

## CALLERS ASSOCIATION PRESENTATION

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By Paul Adams

**Today my topic is, Music, Beat, Tempo, Calling & Dancing and little on Singing Call choice.**

**After the last meeting I thought something like this could help the new guys and maybe of interest to some of the other Callers**

**I will try to keep this short and if you have questions on anything then you could phone me or email me & I'll answer you individually.**

**How many of you have never had a formal Music lesson?**

**How many of you ever played a musical instrument?**

**What / who is a Musician?** A Singer uses the voice to create the music , an instrumentalist uses their hands and or feet with or without an instrument to accomplish the same effect.

**When someone states that they would like to call. What do we as established Callers do?**

We give them some music, maybe a Singing Call or Patter and maybe some choreography and tell them to give it a try. The new Caller goes home loads up the music and blasts away. When he gets a Singing Call all memorized we hand him a mic and let him try. Then we tell him all the things he did wrong.

- Did anyone ask **why** they wanted to try Calling?
- Did anyone explain some of the requirements involved with becoming a Caller?
- Did anyone tell him that he would be expected to start a Class or Cub?
- Did anyone explain or tell him anything about our **Music**?
- Did anyone explain how to **Say the Calls**, or what the **Rhythm** is, the **speed** of the music, what is the **beat**, or rhythm?
- Did anyone tell him to start practicing very slowly and gradually build up speed?

I think likely not, but if someone did all the above, then this will be a review. I think I was taught Beat before I could walk or talk.

**Our Square Dance music** comes from many different Genera. Such as, Blues, Rock, Popular, Rock & Roll, Country, Bluegrass, Jazz, Swing, Western Swing, Boogie, Celtic and Broadway, The Movies, all in 4/4 time. In Traditional or Old-Time Square Dancing 6/8 rhythm was used a good deal of the time.

**The Music:** Basically there is 2 types of music, Classical & Jazz, in Classical the value of each **note, phrase,** and **the expression,** of the composition of music is strictly adhered to and the **Conductor** keeps every instrument in time and with the proper expression, because in Classical music sometimes the **Beat becomes very difficult to hear** and **in some cases the beat changes in different sections of the composition which becomes the Conductors job to control the orchestra.**

All other music including Square Dance Music is **Jazz base. Jazz means to talk,** this allows the musician (Vocalist or Instrumentalist) to express their feeling and emotions, called improvising the music as they wish. However they must stay in Key and on time with the Beat. If we start with the base as Jaz then, next comes Blues, followed maybe by Gospel, then Country Blues, Country, Rock & Roll, Soul, Bluegrass, Rock, Metal etc.

**Music is nothing more than sound & silence,** lines of sound one placed over or on top of each other. We start with a **Bass Line** which is the **Beat Line,** on top of or over the **Bass Line** we play a **Rhythm Line,** this sets the different tones and accentuates the **Beat.** The next line is the **Melody Line** which is the actual words or the Notes of the song. Sometimes we call this the **Lead Line** or **The Vocal Line.**

If we take the **Bass Line** and divide into 4 or 8 sections we give these sections the name **Bars.** Depending upon how many beats we place in each **Bar** depicts the **Time Signature of the Music.** If we hit the drum 4 times for each **Bar** we call that 4/4 time. If we hit the Drum 3 times for each bar we call that  $\frac{3}{4}$  time.

**NOTE: Not everyone can hear the beat.**

Let us take a look at a simple little song and see what we can learn from it.

Example:

Twin-kle, twin-kle, litt-le star,

How I wond-er what you are,

Up a-bove the world so high,

Like a dia-mond in the sky.

Wish I may wish I might

Wish upon a star tonight,

Twin-kle, twin-kle, litt-le star,

How I wond-er what you are.

That little song is in 4/4 time, there are 4 beats to the Bar, 2 Bars creates a **Phrase**, so, if there is 2 bars to a Phrase, then there must be 8 beats in that Phrase, if there is 8 beats in a phrase and we string **eight Phrases** together end to end we should end up with 64 beats of music, which is what in our world. A Singing Call Figure.

Another thing about this little song is that some words fall between the beats. This is called the up-beat or the AND beat. Which counts, 1, &, 2, &, 3, &, 4, &, 1, &, 2, &, 3, &, 4, &, 1.

**Twin-kle, twin-kle, litt-le star,**

**How I wond-er what you are,**

**Up a-bove the world so high,**

**Like a dia-mond in the sky.**

**Wish I may wish I might**

**Wish upon a star tonight,**

**Twin-kle, twin-kle, litt-le star,**

**How I wond-er what you are.**

Although, Twinkle twinkle, starts on beat #1, some songs do not start on beat #1.

Coming Round The Mountain, starts on beat 4 of the Bar before Beat 1 or known as the Pickup Note.

4 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 1 & 2 & 3

She'll be, coming round the mountain when she comes – beat - beat

4 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 1 & 2 & 3 &

**She'll** be, coming round the mountain when she comes

4 & 1

She'll be coming round the mountain, she'll be coming round the mountain,

She'll be coming round the mountain when she comes

**A very good thing to do is, when you are listening to the radio or a CD try to pick out the beat of the song or music being played. You can also count the beats. Try to pick out Beat #1 of each Phrase. This is fairly easy and can be kind of fun.**

At the last meeting when I asked, what tempo we should run our Music, some said about 120 bpm others said 128 bpm. If we think about **walking** then we have to think about the military, they spend a lot of time walking or marching. Studies have proven that, to achieve the greatest distance with the least amount of fatigue, the recommended pace or cadence or tempo, to walk to, is 120 bpm. So, I think that is a great tempo to Square Dance at. You may differ, for now! It has been said that I Call faster than some other Callers, however, I actually play my music slower, but I Call to the Beat and leave out the Nonessentials, which keeps with creating the Dance.

**Square Dance Calling:**

**Finally, I get to what we do, Call Square Dancing, and how all this counting beats, affects our Calling.**

**But first we must look at things we must know before we start actually Calling:**

- We must know The Language or The Calls,
- The number of beats to say the Calls,
- The number of beats to dance the Calls,
- Where to give the Calls so the dancers do not stop dancing.

## **THE METRONOME**

**Why use a Metronome: Because we only get the beat and we can learn to hear that beat. Without all the noise.**

Set your Metronome on 4/4 at about 80 bpm and say the Calls

We now have a little understanding of Down Beat & Up Beat, **Down** is on 1, **and**, is on the Up, **2** is on the Down, **and**, is on Up, **3** is on Down, **and** is up, **4** down, **and** up **1** down.

With this knowledge we can practice saying the Calls, Dancers MUST HEAR the Call, and UNDERSTAND the Call, in order to Dance

Example: **Circle-Left** = 1 beat, or **Circle, Left** = 2 beats or "**Circle**, To The **Left**" = 2, "**Circle**" is on the down beat, "To The" is on the up-beat and "**Left**" is on the down beat. *Set metronome at 80 on voice.*

"Left Allemande" or "Allemande Left", **Left** on 1, Alle on &, **mande** on 2. Or **Alle** - mande - **Left** = 2

"Do Si Do" = 1 beat or **Do** - Si - **Do** = 2 down - up - down

**Right** and Left Grand = 2. Broken down it becomes "Right" down, "and Left" up, "Grand" down.

**Sides Face Grand Square** = 2 or 4.

"**Heads**:-- Square Thru" = 2

"**Heads**:-- Square Thru **4**" = 3

If you want to practice this get a metronome set it at 80 beats in 4/4 rhythm and just say the Calls on the beat. Once you can do this well you may increase the speed 10 bpm and say the Calls again, and repeat the process until you can Call at 120 bpm.

Dance to the Metronome. Set it at 120 and Call, Bow to the Partner, Bow to the Corner, Circle to the Left, Allemande Left, Do-si-Do, 4 Boys Star Left , Turn Partner Right, Left Allemande, Right & Left Grand, Promenade Home.

Call the Opener to **Take The Ribbon From Your Hair, ////** into **Hallelujah Opener, //// Beautiful, Beautiful, Brown Eyes**

Set Metronome to 128 and Have them dance the same routine.

Can you feel the difference.

Any Questions so far, before I move on to deal with Singing Calls.

I did a presentation back a while ago, on why I hate Singing Calls you may have missed it, but I still Hate Singing Calls.

Picking your singing Calls, you listen to a stack of music and pick one that you may have heard a while ago, you like the music so you practice it and then when you get the chance you get up and Call it. You're so wound up before you start, you pick up the mic and blast away, ending up being somewhat exhausted and with no idea whether you did well or not, or more importantly, how the Dancers received your song.

Maybe I can help you in this venture as well, because this fits under the same heading and Beats, Timing, & Rhythm.

**Picking your song**, a couple of things you should think about, one, is it originally in 4/4 timing, because these are easier than one converted from an original 3/4 Waltz Time to 4/4 Time.

Do you know the words to the song from the radio or CD.

Have you ever heard the song before.

Remember you can't always trust the idiot sheet to time out correctly so if you are going to use it you should dance it first.

### **Learning the Singing Call.**

**Step #1.** Read and memorize the words. Writing the lyrics out by hand a few times will help.

**Step #2.** Put the music on and slow it down and try to say the words in time with the Beat.

**Step #3.** Pay close attention to the intro, how many beats, not always 8 you know.

**Step #4.** Once you can do this successfully start to speed the music up in increments of about 10 bpm.

**Step #5.** Once you know you can do it up to tempo run through it every time you practice. By the time you have done a few hundred times you might be ready to call it for your Club. I've had records I've worked on for 6 months before I would do them out at a dance.

**Step #6.** Always run through your singing Calls before you go to Call that evening.

If Love is Just a Game, intro 6 - 4 Ladies Chain

Help me make it through the night, intro 4 - Sides Face - Grand Square

Darling intro 28 - Sides Face Grand Square

Beautiful Brown Eyes intro 8 - 4 Ladies Chain

Sweet Caroline intro 28 - Circle Left

Hallelujah- intro about 14 - Circle Left (Different Figure)

The greatest gift you can get by being a Caller is when you hear the Dancers leave the hall humming the last singing Call, or another Caller asks for the # of that record.

Good luck I hope you found something you can use. If you have any questions give me a call, if you want private instructions or help with a Figure, or anything in this article, I will help you there as well.