities, and international folk dancers. These groups of performers are far enough removed from each other temporally and culturally that it is not surprising that one group may be unaware of the others' existence. The garland dance in America is thriving and the number of teams is growing, albeit with a

curious American tendency to consider it a woman's dance which is in marked contrast to English and Continental traditions.

## Appendix A

### *Peasants' Floral Arch Dance*

(University of Illinois)

choreographed by Elizabeth E. Atkinson<sup>25</sup>

*Properties.* Double twisted steel wire arches, with wooden handles, covered with pink and white tissue-paper chrysanthemums. Wreaths of flowers. Girls with white arches in wreaths of white spirea. Girls with pink arches and wreaths of pink honeysuckle.

*Directions for making Flowers.* Material: Tissue paper (1c. per sheet) and spool wire for stems. Fold the tissue paper lengthwise of the sheet in three equal parts, then fold over once in a square. Take the two opposite corners of the square and fold over together, then fold twice more. Round off the outer edge. To cut petals take scissors and cut down center of paper from outer edge to within one inch of center. Cut once on each side of that, making three slashes in all, then cut down the sides where the paper is folded. To curl flowers open up the paper, take one leaf at a time, place it on the knee and roll with a small, round-headed hatpin, beginning at the outer edge of each petal, and roll in, pressing rather hard. Take four of the curled leaves to make a flower. Place one on top of the other, and run a piece of the wire through center to fasten together and form a stem.

### *Peasants' Floral Arch Dance*

The Peasants' Floral Arch Dance by 32 young women dressed in white, wreaths of flowers in their hair, each carrying an arch; 16 white arches and 16 pink, the colors alternating.

The girls form in order at one side of the grounds and march in and form a circle around the May-pole, being numbered in four sections, 1, 2, 3,

4, 5, 6, 7, 8, Nos. 1 standing opposite each other. After forming the circle, partners (pink and white arch) face.

Figure I. Serpentine Movement: This movement is simply the Grand Right and Left done without joining hands; once around.

Figure II. Right face and cross step in circle around the pole. On reaching places Nos. 1 turn in toward the pole, forming a star, making eight girls on each side of pole. Left face and march forward around the pole in a star, Nos. 1 acting as pivots, finishing in original position.

Figure III. All left face out and Nos. 8, (on the ends), lead off to the left, each eight girls forming a circle at one of the four corners of the pole. Each circle faces out, join hands, connecting arches and circle once around to left. Hold 8 counts and circle to right. Left face; march once around and re-form star, Nos. 1 leading.

Figure IV. Nos. 1 lead off to left and march in large circle around pole to place.

Figure V. Face partners. Odd numbers sink on one knee and partners two-step around them. Repeat for even numbers. Repeat all.

Figure VI. All face out. Odd numbers step forward one step, face left. Even numbers hold one handle of arch in right hand and swing the other handle to girl standing next, forming a circle of arches. Odd numbers step through arch on left of partner, winding in and out around circle to place. Inside circle swing arches back to place, outside girls step back to place, forming large circle.

Figure VII. Partners face and repeat serpentine movement. (Figure 1).

Figure VIII. All face same direction and follow leader from the grounds in a serpentine march (with fancy steps if desired).

## Appendix B

### *Garland Dance*

from: *Gymnastic and Folk Dancing, Volume III*<sup>26</sup>  
Choreographed by Doris Humphrey

## FORMATION:

Two parallel lines of 8 girls each. The dance may be executed by using a line of boys and a line of girls or by using all girls.

## FIGURE 1:

Boys' line enter at left with running step. Boy No.1 runs forward around the stage into a circle followed by Nos.2-3-4-5-6-7-8. No.1 runs 4 steps (meas.1) before No.2 enters, and each successive boy begins four steps later than the one in front of him (meas.1-8). Carry garland before you—shoulder high—suspended between both hands.

## FIGURE 2:

Girls' line enters at right, in same manner as boys line, using meas.9-16. They form a circle outside the boys, and because their circle is larger girl No.1 has not reached boy No.1 at the close of meas.16. Girl No.1 continues 8 steps further and meets her partner. No.2 continues 16 steps and meets her partner. They continue thus until all meet their partner. Meanwhile boys stand on spot, and step first to right and point left foot in front, then step to left and point right foot in front, in time with the music (meas.16-32). (Be sure that each line as it enters swings to the front of the stage.)

## FIGURE 3:

Dancers face one another and run toward their right hand 7 steps (half the number are now in a small inside circle and half in a large outside circle). All the dancers now run to their own left 7 small steps, passing partner and moving up to next place. (The circles have changed places.) Continue this by using meas.33-48. The step ends with the boys forming inside circle. Carry garlands as in Step 1.

## FIGURE 4:

Boys run out toward right hand 8 steps and join hands with girls standing back to back. Both turn to right on spot with 8 little running steps. Keep garlands still suspended between hands. Drop hands, face partner, and

again turn one another with hands joined (meas. 1-8). First couple make a tandem by placing garlands over shoulders and driving the person in front of you. Second couple form an arch with garlands.

#### FIGURE 5:

Children standing in tandem position run around circle under arches until they return to their own place (meas.9-16). Tandems and arches change and the new tandems run around circle to original place (meas.17-24).

#### FIGURE 6:

Boys join hands (or use garlands suspended between the dancers) in a big circle back to back. Girls join hands (or use garlands suspended between the dancers) in a circle outside, facing the boys. Boys circle toward right 16 steps (meas. 25-32).

#### FIGURE 7:

First boy pass under the arch formed by girls No.1 and 2 and draw the line of boys after him. Cross and re-cross the stage toward the exit, each girl join the line as the end passes her until all are in one long line. Exit in this manner. Use Coda (meas. 49-56).

### Notes

1. Certainly there is precedent for grouping dances together based on the use of a distinctive implement. Scholars since Cecil Sharp have linked the different rapper and long sword traditions as "The Sword Dances of Northern England", and the widely varied linked sword dances of Europe have been considered as a group even though connections between these dances (other than the use of swords) are at best incompletely understood. Within garland dancing, Roy Dommett describes dances from England, France, Spain and Belgium in his influential *Notes* for no other apparent reason than garlands are used and the dance has at one point been performed in Roy's country. Roy's criteria is essentially the same as that used in this article.

2. Weiss' title is listed as "Mistress de Ballet de Theatres Imperieriaux de Vienne" on a Park Theatre (NYC) program of December 5, 1846.

The London critic Henry F. Chorley (1808-72) panned the Viennese Children, calling them "pitiful and awkward...worthless and unattractive" (Henry F. Chorley, *Thirty Years Musical Recollections*. New York: Da Capo, 1984. pp. 265-6). However, this harsh criticism is unique among the otherwise very favorable opinions I have seen.

3. Other dances in their repertoire include: Pas de Miroirs, Hornpipe, Schevizer, Polonaise, Linzertanz, Cracovienne, Polka de Payson, Pas Styriene, L'Allemande, Pas Oriental, and Gallope des Drapeaux.

4. George C. D. O'Dell, *Annals of the New York Stage*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1933), 5: 256.

5. *Boston Daily Bee*, March 1, 1847 and January 14, 1847.

6. The necessary rise in prices is mentioned in the *St. Louis Daily Union*, November 5, 1847.

The quotation is from Noah Ludlow, *Dramatic Life As I Found It*, (Benjamin Blom: Bronx NY, 1966), p. 668.

I have been able to partially recreate the North American tour of the Viennese Children from contemporary newspapers and secondary sources:

12/5/46-1/9/47 New York City.

1/11/47-2/27/47 Boston.

3/1/47-3/20/47 New York City. Then left for Philadelphia.

6/21/47-7/5/47 Boston.

8/2/47-8/6/47 Albany.

8/16/47-9/47 Montreal, then Quebec, then Montreal again.

9/27/47 Opened in Buffalo for nine performances.

10/11/47-10/16/47 New York City. Then sailed for Havana.

11/5/47-11/16/47 St. Louis.

12/26/47-1/21/48 New Orleans. Arrived there from Cincinnati; left there for Mobile.

5/22/48-6/5/48 New York City.

7/48 Montreal.

7. *La Presse*, January 10, 1845, translated in Ivor Guest, *The Romantic Ballet in Paris*, (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1966), p. 240.

8. "Pas des Fleurs des Danseuses Viennoises, consisting of four waltzes as danced by the Viennese Children at the Park Theatre and played by Kammerer's Band", (Vanderbeek, New York, 1847).

"The Flower Dance of the Viennoise Children", (Atwill, New York).

"Repertoire den Danseuses Viennoise in 24 Sets, No.1: Le Pas de Fleurs. Danced by the celebrated Danseuses Viennoise at Her Majesty's Theatre".

Obituary of Max Maretzek, *Musical Courier*, vol. 34, no. 20, p. 16.

9. Rhett Krause, "Step Dancing on the Boston Stage: 1841-1869", *Country Dance and Song*, vol. 22, June 1992, pp. 1-19.

O'Dell, *Annals*, V: 428.

The benefit performance is mentioned in the *Boston Daily Bee*, February 27, 1847.

10. The Melodeon was at 539 Broadway and is also frequently referred to as the "Chineese Rooms". The garland dance was advertised in the *New York Clipper* on July 28, 1860. The dancers included Kitty Blanchard, Millie Flora, Emily Lemaire, Florence Rivers, Mary Welch, Fanny Weaver, Sallie Comly, Kate Marshall, Clara Berger, and Susan Summerfield.

11. Anthony Barrand, ed., *Roy Dommett's Morris Notes*, (CDSS, 1986), 3: 3.

12. The quotation is from: *The Two Step*, June 1897, p. 141.

Other examples of garland dancing include:

"The Flora Girls March", taught by Prof. F. H. Norman at his dancing academy, Montreal, in June 1897. (*The Two Step*, March 1897, p. 44).

"Flower Hoop Polonaise", taught by Prof. T.W. Bush in Knoxville, Tennessee, April 1897. (*The Two Step*, May 1897, p. 94).

"Flower Hoop Polonaise", taught by Prof. Malcolm, in 1897, location not specified. (*The Two Step*, May 1897, p. 94).

"Flower Hoop Dance", taught by Mrs. G.R. Wallace, Great Falls, Montana, June 1897. (*The Two Step*, July 1897, p. 179).

"Flower Polonaise", taught in children's dancing schools in Cleveland, Ohio. (*The Two Step*, January 1898, p. 6).

"Floral March", performed at the Children's Flower Ball given by the dancing class of Prof. R. L. Northcutt of Rome (presumably Rome, New York). "Each child ... carried either a wreath or arch". (*The Two Step*, February 1899, p. 51).

"Pas de Fleurs", performed at the Annual June Festival of H. Layton Walker's Dancing Class, Buffalo, New York, June 1919. (*The Two Step*, June 1919, back cover).

"Floral Ballet", performed at the Carnival of Prof. Henry Doring's dancing school, Troy, New York. "...sixteen girls in pretty costumes, each bearing a floral twined hoop." (*The Two Step*, May 1900, p. 104).

"Hoop Polonaise", performed at the Annual Reception of George Prutting's dance class, Hartford, CT. (*The Two Step*, May 1900, p. 101).

13. Jeannette E. Carpenter Lincoln, *May-Pole Possibilities*, (Boston: American Gymnastic Co., 1907).

14. Mary Wood Hinman, *Gymnastic and Folk Dancing. Volume III*, (New York: A.S. Barnes and Co., 1916), pp. 62-4.

15. The photos are in the Library of Congress (Lot 10, 023) and are labeled simply "May Day. Forest Glen, Maryland. 1907". Forest Glen is within the town of Silver Springs. The distinctive architecture in the background of some of the photos could only be the campus of the former National Park Seminary, and the dancers seem to match the age of the students (high school and college age). The National Park Seminary ran from 1894 until 1942, when the wartime government purchased the Seminary and converted it into the annex for Walter Reed Hospital. The history of the Seminary is told in: Mildred Getty, "National Park Seminary", *The Montgomery County Story*,

(published by the Montgomery County Historical Society), vol. XIII, no. 2, February 1970.

I am grateful to Mrs. Jane Sween of the MCHS for sending me catalogues and programs from the Seminary.

16. *Gauzeitung* (newsletter of Gauverband Nordamerika, Inc.), vol. 5, no. 6, May 1991.

17. Mary Ann Herman, "Garland Dance For Spring Festival", *Dance Magazine*, May 1956, pp. 34, 69.

18. Mary Effie Shambaugh, "Debnarskey Dance of Hoop-Makers: German Dance From Banska Bystricia, Slovakia", *Folk Dance for Boys and Girls*, (A. S. Barnes and Co., 1929), pp. 103-107.

19. The quotation is from B. H. Haggin, "In Homage to Tchaikovsky", *Dance and Dancers*, September 1981.

Jack Anderson, "New York Newsletter", *Dancing Times*, August 1981, pp. 756-8.

*New York Times*, May 4, 1993, C15.

Balanchine's garland dance was even larger than that of the Viennese Children, with a total of 57 dancers (25 women, 16 men, and 16 girls).

20. The following dancers contributed information to this section of the article. Their assistance is very much appreciated: Margaret Dale Barrand, Tony Barrand, Rick Conant, Rosie Donovan, Sylvia Forbes, Lisa Greenleaf, Cathy Henson, Beth Hodson, Katie Kellett, Neil Kelley, Paul Kerlee, Julia Kindred, Ginger Pyron, Jean Shaver, Pamela Slowkowski, Kari Smith, Laura Sprung, Juliana Stevens, Sarah Strong, Yvonne Thompson, Cynthia Whear, Barbara Witschonke.

21. Rhett Krause, "Morris Dancing and America Prior to 1913", Parts I and II, *Country Dance and Song*, vols. 21-22, 1991-2.

22. Ira W. Ford, *Traditional Music of America*, (New York, E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1940), p. 135.
23. *The New York Times*, December 17, 1939, IX: 10.  
*Dance Magazine*, November 1949, (cover).
24. Barrand, ed., *Roy Dommett's Morris Notes*, 3: 3.
25. Lincoln, *Maypole*, pp. 14-15, 50-52.
26. Hinman, *Gymnastic*, III: 62-64.

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**F A R E W E L L**  
**B E N E F I T**

And Positively the **Last Appearance** of

**L E S**

**DANSEUSES**  
**VIENNOISES**

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**Saturday Evening, March 20th, 1847.**

The Performances will comence with, by request, the Fascinating

**Pas des Fleurs**

**By 42 Danseuses Viennoises.**

As danced by them for many nights, to Crowded Houses, with enthusiastic applause  
at the Queen's Theatre, Italian Opera House, London.

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De chorea gladiatoria, vel armifera  
saltatione.

CAP. XXI I I.



**H**ABENT præterea Septentrionales Gothi, & Sueci, pro exercenda iuuentute alium ludum, quod inter nudos enses, & infestos gladios, seu frameas, sese exercent saltu: idque quodam gymnastico ritu, & disciplina, ætate successiva à peritis, & præfultore sub cantu addiscunt: & ostendunt hunc ludum, præcipuè tempore carnispruii; Mascharanum Italico verbo dicto. Ante etenim tempus eiusdem carnispruii, octo diebus continua saltatione sese adolentes numerosè exercent, eleuatis scilicet gladiis, sed vagina reclusis, ad triplicem gyrum. Deinde euaginati, itidemque eleuatis ensibus, postmodum manuatum extensis, modestius gyrandò alterutrius cuspidem capulumque receptantes, sese mutato ordine in modum figure hexagoni fingendi subiiciunt: quam rosam dicunt: & illico eam gladios retrahendo, eleuandoque resoluunt, ut super uniuscuiusque caput quadrata rosa resulet: et tandem vehemensissima gladiatorum laterali collissione, celerimè retrograda saltatione determinant ludum: quem tibiis, vel cantilenis, aut utrisque simul, primum per grauiorem, demum vehementiorem saltum, et vltimò impetuosisimum moderantur. Sed hæc speculatio sine oculari inspectione vix apprehenditur, quam pulchra, honestaque sit, dum vnus parcissimo præcepto, etiam armata multitudo quadam alacritate dirigitur ad certamen: eoque ludo clericis sese exercere, & immiscere licet, quia totus deducitur honestissima ratione. Quod autem armati chorisent, Strabo de Curetibus Aetoliam habitantibus lib. X. affirmat, quod ab eis armifera saltatio (licet Persis contemptui habita) sit primum introducta. Sequè econtrà in ipsa pugna inuicti habiti, & admirationi, dum fortiores cæteris viderentur, qui versatam in armis vitam haberent.

# SWEDISH SWORD DANCES OF THE SIXTEENTH-SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES: OLAUS MAGNUS AND OTHERS

by Stephen D. Corrsin

The idea that linked sword dancing was a particularly Scandinavian exercise or that it was brought to Britain by Scandinavians (presumably during the Danish conquest of much of northeastern England in the early Middle Ages) has been repeated many times. With respect to the notion of Scandinavian origins for British dances, there is no reasonable evidence to support it. First, the timing is wrong; the Danes controlled parts of the northeast in the 10th-11th centuries: the first evidence of sword dances from the region dates from the 18th century. Second, no records of sword dances from Denmark, or anywhere else in Scandinavia, appear until the 16th century. Third, the geography does not match: the counties of England where sword dance styles became well known (chiefly Northumberland, Durham, and Yorkshire) were by no means completely under Danish control, or settled by Danish populations. As for the tiny island of Papa Stour, in the Shetland Islands, it was ruled by the Scottish crown from about 1470, and the first evidence of sword dancing appears at least 300 years later.<sup>1</sup>

That said, it is also the case that Scandinavia has left very interesting information on sword dancing in the 16th-17th centuries. Sweden provides the first published description of a linked sword dance from anywhere in Europe in Olaus Magnus' *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* (History of the

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Northern Peoples), which was published in Rome in 1555. The book gained widespread renown as the most comprehensive study of Scandinavia and particularly of Sweden, which was gaining increasing importance in European affairs in these centuries. The history was reprinted a number of times, including translations into German in the late 16th century, and into Dutch and English in the mid-17th. In this article, I will quote and discuss this report, including material on the life of Olaus Magnus; then I will turn to other Swedish descriptions from approximately the same period.

Olaus Magnus was born to a bourgeois Swedish family, in the town of Linköping in 1490, and he died in Rome in 1557. His name is closely tied to that of his older brother, Johannes (1488-1544). Both men were prominent scholars, diplomats, and Roman Catholic churchmen of their day. Each served as archbishop of Uppsala, and thus the highest-ranking Catholic churchmen in Sweden; Olaus succeeded to this post on his brother's death. Yet neither set foot in Sweden after 1523 because of the turmoil engendered by the Protestant Reformation, which took hold in Sweden in the early 1520s. Since the Magnus brothers remained true to Roman Catholicism, they were personae non gratae in the aggressively Protestant Swedish kingdom of the day.

Olaus Magnus is probably describing sword dancing he saw in his boyhood or youth, or during his extensive travels about Sweden, about 1520. He does not refer to performing the dance himself. This would place the dance in, perhaps, 1500-1520. His *Historia* is noteworthy for its focus on popular customs, and also the martial qualities of the Swedish population, which presumably explains his focus on this dance and other military exercises which he describes in other chapters.

Olaus Magnus' description is in chapter 23, "De chorea gladiatoria" (On the sword dance), from book 15, describing games and sports, of his *Historia*. He begins by noting that it is practiced among the "northern Goths, and Swedes."

For eight successive days before Shrovetide, young men disport themselves in a rhythmic dancing measure, moving with swords held aloft but sheathed in a thrice-repeated round. Next they unsheath their swords, lift them once more, and extend them from hand to hand: circling more sedately, the

swords grasped hilt and point between them, they change their order and bring themselves into position for forming a hexagonal figure which they call the Rose: this they undo forthwith by drawing back their swords and raising them, so that a square rose is formed over each man's head: finally they end their display by a reverse movement, dancing very rapidly and clashing the flat of their swords together with the greatest vigor. The time of the performance is marked by pipe or singing or both together: the dance is at first staid, then grows faster and faster till it ends at a furious pace. Those who have not seen this with their own eyes can hardly imagine what a beautiful and delightful sight it is when a numerous and armed company at the short commands of one man quickly and with agility get into formation for this act. The clergy are allowed to join in as it is performed in a courteous and respectful manner.<sup>2</sup>

The description clearly describes linking elements, with the dancers holding hilts and points. Other figures in the dance include a procession to begin; a hexagon, called the Rose; a "square rose" placed over each dancer's head; and an end by moving backwards, clashing swords.

The references to the rose are intriguing; at one point this seems to be a hexagonal figure, at another a square of swords held over the dancers' heads. Perhaps the latter is a structure made by interweaving the swords, but there is no way to be certain. The term appears elsewhere, most notably in the Nuremberg descriptions of the sixteenth century, where a platform of swords used to support two dancers is referred to, but that does not seem to be the case here.

Olaus Magnus' work quickly became widely known, and remained an important source on Scandinavian history and geography for centuries. His name also began to appear in the sword dance literature on the Continent and in Britain. John Brand's 1777 publication, *Observations on the Popular Antiquities of Great Britain*, is the first reference in the English sword dance literature to Olaus Magnus. Thenceforth he is referred to repeatedly, perhaps because so many later English writers draw their accounts directly from

Brand's citation in his chapter on Christmas and winter customs. His reference to "the North" probably means Tyneside, and specifically southern Northumberland, since he was born and raised, and served as a minister, in the region around Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

In the North there is another Custom used *at or about this Time*, which if I mistake not, was antiently observed in the Beginning of Lent: *The Fool Plough* goes about, a Pageant that consists of a Number of *Sword Dancers*, dragging a Plough, with Music, and one, sometimes two, in a very antic Dress; the *Bessy*, in the grotesque Habit of an *old Woman*, and the *Fool*, almost covered with Skins, a hairy Cap on, and the Tail of some Animal hanging from his Back: The Office of one of these *Characters* is, to go about rattling a Box amongst the Spectators of the Dance, in which he collects their little Donations.

This Pageant or Dance as used at present, seems a Composition made up of the Gleanings of several obsolete Customs followed antiently, here and elsewhere, on this and the like festive Occasions.

I find a very curious and minute Description of the *Sword Dance* in Olaus Magnus' History of the northern Nations.--He tells us, that the northern Goths and Swedes, have a Sport wherein they exercise their Youth, consisting of a Dance with Swords in the following Manner: First with their Swords *sheathed* and erect in their Hands, they dance in a triple Round. Then with their *drawn* Swords held erect as before: Afterwards extending them from Hand to Hand, they lay hold of each other's Hilt and Point, while they are wheeling more moderately round, and changing their Order, throw themselves into the Figure of a *Hexagon*, which they call a *Rose*.--But presently raising and drawing back their Swords, they undo that Figure, to form (with them) a four-square *Rose*, that may rebound over the Head of each. At last they dance rapidly backwards, and vehemently rattling the

Sides of their Swords together, conclude the Sport. Pipes, or Songs (sometimes both) direct the Measure, which at first is slow, but increasing after-wards, becomes a very quick one, towards the Conclusion.

He calls this a Kind of *Gymnastic Rite*, in which the Ignorant were successively instructed by those who were skilled in it: And thus it must have been preserved and handed down to us.--I have been a frequent Spectator of this Dance, which is now performed with few or no Alterations; only they *lay their Swords*, when *formed into a Figure*, upon the *Ground* and *dance round* them.<sup>3</sup>

In the early 20th century, more Swedish material came to light when musicologist Tobias Norlind published descriptions of several 17th century manuscripts with information on sword dances.<sup>4</sup> Norlind ties the manuscripts to Olaus Magnus' account, and to material from central Europe from the same period. He writes that they consist of:

- 1) Manuscript in the Royal Library in Stockholm, written in the beginning of the 1600s, on some added pages in a copy of the school song book *Piae Cantiones* from 1582. The pages, which later were taken out and bound separately, are cataloged under the title: "Sword dance from [King] John III's time" [that is, 1569-92].
- 2) Manuscript in the Kalmar library, music from the 1640s, included among school songs of parochial sorts. The pages which have the sword dance are torn from top to bottom so that on one side only the beginning of each line remains, and on the other side only the end of each line. It is most similar to the following manuscript.
- 3) Manuscript from the 1670s in the Stockholm Royal Library, "Erik Isaeus' notebook from Narva"; inscribed together with *Piae Cantiones* songs, which bear the title: "Annotatio cantilenarum in lusu robusti certaminis usitatarum 1671: 17 septembris."

Norlind notes that the texts are difficult to read and use a mixture of Swedish, Latin, and German. He reasons that, "The wide use of the German language indicates that this sword dance must have arisen in Germany and from there was brought to Sweden, perhaps during the time of the Thirty Years' War [1618-48]. The Latin language shows that the dance is not of popular, but of learned origin. Finally, the compilation of the dance with *Piae Cantiones* and the church songs shows that schoolboys mostly danced them."

The 16th century was the peak period for sword dancing in central Europe, especially in the German cities of the Holy Roman Empire. To refer back to Olaus Magnus, he studied in several German university cities in his youth, and lived for about ten years in Danzig, a city with a strong tradition of sword dancing. Swedish ties to these cities were strong, and it would be entirely in keeping for customs and sports to be brought to Sweden from Germany. During the Thirty Years' War of the 17th century, Swedish armies fought and conquered across central Europe, devastating large parts of Germany and other lands.

Norlind finds similarities between these manuscripts and Olaus Magnus' earlier account. The performances in the manuscripts have two halves, the first the actual dance, the second a comic and noisy courtroom scene. There are music and songs throughout.

The first part...includes the calm march, where the swords are drawn out and some turns back and forth are executed, thereafter a general dancing around with sword points clashing against each other ends the part. In the second part..."the rose" is formed, where they "take each other by the arms and dance around," and "turn back and forth while dancing about." In the third part...which becomes increasingly lively, a certain actor, "Rex" [the king], appears singing a solo during the dance. The others now behave more martially, "threatening each other with the swords," "thrusting the sword points to the floor," "hitting each other's chests." The fourth part...with the exception of the final words, lacks music. [It] consists of a courtroom scene in which a person who is very drunk is condemned to be put through a spray of water. The accused

begs for mercy, but the "soldiers" shout, "Kill him at once!" The final song tells about the sanctity of the law and has a characteristic drum refrain...reflecting the song's rowdy nature.

No clear reference to linking appears in the dance, unless the comments about "turns" or "the rose" indicate it. The swords are used primarily for "clashing" and "threatening," which may indicate that this was a mock combat, a pyrrhic sword dance, a type which was also common in Europe.

Another point of resemblance which Norlind notes is that these texts, like Olaus Magnus', suggest an upper class setting, with connections to the church. In none of the Swedish material is there any suggestion that this is a dance of the lower classes, of artisans, apprentices, or peasants, or that it has any element which might be perceived as threatening by religious or secular authorities. While Olaus Magnus refers to Shrovetide, these manuscripts make no reference to any special occasions for dancing. The first manuscript mentions that the dance was performed in the late 16th century, while the other two date from the 17th. The last refers to the city of Narva, now in Estonia, which was then under Swedish rule.

There is no other material on sword dancing from Sweden. The only other Scandinavian reference yet known is from Denmark, in 1554. From this evidence, and comparisons with the history of sword dancing in roughly the same period in central and western Europe, it appears most probable that Scandinavian styles developed in the 16th-17th centuries under the influence of central European ones, as Norlind suggests. Unfortunately for the historiography of sword dancing, Olaus Magnus' description was published early and became widely known. It thus encouraged the view that sword dancing was originally a Scandinavian exercise or at least that Scandinavia was a leading sword dance region. This idea became especially popular in Britain, where it seemed to fit with the fact of Scandinavian influence in the early Middle Ages in regions that became, in modern times, the main centers for sword dancing; that is, England's northeastern counties and the Shetland Islands. Actually, even without regard to the fact that the evidence indicates that sword dancing came to Scandinavia relatively late, as has been noted, both timing and geography are wrong for Scandinavian influence on British styles.

I would like to close by referring to the sword dance of Papa Stour. The dance which comes from this tiny island has been well known since Sir Walter Scott and Samuel Hibbert-Ware published their descriptions of it in 1821-22. They surmised, and many later writers have repeated, that this dance must have had a Scandinavian origin, presumably before 1470, when the island came to Scotland as part of a royal marriage settlement. No evidence has been found which supports this idea, and indeed the origins of this dance—hundreds of miles from any other center of sword dancing, on a tiny, isolated, and lightly populated island—remain completely obscure. One intriguing point concerns the Reverend George Low, a minister on Mainland Shetland (the largest island of the group), who studied the geography, natural history, and customs of the islands in the 1770s. Low corresponded with the great English naturalist, Sir Joseph Banks, on whose Revesby, Lincolnshire, estate a sword dance and play had taken place in 1779. The two men met in 1772, when Banks was on a tour studying the natural history of the Orkneys. Low knew of Olaus Magnus, and in 1773 stated that he planned to read the bishop's book.<sup>5</sup> Is it possible that Low had something to do with a connection between the bishop's dance, and the Papa Stour dance written down by Scott and Hibbert-Ware 40 years later? Unfortunately, this remains one of the unknown points in the history of sword dancing in Europe and Britain. Perhaps some enterprising scholar in Scotland will track down Low's papers and look into this.

### Notes

1. The "Scandinavian origins" explanation for English sword dances comes particularly from Joseph Needham, who printed a classified index to all known references since 1800 to sword, morris, and other "ceremonial" dances in Britain and used this material to chart their geographical ranges. Finding long sword and rapper in the northeast, parts of which were dominated by Danes and Norse in the early Middle Ages, Needham concluded that sword dancing must have been a Scandinavian import. Theresa Buckland notes that Needham thus uses "mainly 19th century evidence to support what can be termed a pre-Norman conquest invasion theory." See Joseph Needham, "The Geographical Distribution of English Ceremonial Dance Traditions," *Journal*

of the *English Folk Dance and Song Society* 3, no. 1 (Dec. 1936):1-45, and Theresa Buckland, "English Folk Dance Scholarship: A Review," *Traditional Dance* 1 (1982):12. I discuss the evidence on sword dancing in Scandinavia in chapter 3 of my forthcoming book, *Sword Dancing in Britain and Europe: A History*.

2. Olaus Magnus, *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* (Copenhagen, 1972; reprint of 1555 ed.), p. 517. I have used the translation given in Cecil Sharp, *The Sword Dances of Northern England* (London, 1911-13), pt. 1, pp. 18-19, plus the last two sentences from Violet Alford, *Sword Dance and Drama* (London, 1962), p. 115. The first English edition of Olaus Magnus was *A Compendious History of the Goths, Swedes, and Vandals, and Other Northern Nations* (London, 1658). For a biography, see John Granlund, "Introduction," to the 1972 edition of the *Historia*, pp. 5-37.

3. John Brand, *Observations on the Popular Antiquities of Great Britain, Including the Whole of Mr. Bourne's Antiquitates Vulgares, with Addenda to Every Chapter of that Work, as also, an Appendix, Containing Some Articles on the Subject, as Have Been Omitted by that Author* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1777), pp. 175-79. Brand's work is a thorough rewriting of Henry Bourne's 1725 compilation, *Antiquitates Vulgares, or, The Antiquities of the Common People*.

4. Tobias Norlind, "Svärdsdans och bågäns," *Festskrift til H.F. Feilberg: Fra nordiska sprogen folkemindeforskere: På 80 års dagen den 6. August 1911* (Stockholm, 1914), pp. 738-56. I thank Julia Ferneborg for this translation from Swedish. A brief study of these manuscripts is Madeleine Inglehearn, "Swedish Sword Dances in the 16th and 17th Centuries," *Early Music* 14 (1986):367-72.

5. George Low, *A Tour through the Islands of Orkney & Schetland, Containing Hints Relative to Their Ancient, Modern, & Natural History, Collected in 1774* (Kirwall, 1879), p. xl. The best compilation of material on the Papa Stour dance is Ivor Allsop, "The Sword Dance of Papa Stour,

Shetland," *Folk Music Journal* 3, no. 4 (1978):324-42. See also chapter 12 in my forthcoming *Sword Dancing in Britain and Europe*.

Georgina Boyes. *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1993 (distributed in the US and Canada by St. Martin's Press); xiv, 285pp. ISBN 0719029147. \$79.95.

There is a curious political and ideological innocence about the "folk revival" in the 20th century, in Britain as well as in North America. This becomes even curiouiser when we look at the "received history" of the movement, and of the organizations that have been involved. Despite a limited amount of criticism, the idea still seems to prevail that a few well-educated, middle and upper class English men and women rescued and preserved priceless jewels of English folk dance and music from degeneration and disappearance; that they were able to collect and teach these jewels with unique accuracy; and that they did so selflessly, without motives of personal advancement or support for particular political and social ideologies. Of course, this is an exaggerated picture, but little has been done to revise it in serious and scholarly fashion.

In her groundbreaking study, Georgina Boyes presents a major revision of this "received history." She shows the ideological motivations of the revival, in particular that "from its inception to the present day, the Folk Revival has been used to serve a range of ideological purposes" (p. xiv). She covers from the turn of the century, when the Folk-Song Society was founded, to the post-World War II years when English Folk Dance and Song Society lost its monopolist position in English folk music and dance.

Boyes begins with a review of the intellectual background, with the efforts of "antiquarians" and 19th century folklorists, both scholars and dilettantes. She demonstrates that, around the turn of the century, the desire for a "revival" of cultural activities that could be seen as purely English developed in the context of perceived threats to the British Empire, even indeed to "Englishness," both from within (the rise of the industrial working class, and the urbanization of Britain), and without (especially Germany). One

of the central figures was, of course, Cecil Sharp, whose influential legacy included his collections and writings, as well as the English Folk Dance Society (later the EFDSS), and its North American offshoot, the Country dance and Song Society (CDSS).

Sharp and other "revivalists" found intellectual support in the theory of "survivals in culture," developed by E. B. Tylor, one of the founders of scholarly anthropology: the idea that "primitive" cultural forms "survived" into the civilized era in the form of traditional songs, games, narratives and customs" (p. 8). Tylor's approach (with its rigid evolutionary implications) has long been discarded by scholars, but not by the revival itself. Boyes convincingly challenges this "survivalist" approach to folklore.

Sharp and his colleagues and competitors were deeply involved and active participants in their own societies. Their attitudes, ideologies, and prejudices, Boyes shows, had critical impact on how they perceived popular culture, on what they decided to write down, and on how they presented and taught the material they had gathered. This means, at least, that their work has to be studied in its context. One way in which the ideologies of Sharp and others most clearly affected their work, for example, was the early revival's refusal to regard "northwest morris," urban and often danced by girls, as representative of a truly English style, which should be rural and purely male, such as Cotswolds morris was alleged to be.

Boyes argues that the revivalists reshaped the songs, music, and dances, and sometimes distorted them badly, for ideological or political goals. Class exploitation was a significant element as well; upper and middle class "collectors" published the music and dances, and then kept the copyright and any profits. Sharp, Percy Grainger, Ralph Vaughan Williams, and others enhanced their professional standings and reputations, and their incomes, through the creations of the "folk." But little is recalled of the actual individuals from whom they collected, often with only a nominal payment, or none at all, nor of these individuals' views about this.

Another of Boyes' key themes is this: "The role of women is almost entirely unrepresented [in the received history]--as individuals and as a constituent part of the Revival, women are at best marginalised, at worst trivialised or ignored" (p. xii). One could point to the disputes over morris and sword dancing by women; or to the case of Mary Neal, whom Sharp

pushed out of the organized revival with a breathtaking intransigence and single-mindedness rarely seen outside of university faculty meetings.

Boyes also finds an important theme for the 1920s-30s in the involvement by some members of the revival in right-wing movements which proliferated in Britain and on the continent. There were many groups which now seem merely bizarre curiosities, such as the Kibbo Kift Kindred and the English Mistery. But in fact, they were part of a dangerous international tendency, often extremely racist and anti-semitic, which helped to bring about the Second World War. Boyes focuses on Rolf Gardiner, a founder of the Travelling Morrice and the Morris Ring, who was active in several movements, and was an admirer of international fascism and in the 1930s an apologist for Nazi Germany. Later a respected ecological activist, Gardiner combined his admiration for fascism with extreme hostility towards the involvement of women in many aspects of the revival; he used the term "werris" to denigrate morris dancing by women.

"'When this war ends,' wrote Douglas Kennedy [squire of the Morris Ring and Director of the EFDSS] in 1944, 'the E.F.D.S. [sic] will have the chance to stage its second revival'" (p. 196). Kennedy was right in the sense that interest in a wide spectrum of folk music increased; but Boyes shows that much of it, whether leftist, or American influenced, was outside the control of the Society, which lost the monopoly it had so long maintained. She also discusses Kennedy's struggles to maintain "gender balance" at EFDSS dances—no doubt there is a lesson for today in this! To sum up: anyone who is interested in the context of the "folk revival," in the ideologies, politics, and personalities that underlie not only the EFDSS and other English efforts, but many North American activities as well, should read this book.

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