

## **Grand March** from NEDM's *Sashay the Donut*

*The grand march has been a venerable tradition at community dances over the years. The dancers work together as a single entity making a succession of astonishing shapes. Everyone gets to 'see and be seen' as each dancer passes every other dancer during the figures. In the Renaissance this type of dance was called a 'farandole'. Andy created the Chorus to provide something fun and familiar before each of the other more adventurous figures. It makes both a fine performance piece and a magical part of an evening dance..*

**Music:** Old Time Medley (as recorded on *Sashay the Donut*).

**Formation:** Circle of couples.

### CHORUS FIGURE:

Forward and back (8); forward and back; (8)  
Circle left (8); circle right. (8)

Dosido partner; see saw corner;  
Allemande right partner; allemande left corner;  
Allemande right partner; allemande left corner;  
All right elbow swing partner; promenade partner.

In the above figures the caller should watch the dancers and call the figures so that the dancers flow from figure to figure without feeling rushed.

### THE TUNNEL

While promenading in one large circle, the two lead dancers turn single (towards each other) to face the opposite direction of all the other couples. This lead couple switches from a promenade position to a single handed ('handy hands') arch (inside person stays on the inside, outside person stays on the outside!) and begins moving *over* the other couples. As soon as the second couple passes under the lead couple's arch, they also turn, create a 'handy hand' arch, and follow the lead couple over the other promenading dancers. The third couple follows the second, the fourth follows the third, etc. Eventually all the couples have changed direction and formed a tunnel of arches traveling over the flow of promenaders which is not interrupted because...

The lead couple, when they reach the last of the promenading couples, quickly lowers their arch, turns around, resumes the promenade hold and follows the *last* promenading couple by ducking into the tunnel of arches. The second couple follows the lead couple into the tunnel, the third couple follows the second, etc., until all of the couples have changed back to their original direction and resumed the promenade. When the lead couple emerges from the tunnel they simply continue to promenade in their original line of direction. As soon as everyone is out of the tunnel and the original circle of promenading couples has reformed you may again call the CHORUS FIGURE.

*(continued on next page)*

THE SPIRAL *Grand March, continued, from NEDM's Sashay the Donut*

Do the CHORUS FIGURE only up to the point where everyone is circling *left*. Call out something like, "Keep on going and no one let go of hands!" At that point the *leader only* lets go of the hand of the person they are following (their corner) and begins to lead the line – still moving in a circle left direction – into a spiral shape by pulling their part of the line *past* and *inside* the part of the line they are following (See fig. 1). Making the spiral fairly tight in a large group will take several rotations; in a small classroom it will take place very quickly (see fig. 2).

When the leader feels as though they are running out of space in the center of the spiral, the leader makes a quick and decisive U-turn to their own left and begins following the path outward through the spiral (see fig. 3). This can be a wonderfully unexpected moment of magic and enlightenment. As the line of dancers moves outward through the spiral, each dancer is treated to a succession of smiling faces as they pass by everyone else in the dance. When the leader reaches the outside of the spiral they make a quick and decisive U-turn to their own *right* so that everyone will return to the original large circle facing *in* (see fig. 4). Once the leader has reconnected with their corner, you may again call the CHORUS FIGURE.

A variation on the SPIRAL goes as follows: the leader leads into the spiral from the circle left, just as before. However, this time the leader keeps winding the spiral until everyone is very close to touching in a tighter spiral formation than before. Call out something like, "All start to slow down, keep holding hands, now stop!" The leader now burrows their way out of this tight spiral by simply leading the dancers under a series of random arches, as though searching for daylight on the outside of the spiral. Then the leader reaches the outside of the spiral, they turn *right* so that everyone will return to the original large circle facing *in* (see fig. 5). Now you can call the CHORUS FIGURE again.

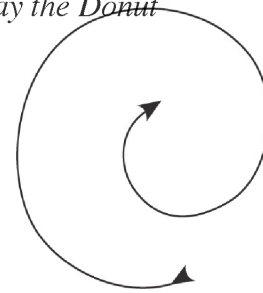


figure 1

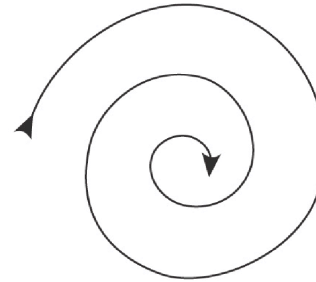


figure 2

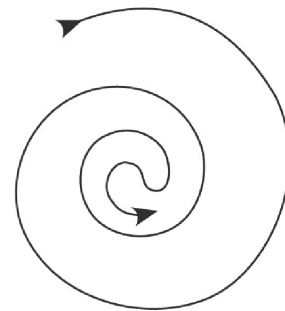


figure 3

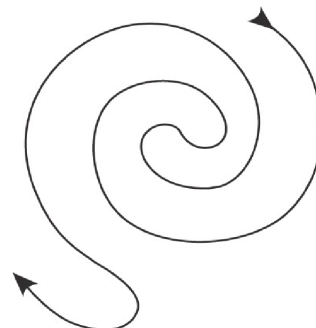


figure 4

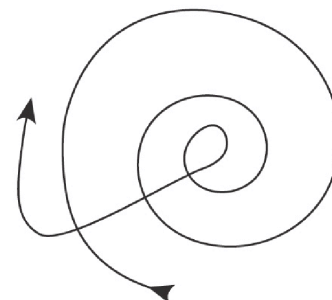


figure 5

This is the defining figure of the dance. It starts at the end of the CHORUS when everyone is promenading. The lead couple goes along the outer edge of the room in the usual counterclockwise direction of a promenade. At the bottom of the hall the lead couple leads the line of promenading couples right up the *middle* of the hall, heading straight for the band. At the top of the hall the lead couple drops hands and casts off, separating from each other. The 'gent' (or left hand person) leads his line down one side of the hall while the 'lady' (or right hand person) leads her line down the other side of the hall. These two single files of dancers will meet at the bottom of the hall.

When each person meets their partner they rejoin hands and promenade a second time up the middle of the hall. The second time the lead couple reaches the top of the hall everyone keeps their partner but casts off in alternating directions: the lead couple goes left, the second couple goes right, the third couple goes left, etc. Now there are two lines of couples going down the sides of the hall. Then two couples meet at the foot of the hall they join hands in a line of *four* dancers facing up towards the top of the hall.

These groups of four come up the middle of the hall and, keeping their hands joined, cast off in alternate directions to create two lines of four abreast each going down the sides of the hall.

Depending on the numbers of dancers in the hall you can repeat this process until have lines of eight or even sixteen dancers coming up the middle of the hall. We often end this figure by having the dancers start clapping to the music as they approach the top of the hall, honoring the musicians and creating a satisfying ending to the Grand March.

**Notes:** As you can see, this dance is not about dancing to specific musical phrases. We almost always lead this dance from the floor as one of the dancers. You can start by repeating the CHORUS FIGURE two or three times. During the walk through it is only necessary to go through the CHORUS and the TUNNEL figures. It is best to keep the SPIRAL figure a surprise. Pick and choose the figures that you think will meet your needs and the abilities of the dancers. You can end the dance absolutely anywhere with a "Swing your partner!".