

Variations on a Theme

A 48 bar strathspey for three couples in a longwise set. The theme here is the Bourrel.

Bars Description

- 1-8 1st couple set advancing towards each other, half turn with both hands and twirl away to face the opposite side. 1st couple cast off one place as 2nd couple step up. They then cross over to their own side giving left hands.
- 9-16 All dance a three couple Bourrel ending with a new partner:
- 1-4: 2nd man and 1st woman also 1st man and 3rd woman set advancing towards each other, half turn with both hands and twirl away to face up and down. Meanwhile 2nd woman and 3rd man dance anticlockwise half way round to the other end of the centre line.
 - 5-8: All set to new partner and turn three quarters with both hands to the sidelines with 3rd, 2nd and 1st men now opposite 1st, 3rd and 2nd women.
- 17-24 3rd woman with 3rd man and 1st woman also 2nd man with 1st man and 2nd woman dance right hands across. 3rd woman and 2nd man pass right shoulder to dance left hands across at the other end. All finish on the sidelines.
- 25-32 All dance an "Outer Tandem Bourrel" as follows:
- 1-4: 3rd man and 2nd woman (in 1st corner places) set advancing towards each other, half turn with both hands and twirl away to face up and down. Meanwhile 1st and 3rd woman in tandem also 1st and 2nd men in tandem dance anticlockwise half way round to finish beside each other on the centre line at the other end.
 - 5-6: 1st and 2nd men take nearer hands facing down and set to 2nd woman as 1st and 3rd women take nearer hands facing up and set to 3rd man.
 - 7-8: 1st man with 2nd couple and 1st woman with 3rd couple circle three hands round three quarters to the left. 1st couple drop right hands to reform as one big circle with all now opposite original partner in the order 2,1,3.
- 33-40 All circle six hands round to the left and back.
- 41-48 All dance an "Inner Hand-in-Hand Bourrel" as follows:
- 1-4: 2nd and 1st men also 1st and 3rd women retain nearer hands and set advancing towards each other. On the second setting step 2nd man and 3rd women come towards each other to end in facing lines across the set. They then circle four hands round half way, drop hands and twirl pulling right shoulder back. Meanwhile 2nd woman and 3rd man dance anticlockwise half way round to the other end of the centre line.
 - 5-6: 1st and 3rd woman, now facing up, also 2nd and 1st men, facing down, take nearer hands again and set to 3rd man and 2nd woman respectively.
 - 7-8: 1st woman with 3rd couple also 2nd couple with 1st man circle three hands round three quarters to the left ending on the sides in the order 3,1,2.

Music

- Tune: The Farewell (William Marshall).
- Recording: Crathes Castle (Deirdre Adamson: Tarry a While).

Other variations of the dance

- The original theme, the two couple Bourrel, is notable by its absence here. Those who feel that variations should be preceded by the theme can replace bars 1-8 (a kind of Bourrel for one couple) with a two couple Bourrel though that would make the dance even busier and give no rest to 2nd couple.
- Alternatively those wanting a slightly less busy variation could replace bars 17-24 with a solo for the central pair in 2nd place. For example figures of eight across the dance, starting right shoulder to 2nd corner position (2nd man up, 3rd woman down).

Other variations of the Bourrel

- Another possible variation of the "Outer Tandem Bourrel" would be to replace the circle in bars 7-8 of the figure by a three quarter turn with both hands for the central dancer and the right hand free member of the tandem pair while the left hand free dancers just cross to their own sides passing left shoulder. All would then end opposite the same partner, just inverting the order from 1,2,3 to 3,2,1. That would break the progression in this dance but may be more suitable for use in other dances.

Diagrams

