

# Adding Variety To Module Calling At Low Extra Costs

Electronic Tips for Callers

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Issue 9

When I started to call, I needed to find a way of dealing with choreography in singing-calls (patter-calls seemed to work just fine because I have been using sight-calling since the very beginning). Naturally, I learnt my first singing-call modules by heart. Later on, I found out that the dancers would probably appreciate more variety, and I started to develop my way slowly. When calling a singing-call today, I am creating a chain of short modules (consisting of two or three calls) on the fly, using many equivalents and employing some basic mental image calling, too. Using this approach, I am able to incorporate in fact any call into a singing-call and I can also achieve some variety of the partner-changing sequences by modifying some of the short modules or particular calls.

As the next step, I started to use this approach in patter-calls: quite often, I do not feel comfortable enough to be able to remember four key dancers at the beginning of the tip. By using the described method, I can move the dancers without worrying about the FASR (the modules take care of this), and if everything goes well, I am able to switch to sight calling; if not, I can go on with modules.

## Expanding the arrangement

It is a well-known fact that one tends to prefer the normal (#0) arrangement when using modules and mental image calling. Although this is usually not a big issue in singing-calls, a patter-call often requires some variety in the area of arrangement, too. Recognizing this need, I started to look at possible ways to go. I did not want to learn batches of new modules because I was sure there must have been a simpler solution.

When analyzing my “modular” choreography, I found out that apart from using those “most-popular” FASRs like Zero Box, Lead Right Box, Zero Lines and their out-of-sequence counterparts, I was using Zero-Box Waves and Corner Lines (both in-sequence and out-of-sequence) frequently, too. In other words, I brought each dancer and his/her Corner to the same quadrant quite often. These setups (as well as some derived ones) allow easy swapping of the two dancers that are supposed to end together after *Promenade Home*. Such a procedure does not change the sequence of Boys nor Girls, and the relationship obviously remains the same, too. Therefore, if we swap those two dancers in a suitable situation and take care to use only modules that are not gender-based or to modify them to use the other gender at appropriate places (so that the formation does not diverge from the “usual” one), the two dancers come back to each other in the proper quadrant—and there is certainly no problem in calling *Swing* for them even if they are swapped (it might feel a little strange from #1/2 Back-to-Back Lines

but one can always say *Swing Your Partner* to avoid possible ambiguity for the center dancers who are in a Normal Couple), or we can swap them again to undo the effect. The change of arrangement should not cause much trouble for the dancers because they are already familiar with the sequences of calls being used, and the #1/2 arrangement gives the choreography a different feel.

Let us illustrate the described approach by several examples (the action of swapping is indicated in bold):

- Zero Box: ***Swing Thru***—***Boys Trade***—*Swing Thru*—*Girls Run*—*Ferris Wheel*—*Pass Thru*—*Swing*—*Promenade Home*
- Zero Box: ***Box the Gnat***—*Square Thru Four*—*Bend the Line*—*Pass the Ocean*—*Boys Trade*—*Swing Thru*—*Swing*—*Promenade Home*
- Zero Box: *Star Thru*—*Right And Left Thru*—***Half Sashay***—*Pass Thru*—*Bend the Line*—*Square Thru Three*—*Swing Your Partner*—*Promenade Home*
- Zero Box: ***Touch One Quarter***—***Girls Run***—*All Pass Thru*—*Face In*—*Double Pass Thru*—*Outsides U Turn Back*—*Swing Thru*—*Girls Trade*—*Swing*—*Promenade Home*

Of course, we can go further—there are other arrangements available and we can use the same principle. As indicated above, one of possible transition points is the Corner Lines setup (in sequence or out of sequence). So, let us have a look at possible ways of creating this FASR with different arrangements and present several examples:

- Static Square: *Heads/Sides Star Thru*—*California Twirl*—*All Star Thru* (BGBG)
- Static Square: *Heads/Sides Square Thru Four*—*All Touch One Quarter*—*Girls Run* (GBGB)
- Static Square: *Heads/Sides Right And Left Thru*—*Pass the Ocean*—*Extend*—*Out-Facers Run* (GBBG)
- Static Square: *Heads/Sides Star Thru*—*California Twirl*—*All Touch One Quarter*—*Centers Run*—*Bend the Line* (BGGB)

Obviously, it does not make sense trying to achieve BBGG or GGBB Facing Lines if we want to stick to the “keeping the Corners together” principle (otherwise we would have two dancers of the same sex ending in the same quadrant and the relationship would be lost). However, there are other ways of establishing such setups temporarily—we just need to know how to return to mixed-sex twosomes consisting of original Corners (and being sure of their sequence, of course).

It does not take much effort to find out that it does not really matter if there is any *Arm Turn* action (the kind being used in *Ocean Waves*) performed by mutual Corners together or not

when this approach is used (it would just swap these two dancers). As a result, we can replace (*Left*) *Swing Thru* with *Centers Trade* if the starting FASR (Parallel Ocean Waves) has the original Corners together in the same quadrant. This in fact means that the well-known Zero module *Swing Thru—Centers Run—Wheel And Deal* can be replaced with *Centers Trade—Centers Run—Wheel And Deal* in such situations. For example, it can be used in the following way:

- Zero Box: *Touch One Quarter—Centers Trade—Centers Run—Wheel And Deal—Swing—Promenade Home*

Note that same-sex couples are established and this arrangement is kept for several consecutive calls which feels very unusual in singing-calls—without raising the level of difficulty too high (dancers should be familiar with this combination of calls).

We can also take the “normal” version of this Zero module and “rotate” it so that it starts with *Centers Run*:

- Zero Box: *Touch One Quarter—Centers Run—Wheel And Deal—Swing . . . Thru—Swing—Promenade Home*

In this case, dancers often have the feeling that *Swing* with the same gender is inevitable—the relief comes in the last possible moment and the surprise solution is always appreciated with smiles.

### Visits to other quadrants

The approach of keeping the original Corners close together all the time has some drawbacks, too: for example, some calls are difficult to use because they modify the relationship significantly and restoring it might be a problem. Another weak point is that the dancers feel they are “locked” in their quadrant and its close neighborhood quite often and they always interact with the same three people (their Corner and the other Corner-Corner twosome) during the whole progressive sequence of calls. However, the latter problem can be resolved quite easily.

An obvious extension is allowing a temporary change of relationship and undoing it later. For example, *Swing Thru* from Zero Box brings Corners to different quadrants; if this call is followed with *Boys Run—Chain Down the Line—Pass Thru*, the relationship is restored and the sequence is not changed. We can even insert a Zero module to reinforce the sensation of dancing with other dancers than possibly expected.

Another useful trick is to move the Corner-Corner twosomes around the square and to bring them to other quadrants. We can either move all the twosomes in the same direction (for example by using *Couples Circulate* which is a “working” Technical Zero module in this case because the sequence state of men and ladies is the same)—this way, the sequence remains

unchanged. We can also swap the Corner-Corner twosomes in two neighbouring quadrants; however, this operation changes the sequence (two opposite twosomes are moved clockwise and the other two are moved counterclockwise). We can swap them back either by reversing the direction of each twosome, or by continuing in the original direction, and we can also insert any number of moves where all four twosomes travel in the same direction.

Let us demonstrate this with a simple example from Zero Box: *Touch One Quarter* establishes the Corner-Corner relationship and all dancers remain in sequence; *Centers Trade—Swing Thru* swaps dancers in two adjacent quadrants along each wave so both genders (or, in other words, all four Corner-Corner twosomes) are out of sequence now. We can reverse the direction of swapping, optionally including a move that has no effect on sequence (*Centers Run—(Couples Circulate)—Bend the Line—Pass Thru*), or we can move each twosome in the direction of the original move once again (*Split Circulate Twice*). This way, the caller is able to bring the dancers to a particular quadrant so that the timing of *Promenade* fits the musical phrase.

### Tricks for patter-calls

As soon as one feels comfortable using this method in singing-calls, it is quite easy to use it in patter-calls. As a matter of fact, there is no need to limit the sequences of calls so that they fit the singing-call structure—we can dive deeper into modules and use the “abnormal” arrangements in a wider scope. We can even use another relation for swapping: original Partners (for example, we can start from Static Square by calling *Heads/Sides Lead Right—All Swing Thru—Leaders Run*, resulting in GBBG Zero Lines).

As far as I can guess, most callers use normal (or maybe half-sashayed) arrangement at the starting point for their Get-Out modules. Therefore, it is useful to know some simple methods of normalizing the setup. An obvious way is to bring the dancers to Parallel Right-Hand Ocean Waves and to call *Boys Run* (we can do that because we know there is exactly one Boy and one Girl in each quadrant—each Right-Hand Mini-Wave). The result is Facing Lines, Back-to-Back Lines, Parallel Right-Hand Two-Faced Lines, or Parallel Left-Hand Two-Faced Lines but the arrangement is definitely normal (#0).

Another neat way with many possibilities of using is to bring the dancers into any Parallel Lines (or even Ocean Waves—however, those left-handed are better in this case because of the body flow) and to call *Tag the Line—Face X* where *X* is one of four possible directions (*Right/Left/In/Out*)—we just need to pick the one that results in normal arrangement.

By the way, this system can be also used together with isolated sight-calling: we need to keep four particular dancers together which is similar to having two twosomes and knowing where they are. We can easily switch between these two systems as long as the sight-called part makes up a Zero module from the relationship and sequence point of view (otherwise we need to remember what changes we did or what was the original setup of the foursome that we are watching—which dancers occupied particular positions at the beginning of the part called by sight). This enhancement can be useful for isolated sight-calling because the major part of choreography that is called using this system is based on the #0 or #1/2 arrangement while the “twosome” system allows easier transitions to other arrangements.

Let us illustrate this with a sequence of calls starting from Static Square (changes of sequence of the Corner-Corner twosomes and changes of the Corner-Corner relationship are indicated as they happen; we are not including the information about formation and arrangement now because they are both obvious when watching the dancers):

<i>Heads/Sides Touch One Quarter</i>	This is just a Get-In module . . .
<i>Center Boys Run</i>	Corners are together in each quadrant. In sequence.
<i>Reverse Flutterwheel</i>	Girls are swapped (Boys remain where they are).
<i>Sweep 1/4</i>	Girls are back with their Corners. Out of sequence.
<i>Half Sashay 1 1/2</i>	No change.
<i>Double Pass Thru</i>	In sequence.
<i>Face In</i>	No change.
<i>Pass the Ocean</i>	Out of sequence.
<i>Swing Thru</i>	Same-sex dancers are together! We have a problem!
<i>Swing Thru</i>	Now we are back to normal. In sequence.
<i>Split Circulate</i>	Boys are swapped . . .
<i>Split Circulate</i>	. . . and Girls follow them. Out of sequence.
<i>Centers Trade</i>	Oh no! Same-sex dancers are together again!
<i>Swing Thru</i>	The recovery was quick. In sequence.
<i>Centers Run</i>	No change.
<i>Couples Circulate</i>	All move in the same direction. No change.
<i>Ferris Wheel</i>	Now they really left the scheme. Come back, please!
<i>Centers Pass Thru</i>	Help! Same-sex dancers are together again!
<i>Swing Thru</i>	Corners are together again. What a relief!
<i>Boys Run</i>	No change of sequence. Shall we resolve?
<i>Right And Left Thru</i>	Out of sequence.
<i>Half Sashay</i>	No change. Do we know a Get-Out from here?
<i>Square Thru Two</i>	In sequence, ready for . . .
<i>Right And Left Grand</i>	
<i>Promenade Home</i>	

### **Do it if you want it**

The described approach can be used if we want to go a little wild—I think everybody has experienced the *If You Want (But You Don't Have To)* choreography sometimes. The trick is the same again—we just leave the decision (whether to get swapped or not) to dancers; of course, we still maintain the Corner-Corner relationship and avoid any gender-based calls. Getting out of the “mess” is simple: for example, we can establish Facing Lines (we know that each quadrant is occupied by one Boy and one Girl who are Corners to each other but they might be in a Normal Couple or in a Half-Sashayed Couple) and call *Pass Thru—Face Your Partner—Out-Facers California Twirl* which brings the dancers into Normal Corner Lines so that we can use a Get-Out module from there or go on with calling (and possibly swap some dancers again).

Of course, we can let the dancers make the decision several times within one tip; we just need to be careful and offer the possibility of swapping to the same two dancers every time. If we use different formations and calls for this operation (and, which is the most difficult part, if we resist the temptation of overdoing the “trick”), most dancers will not notice that they always work with the same person.

### **And what are the costs?**

If you have established a set of modules you are comfortable with, you do not need to worry about expanding their usage slightly. All you need to know is which particular dancers can be swapped (usually original Corners)—and if you swap them, you need either to refrain from using gender-based calls in your modules, or to modify them so that they work as expected. In my opinion, these costs are really low, considering the possibilities that open to you. Good luck!

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Graphics: Created using **SDIA** (<http://www.square.cz/sdia/>). Many thanks!

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