



New Mexico Folk Music & Dance Society



FolkMADS Newsletter

March-April 2009 P.O. Box 40421, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87196-0421 Volume 12, Issue 2

The FolkMADS Calendar and Notes are published bimonthly by the New Mexico Folk Music and Dance Society, a nonprofit organization.

FolkMADS sponsors Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and Taos contra dances, concerts, camps, and other special events. "Contra" dances include contras, squares, mixers, and couple dances. Unless noted on the calendar, admission is \$7 for members, \$8 for nonmembers. Students with ID receive half price admission and children up to 12 years of age are free. You need not come with a partner. Free instruction for beginners half an hour before the dance starts. Dances are smoke-free and alcohol-free. Children and teens are encouraged to participate if supervised by an adult.

Albuquerque Dances 1st and 3rd Saturday, contra dances, 7:30-10.30 p.m., 2nd Sunday English & Contra Dance, 7:00-9:30 p.m. Heights Community Center, 823 Buena Vista SE (south of Lead/Coal).

Santa Fe Dances 2nd and 4th Saturday contra dances and some 5th Saturday English Country dances, 7:30-10.30 p.m., Odd Fellows Hall, 1125 Cerrillos Road (south of Cordova Dr. on the west side of Cerrillos).

Taos Dances 3rd Saturdays, 7:30-10:00 p.m., San Geronimo Lodge, 1101 Witt Road, in Taos. Call for details, 776-1580.

Albuquerque Megaband practice is held the Tuesday before the 3rd Saturday dance. All acoustic musicians welcome. Check calendar for location. Contact Bruce Thomson, 268-6003. www.folkmads.org/megaband.html.

Santa Fe Community Band practice is held at the Odd Fellows Hall on (1st and 3rd) Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. Contact Gary Papenhagen, 242-1104, gpap@cybermesa.com.

Handy Information

Membership

Volunteer: 243-2225 or
Rob Campbell robanddeb@yahoo.com

Newsletter: 898-2565;
Jane Phillips heyjane@yahoo.com

Board members: folkmadsboard@yahoogroups.com

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Caller-Band Workshops/Explorations

After the success of the caller workshop with Doc Litchman in November, folks have expressed interest in continuing the dialogue with an ongoing series of formal and informal opportunities for callers and band members to learn from each other, while discovering the keys to creating a great dance experience.

The next organized event will be March 28, in Santa Fe. See the announcement below for all the details!

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CALLING ALL CALLERS and CONTRA-DANCE BAND MEMBERS

A Workshop in Santa Fe by
Longtime Caller Extraordinaire, **Richard Wilson**

Saturday, March 28, 2009
10:00 *a.m.* - 4:30 *p.m.*

No charge to participants, but donations accepted.

Richard will share out of his 30+ years of dance calling, with his strong emphasis on community-building and accessibility to dancers of all levels with callers and dance-band musicians.

Live Music will be provided by Karina Wilson, Scott Mathis, and Linda Askew. Callers of all levels of experience are encouraged to come with any areas you would like encouragement or enlightenment of.

There will be an open-mike caller Contra Dance that evening at the Odd Fellows Hall, with an Open Band hosted by the same three excellent musicians.

Pot luck lunch will be shared. Please let us know if you plan to come. Ask also for directions to workshop. Suggestions, questions, please direct to : betsybrown@lobo.net

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Announcing a new Santa Fe Open Band series:

Santa Fe is starting an occasional series of Open Band Dances. Based on the popular New Melody Tavern dances in Seattle, we will feature a different fiddler/melody player each time. The leader and their chosen backup players will play from their repertoire and be miked, thus providing the driving force of the band. Community musicians will be able to play along in the background and get a chance to hone their playing by ear skills and to play different tunes than usual. You can join in when you want, dance one if you want, move closer to the front or farther away if it happens to be a tune you do or don't know.

We will feature local or visiting musicians with differing repertoires, sometimes more Northern and sometimes more Southern. This combination allowed several of us to develop our playing in the shadow of great musicians. It is a safe way to learn and is really fun for all musicians to play along on some new tunes as well as providing exciting music for the dancers. We hope it will join the Megabands as another fine way for the community to participate in the music for the dances and to continue to develop talented musicians.

We are proud to announce that Karina Wilson will be our first guest host, at the March 28 Santa Fe dance. Karina grew up in the FolkMADS community and plays a great mix of traditional New England, Irish, Quebecois and modern tunes. She'll be ably backed up by Scott Mathis and Linda Askew. Please join us!

Tune of the Month

Bruce Thomson
(LibTNov1@aol.com)

Practice Makes Perfect

There are two occasions in which most of us take our instruments out of its case; to perform and to practice. And of course these are two very different events with two very different objectives. The objective of a performance is to have fun and celebrate your music and musicianship. You'll want to play your best, and this will require your absolute undistracted focus. But a performance is probably not the best time or place to work on new licks, experiment with new techniques, or try new tunes. That's what practice is for.

I ran across a quote by the great classical violinist Jascha Heifetz, "If I don't practice one day, I know it; two days, the critics know it; three days, the public knows it." That certainly describes my experience, though only in the most general terms – most of the public probably can't tell that I practice at all. As I get to know musicians, both great ones and not so great, one topic I like to explore with them is how they practice and try to figure out what works for me and what doesn't. Let's give it some consideration.

For many musicians I know, especially the old time musicians, their individual practice consists solely of playing familiar tunes and/or learning new ones. There is very little emphasis on technique, intonation, improvisation, or stylistic interpretation. At the other extreme, professional classical musicians will spend an hour or more each day working on fundamentals including technical exercises and scales before they ever play their first tune or musical passage. Whether we aspire to this level of proficiency or not, I think there's a lot to be learned about music and musicianship from the classical folks.

If you go to the web you'll find much guidance on practice (surprised?). One of the common threads is to establish goals, something to work towards. It could be something like: "be good enough to be in a hot band," "win the local fiddle contest," or "make lots of money and impress the girls/boys." From this you'll need to evaluate your own playing and figure out where you stand relative to this goal. The final step in goal setting will be to develop a practice regime to develop those parts or your playing needed to achieve this goal. A good music teacher that you have confidence in can help set realistic goals.

From my perspective, the single most important aspect of practicing is to set a schedule and stick to it. Ideally, one will practice every day, but that's often not possible. Nevertheless, you should pick a time early enough in the day that you're not exhausted, and play as frequently as possible. My son used to practice instead of doing his homework. The discussion went like this:

Mother: Go do your homework.

Son: Moommm, I've got to practice!!

He didn't do very well in school. But he's now in Austria, trying to figure out how to make a living as a classical bassist and having more fun than I've had in my whole life.

I suggest that every practice session should have three components at a minimum: warm up, technique, and tunes. The exact nature of the practice depends of course on the instrument and style of music. When I play fiddle I spend a lot of time working on intonation and tone. I'll play three octave

major & minor scales and arpeggios. I'll work on double stops, alternate fingerings, and bowing. On the guitar I'll work on scales using multiple fingerings up the neck, chords and picking styles.

Working on technique is for me the most challenging aspect of practice. Assistance with technique is where a teacher can be so valuable. When you're playing your instrument you don't hear what the audience hears, In addition, you're not an objective listener. The sound you hear is partly that coming through the air, but much of it is also transmitted as vibrations of the instrument held against your body, especially the fiddle clamped between your chin and shoulder. Further, the notes you think you're hearing are an integrated mix of sound and vibration together with what your brain is intending your fingers to play. Don't believe me? Listen to a recording of yourself! The difference between what's captured by the electrons and what you thought you played is remarkable. A good teacher can hear these problems, articulate them, and offer suggestions as to how to fix them. I suspect this is why even the most successful classical musicians continue to study with a teacher throughout their career.

Working on technique often involves things such as learning intricate passages with difficult bowing, fingering or picking patterns. Play the material through slowly at first, then work up to speed. Don't take short cuts, omit notes or play wrong rhythms, this just leads to bad habits. Play the part repeatedly until muscle memory replaces conscious thought. Careful, deliberate repetition is essential to good practice, but one must remember that, depending on the passage and your proficiency, this may drive other residents of the house stark raving nuts.

Finally, the third part of a practice session should, in my view, focus on tunes. This is the fun part. Here you might work to perfect an existing tune, learn a new one, or work on improvisation skills. If I'm tired I'll often just play a few favorite tunes through a couple of times to keep the fingers limber. Other times I'll sit by the CD player and try to figure out a new lick or a new tune. Throughout, one should work on intonation, accuracy, technique, tone and style, not just whang the tune out to get the dog howling. That's what a performance is for.

This month's tune is the Cowboy Waltz. I have no idea of its origin but a long time ago I saw a film clip of Woody Guthrie and I think Cisco Houston playing it. The words, sung to the A part are:

Cowboy Waltz

Now it's all around this wide country, the winter has begun
Now is the time for a man to split for the California sun
To a place where a man can be free, where the wind and the wild huskies howl
Winter is nigh, let us fly to our log cabin home in the sky.

Now the snow's piling up all around the door, many a log's on the stove
While the chickadee sings a comforting song I'll prove it's you that I love
Let the wolves howl they won't get no peace, we're safe in our log cabin home
Winter is nigh let us fly to our log cabin home in the sky.

There comes a time in every man's life when he must turn his back on the crowd
When the shrill of the lights gets too bright and the music gets too loud
Too a place where a man can be free, where the wind and the wild huskies howl
Winter is night let us fly to our log cabin home in the sky.

ABC Notation

X:189
 T:Cowboy Waltz
 N:Transcribed by Bruce Thomson
 R:Waltz
 Q:150
 M:3/4
 L:1/4
 K:D
 Ade|:"D"f3|f2f/g/|fed|AFA|"G"B2B/=c/|BAG|
 "D"(A2A/) B/|Ade|"D"f3|f2f/g/|fed|AFA|"E"B2e|e2f|
 "A"e3|Ade|"D"f3|f2f/g/|fed|AFA|"G"B2B/=c/|BAG|
 "D"(A2A/)B/|A3|d3/2c/d|"A"efg|"D"afd|"G"b3/2b/ a/g/|
 "D"f3|"A"f2e|"D"(d3|d3):||:"D"DFA|d2c/d/|edg|"G"B2c/B/|
 "A"Ace|a2a/b/|afe|"D"f3/2d/ B/A/|DFA|d2c/d/|
 edg|"G"B2c/B/|"A"Ace|gfe|"D"(d3|d3):|

Cowboy Waltz

The image shows a musical score for 'Cowboy Waltz'. It consists of eight staves of music. The key signature is D major (two sharps: F# and C#) and the time signature is 3/4. The melody is written in treble clef. Various chords are indicated above the notes: D, G, A, and E. The score includes repeat signs and a double bar line with repeat dots at the end.

**New Mexico Folk Music and Dance Society
(FolkMADS)**

P.O. Box 40421
Albuquerque, NM 87196-0421

Return Service Requested

Time to Renew Your Membership?

☞ Look at Your Mailing Label ☞

The first line will indicate when
your membership expires.

FolkMADS Membership Form Return with payment to: FolkMADS, P.O. Box 40421, Albuquerque, NM 87196-0421			
Date	Received by:		
<input type="checkbox"/> New Member ? <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal ? <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal of Lapsed Membership?	1 year <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 Individual <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Family 3 years <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Individual <input type="checkbox"/> \$40 Family	Change of Address/Info? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Adult 1	<input style="width: 100%; height: 15px;" type="text"/>		
Adult 2	<input style="width: 100%; height: 15px;" type="text"/>		
Children's Names	<input style="width: 100%; height: 15px;" type="text"/>		
Address	<input style="width: 100%; height: 15px;" type="text"/>		
City	<input style="width: 80%; height: 15px;" type="text"/>	ST	<input style="width: 10%; height: 15px;" type="text"/>
Home phone	<input style="width: 15%; height: 15px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 15%; height: 15px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 15%; height: 15px;" type="text"/>	Cell phone	<input style="width: 15%; height: 15px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 15%; height: 15px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 15%; height: 15px;" type="text"/>
Email	<input style="width: 100%; height: 15px;" type="text"/>		
Email Preferences: <input type="checkbox"/> Do NOT include my email address on the FolkMADS mailing list			
Directory Listing Preference: <i>(Your information will be included, unless you indicate otherwise.)</i> Leave out <input type="checkbox"/> address <input type="checkbox"/> home phone/work phone <input type="checkbox"/>			
Questions about your membership? Contact Rob Campbell at (505) 243-2225 or robandedeb@yahoo.com			