

Bella Gioiosa

Or: what to do when the reconstruction process goes all wrong.

Background

Bella Gioiosa is a three-person cascarada in Caroso's *Il Ballarino* that does not appear to conform to the rules of the other dances of this form. Furthermore, there are several contradictory or unclear statements in Caroso's description of this dance that present a few challenges for anyone trying to reconstruct it.

Cascarade

A cascarada is a short, triple time dance, usually for 2 people.

The 2 person cascarade from *Il Ballarino* are covered in depth in Sion Andreas o Wynedd's pamphlet *Dell'Arte Cascaradare* published in 1996. They all conform to the same rules: They have a simple intrada/mostra/ritornello sequence, they are all danced to triple time music where a single verse/chorus structure (eg: ABC or ABBCC or similar) is repeated somewhere between 3 and 7 times, and they all follow a similar construction technique. The seguito spezzato is the main travelling step, and the verses often contain trabuchetti, reprise (often in 2s or 3s), and occasional steps borrowed from the galliard. The seguito spezzato in volta with a cadenza is another common sequence seen in a number of cascarade. Cascarade also contain common movements including circling, advancing/retreating, etc.

3 Person Cascarade

Sion states:

While there are some three-person cascarade, they do not conform so stringently to the standard choreographic formula...

Bella Gioiosa is one such 3 person cascarada. The question is: Does it not conform to the choreographic formula because Caroso intended it not to, or does it appear not to conform because of transcription errors, typographical errors, or other misprints?

Transcription and Translation

I have included a transcription of the dance from *Il Ballarino*, taken from Greg Lindahl's Caroso project. I have also included a translation of the transcription, provided to me by a lady in Canberra.

Discussion

I have included discussion taken from three mailing lists about this dance. The discussion started on the rendance mailing list after I looked at both Etienne de Clermont's reconstruction, and one by Adina Hamilton.

Here is the important bits of the conversation -- I have reformatted most of the messages, and omitted some that said things like "me too" or "I have never looked at this dance..."

Additional discussion taken from the sca-dance and Lochac dance mailing lists has been heavily trimmed to reduce the amount of repeated argument, and to restrict the commentary to the salient points. The full discussion should be available in the list archives for those two mailing lists.

Transcription

**Caroso, Il
Ballarino, 1581 ff.
94r - 95v**

BELLA GIOIOSA
CASCARDA;
IN LODE DELL'ILLUSTR.(MA) SIGNORA
LA SIGNORA GIVLIA
SAVELLA ORSINA.

QUESTO Ballo ha da esser fatto in terzo, cioè, due Huomini, & una Dama, overo due Dame, & un'Huomo: & questi si pigliaranno le mani in ruota, & faranno la Riverenza in balzetto, come s'usa alla Cascarde, con quattro Trabuchetti alla sinistra, & lasciando tutte le mani, si voltaranno alla sinistra, & faranno due Seguiti spezzati, con due Passi gravi innanzi, & la Cadenza, principiando ogni cosa col sinistro. In ruota poi faranno tutti insieme quattro Seguiti spezzati, con due Scambiate, l'una alla sinistra, & l'altra alla destra: poi quello che guida il Ballo, farà un Seguito spezzato volto alla sinistra, & la Cadenza col destro, cioè, se farà un huomo, & due Dame, l'huomo guiderà esso: ma se fosse una Dama, & due huomini, essa guiderà il Ballo: cosi nel fine della Cadenza, che fa quello che guida, ha da rispondere colvi, ò colei che stà à man destra, & ha da farla col piè sinistro, con un'altro Seguito spezzato volto alla sinistra, & la Cadenza, come di sopra: il terzo farà il medesimo che haranno fatto gli altri: dopò quello che guida il Ballo, farà due Passi presti innanzi, & la Cadenza, principiando col sinistro, con cinque Seguiti battuti del Canario, principiandoli pur col sinistro: & chi non sapesse fargli, farà in sua vece quattro Trabuchetti: poi si seguirà con due Riprese, due Trabuchetti alla sinistra, un Seguito spezzato volto alla sinistra, & la Cadenza col destro: quello poi che starà à man dritta di lui, farà la medesima mutanza, che haurà fatta esso: & il medesimo farà il terzo compagno. Ciò fatto, giostraranno insieme in questa maniera, cioè; Ogn' uno si voltarà col fianco sinistro per dentro, facendo quattro Seguiti spezzati, uno innanzi, uno in dietro, & due passando innanzi, principiandoli col sinistro: & quello che guida, passerà sempre in mezzo, cambiando luogo: il medesimo torneranno à fare un' altra volta; tornando però ogn' uno al suo luogo.

Dipoi in ruota tutti insieme faranno due Seguiti semidoppij alla sinistra, due Riprese, due Trabuchetti, un Seguito spezzato volto alla sinistra, & la Cadenza col piè destro all'incontro: il medesimo faranno alla destra per contrario. Insieme faranno poi all incontro due Fioretti à piè pari, uno al fianco sinistro, & l'altro al destro, con due Passi presti in dietro, passando con duo Seguiti spezzati, & cambiando luogo, principiando col sinistro: il medesimo torneranno à fare un'altra volta, tornando ogn'uno al suo luogo.

Dopò ciò faranno la Catena, overo intrecciata, con sei Seguiti spezzati, & quello che guiderà il Ballo, passerà per mezzo i Compagni, voltando alla sinistra; poi ritornerà à passare un'altra volta alla destra: & i medesimi Seguiti, & volte faranno gli altri Compagni: al fine della qual Catena ogn' uno ha da ritrovarsi al suo luogo, & fare due Passi presti innanzi, con la Cadenza, principiando ogni cosa col piè sinistro.

Dopò faranno quattro Trabuchetti, & quattro Seguiti battuti di Canario, due Riprese, due Trabuchetti alla sinistra, un Seguito spezzato volto alla sinistra, & la Cadenza col destro, trovandosi al fine di essi in triangolo: il che fia fine della Cascarda.

Translation

**Translation
provided by Rosa
Saladino, of
Canberra, ACT.**

BELLA GIOIOSA (beautiful joyous)
CASCARDA
IN PRAISE OF THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS LADY
THE LADY GUILIA
SAVELLA ORSINI

This dance must be danced in threes that is by two men and one woman or two women and one man: the dancers will join hands in a circle and will riverenza with a little jump as one does in a cascarda, with four trabuchetti to the left, and dropping the hands they will turn to the left and will do two seguiti seppzati followed by two passi gravi forwards, and the cadenza starting everything with the left. In a circle then they will all do together four seguiti spezzati with two scambiate one to the left and the other to the right: then the leader of the dance will do a seguito spezzato turned to the left, and the cadenza with the right, that is if it is one man and two women, the man will lead the dance but if it is one woman and two men she will lead the dance: thus at the end of the cadenza what the leader does must be answered by the person on the right hand side and they must do it with the left foot, with another seguito spezzato turned to the left and the cadenza as above: the third person will do the same thing as the others: the leader will take two passi presti forward, and the cadenza starting on the left with five seguiti battiti del canario starting them also on the left: and those who don't know how to do them will do instead four trabuchetti: then will follow two riprese, two trabuchetti to the left, a seguito spezzato turned to the left and the cadenza on the right: the person who is on the right hand side of him will do the same variation which he has done: and the third person will do the same thing. This done they will joust together in this fashion, that is each person will turn with their left side inwards doing four seguito spezzati, one forwards one back and two moving forward, starting on the left: and the leader will always pass in the middle, changing places: they will then do the same thing once more returning however to the same spot.

Then in a circle altogether they will do two seguiti semidoppii to the left, two riprese, two trabuchetti, a seguito spezzato turned to the left and the cadenza with the right foot into the circle. They will then do the same thing to the right in contrast. Together then they will at the meeting do two fioretti a pie pari, one on the left hand side and the other on the right hand side, with two passi presti backwards passing with two seguiti spezzati and changing places starting with the left: they will then do the same thing again returning to their own place.

After this they will form a chain or braid with six seguiti spezzati and the leader will pass in the middle of the others turning to the left; then he will pass again to the right: and the same seguiti and turns will be done by the others: at the end of which chain each one will be back in their place, and take two passi presti forwards with the cadenza, starting everything with the left foot.

They they will do four trabuchetti and four seguiti battuti di canario, two riprese, two trabuchetti, to the left, a seguito spezzato turned to the left the cadenza with the right finding themselves at the end in a triangle which is the end of the cascarda.

Discussion on Rendance

From: Del

Subject: bella gioiosa

Date: Tue, 6 Nov 2001 19:24:17 +1100

Hi all (and especially Andrea, and anyone else who speaks good Italian),

I have in front of me a copy of Bella Gioiosa from Il Ballarino which is transcribed on Greg's page, here:

<http://www.pbm.com/~lindah/Caroso/transcription/0092.clean.html>

I also have a copy of a reconstruction of this dance, by Enienne de Clermont which is also similar to one I've been using for several years. I also have a recording of the music of the dance from Silence Is Deadly, by the Waits of Southwark. Last weekend, Adina Hamilton and I played with the reconstruction a bit, and hit a few anomalies.

The dance is for 3 people, either two men and a lady or two ladies and a man.

Firstly, the opening verse contains the text:

poi quello che guida il Ballo, farà un Seguito spezzato volto alla sinistra, & la Cadenza col destro, cioè, se farà un huomo, & due Dame, l'huomo guiderà esso: ma se fosse una Dama, & due huomini, essa guiderà il Ballo: così nel fine della Cadenza, che fa quello che guida, ha da rispondere colvi, ò colei che stà à man destra, & ha da farla col piè sinistro, con un'altro Seguito spezzato volto alla sinistra, & la Cadenza, come di sopra: il terzo farà il medesimo che haranno fatto gli altri:

This states that the man who leads the dance (in the case that the dance is done with a man and two ladies) does a seguito spezzato turning left, and a cadenza (col destro -- finishing on the right foot?). It then goes on to say how should the dance be done with a lady and two men then the lady leads the dance and does this first. Then the two others in the dance also do the seguito and the cadenza.

This fits neatly into the "B" section of the music which is then repeated 3 times at the end of the "A" (verse) section, leading to a fairly standard Cascarda style chorus.

The problem is that all reconstructions I've seen, and also all copies of the music I've seen, repeat this chorus at the end of each of the other verses. This makes sense, although I can't read anything into any of the above (Italian) words that mandates this as going at the end of each verse. Nor is there anything at the end of the verses that says this should be done that way.

Are we just assuming that since this looks like a chorus it should be done that way? My reconstruction of the other verses seems to show that there is nothing else that fits into the repeated B sections of the music. Or am I missing something?

Secondly, the "jousting" section of the dance, following immediately on from the above says:

dopò quello che guida il Ballo, farà due Passi presti innanzi, & la Cadenza, principiando col sinistro, con cinque Seguiti battuti del Canario, principiandoli pur col sinistro: & chi non sapesse fargli, farà in sua vece quattro Trabuchetti: poi si seguirà con due Riprese, due Trabuchetti alla sinistra, un Seguito spezzato volto alla sinistra, & la Cadenza col destro:

OK, so my reading of this:

Begin with two passi presti, starting on the left, and a cadenza. 5 seguiti battuti al canario, L R L R L, or if you are unable to do this then do 4 trabuchetti L R L R. 2 riprese, and 2 trabuchetti, beginning L. 1 seguito spezzato, turning left and a cadenza.

(this follows Etienne's reconstruction so far, except that he has 4 seguiti battuti and not 5).

... continuing with ...

... quello poi che starà à man dritta di lui, farà la medesima mutanza, che haurà fatta esso: & il medesimo farà il terzo compagno. Ciò fatto, giostraranno insieme in questa maniera, cioè; Ogn' uno si voltarà col fianco sinistro per dentro, facendo quattro Seguiti spezzati, uno innanzi, uno in dietro, & due passando innanzi, principiandoli col sinistro: & quello che guida, passerà sempre in mezo, cambiando luogo: il medesimo torneranno à fare un' altra volta; tornando però ogn' uno al suo luogo.

My reading:

... 4 seguiti spezzati, one forwards, one backwards, and 2 more forwards passing each other. Turning around and then repeat this so that you return to your place.

Now I'm unsure of the meaning of the sentence beginning "quello poi che stara" and continuing to "cioe". It appears to be saying that this joust is repeated, or that it's all done together. There seems to be something in there saying that something is done by all parties, but I'm not sure whether "mutanza" is here referring to just this small joust part or the entire variation containing the joust part.

Etienne's reconstruction has the leader doing the first section beginning with the passi presti through to the riprese, trabuchetti, spezzato and cadenza, then everyone doing the 4 spezzati together so that they switch places, then the 4 spezzati again so they switch back, then the turning spez/cadenza chorus (repeated for everyone, although I don't see anything in the original to back that up unless my reading of the first variation is wrong), and then the entire variation repeated 3 times so that everyone has a turn at leading the joust section.

Is there enough in the dance description to justify this? Or should the joust section only be done once, lead by the solo man (or lady)?

There are 3 other variations in the dance, which means that including the introduction, the 3 jousts, and the 3 others, there should be 7 repeats of the music. If the joust is only done once, then there should only be 5 repeats of the music. The music by Waits of Southwark has 5 repeats.

Comments?

**From: Diana
Cruickshank**

**Subject: Re: bella
gioiosa**

**Date: Wed, 7 Nov
2001 05:00:52 EST**

To Del - a quick reply! with greetings!!!!

First, the ritornello: I think that the repeat of this section is clearly enough (!!!) indicated, as in your own break-down, by the fact of it being termed a ritornello in the music - plus the comment that the main A music "farassi duoi tempi senza li Ritornelli". This seems clearly enough to suggest that the music should be played as - AA BBB, each time through.

Your implied question on the Cadenza - finishing on the right foot? - is, I believe, simply a statement that the cadenza is made with the R foot, which then finishes behind the L foot.

The Second Section - the 5 seg. battuti are tricky in timing, starting on the second bar of the cadenza's (two-barred) tempo, but wonderfully showy!!

The text then seems to indicate that the "pre-joust - show-off - warm-up!!" is to be done, first, by the middle 'man', then by the person on his/her R, and finally by the person on his/her L - SO three times in all. I read this by the punctuation - a colon, as in the description of the three 'chorus' turning spezzati.

However, there then comes the problem of the joust proper!.. which is, of course, done by all three, together. Is that, then, a fourth playing of the A music - or should one, in fact, make the side people do the "pre-joust" together so that there need only be two playings of the A music (plus ritornello!) then the joust proper - but that then requires a further playing of A ...

But their "recovery" or "let's be friends again" section uses two As anyway and so the AA sequence breaks down anyway.....

Mutanza - where it is written - must refer to what has preceded it - viz. The seg. battuti sequence, which is to be done by all - in turn, I believe.

So I would do that small section, then the actual "joust" and return to place - as indicated by the "cio fatto" - so the joust must follow after what "has been done" and, presumably, therefore, only happen the once.

My full version (open to revision!) runs as:

AA BBB; AAAA BBB; (this is the first long paragraph)

then AAA BBB; (the next para, with the recovery and mini-joust - the version more often encountered elsewhere)

and, finally, AA BBB. (being the 'catena' and the finale!)

I look forward to reading other comments and interpretations....

Diana

[Cruickshank, Salisbury, UK.]

From: Steven Bush Greetings.

Subject: Re: bella gioiosa

Date: Wed, 7 Nov 2001 15:13:29 -0600

As I heard that my reconstruction of Bella Gioiosa was being discussed here, I figured that it would be a good time to join the list.

My name is Steven Bush and I am known as Etienne de Clermont in the SCA. I have been doing Renaissance dance for twelve years, teaching it for ten years and have been studying Italian Ren dance (primarily 16th C.) for six years.

The problem is that all reconstructions I've seen, and also all copies of the music I've seen, repeat this chorus at the end of each of the other verses. This makes sense, although I can't read anything into any of the above (Italian) words that mandates this as going at the end of each verse. Nor is there anything at the end of the verses that says this should be done that way.

Are we just assuming that since this looks like a chorus it should be done that way? My reconstruction of the other verses seems to show that there is nothing else that fits into the repeated B sections of the music. Or am I missing something?

As Diana stated, the lute tabulature in *Il Ballarino* indicates that the music for the ritornello should be played after every verse. "farassi duoi Tempi senza li Ritornelli." "Questo ritornello farassi tre volte." Which I translate as "done two times without refrains" and "This refrain done three times." This leads to the AA BBB pattern which you pointed out. As there is nothing else in the dance that would fit into the BBB section, I assumed that the same ritornello should be done each time. The one concession that I made was the order in which turns are done. I decided to have the original leader do the turn first in every verse, except during the solo verses, in which the soloist does it first.

Begin with two passi presti, starting on the left, and a cadenza. 5 seguiti battuti al canario, L R L R L, or if you are unable to do this then do 4 trabuchetti L R L R. 2 riprese, and 2 trabuchetti, beginning L. 1 seguito spezzato, turning left and a cadenza.

(this follows Etienne's reconstruction so far, except that he has 4 seguiti battuti and not 5).

Actually, my original reconstruction does have 5 Canarii in 4 beats, but the transcription in the Terpsichore booklet only shows four. Unlike Diana, I have not been able to figure out how to do five in that amount of time.

... quello poi che starà à man dritta di lui, farà la medesima mutanza, che haurà fatta esso: & il medesimo farà il terzo compagno. Ciò fatto, giostraranno insieme in questa maniera,

Now I'm unsure of the meaning of the sentence beginning "quello poi che stara" and continuing to "cioe". It appears to be saying that this joust is repeated, or that it's all done together. There seems to be something in there saying that something is done by all parties, but I'm not sure whether "mutanza" is here referring to just this small joust part or the entire variation containing the joust part.

Etienne's reconstruction has the leader doing the first section beginning with the passi presti through to the riprese, trabuchetti, spezzato and cadenza, then everyone doing the 4 spezzati together so that they switch places, then the 4 spezzati again so they switch back, then the turning spez/cadenza chorus (repeated for everyone, although I don't see anything in the original to back that up unless my reading of the first variation is wrong), and then the entire variation repeated 3 times so that everyone has a turn at leading the joust section.

Is there enough in the dance description to justify this? Or should the joust section only be done once, lead by the solo man (or lady)?

The instructions definitely indicate that the three dancers do the same thing ("farà la medesima mutanza" Do the same section), one at a time (the leader, then the person to the right and then the third). This could easily be interpreted as meaning they should do it one after the other, before doing the joust section of the verse, especially since it comes before the description of the joust. But that would require playing with the music and repeating the A section four times, instead of the indicated two, for that part of the dance. While I have massaged music before to make it fit better with the steps, it did not seem to fit with the standard Cascarda style, here. I decided it would work better if each person had a chance to do the solo and lead the joust in separate verses.

Even though I originally reconstructed this dance four years ago, I think that I would still do it the same way. But I am always looking for constructive criticism.

There are 3 other variations in the dance, which means that including the introduction, the 3 jousts, and the 3 others, there should be 7 repeats of the music. If the joust is only done once, then there should only be 5 repeats of the music. The music by Waits of Southwark has 5 repeats.

I have not heard the Waits version of the music, but if it does not have the extra repeats in the second section of the dance, it would require the dancers to do the first part at the same time.

Steve

**From: Diana
Cruickshank**

**Subject: Re: bella
gioiosa**

**Date: Mon, 12 Nov
2001 11:30:45 EST**

To add some further comments to all this -

I would agree with Etienne / Steve that the Chorus figure should be initiated by the soloist in the relevant solo sections - IF one were to have only one A. It is quite a nice idea to include a second A by having each solo "completed", as it were, by the joust - and certainly would stick to the musical pattern! However, since I think all three solos happen sequentially, to be followed by the Refrain, then the question does not, for me, arise!

It's a nice idea, though! And, I said before, I am not happy with having AA BBB; then AAAA BBB; then AAA BBB; and, finally, and more correctly, AA BBB. Steve's alternative would also make a rather longer dance than many audiences might appreciate - though I am sure the dancers would love it!!

But then, one stumbles on Caroso's own statement of 'cio fatto' - apparently clearly stating that all three should do their solo before they start the joust that first joust.

As for the timing of the five Seg. batt. di Canario, I slip the first one in at the end of the cadenza, where the music (bar 4) happily encourages the foot into the rhythm!!!

The fact that Caroso suggests only four trabuchetti, if one cannot do the battuti, rather than five of them, only means a longer (more "normal"!!) cadenza before equally normal trabuchetti. The final seg. batt. is the tricky one if one over-indulges in the stamp!! since it comes immediately before the riprese to the left!!

I should, however, like to know more of any rhythm that might be recommended by María José Ruiz.

I am also concerned by Caroso's division of the instructions into paragraphs which do not, apparently, fit his musical pattern. So any suggestions there would be welcome.

Diana

From: Dorothee Wortelboer

Subject: bella gioiosa

Date: Wed, 14 Nov 2001 11:24:34 +0100

I come in rather late on the Bella Gioiosa discussion. As I never tackled the dance, I didn't look too closely at the several contributions, but since I was looking up dances for three a few days ago I hit upon Bella Gioiosa and decided to work it out.

As I deleted part of the discussion, I can't look up any more what everybody wrote, but anyway: I think the problems in reconstructing this cascarda are just a few, but they are a bit baffling indeed!

In the first place (and I seem to remember somebody mentioned this before):

I don't see how the ritornello could be slipped in anywhere except after the first part of the dance, which would neatly fit into 2x A. So, at this phase of reconstruction, my repeats of the music would read AA BBB followed by 9x A. I come to this conclusion when I try to keep to the rule that in one dance (or at least in sections with one and the same rhythm), one doesn't fiddle with the durations of step sequences. This seems to pose no problem at first: I have taken 4 bars for riverenza, scambiata and seguito semidoppio. Two bars for spezzato and cadenza, one bar for trabuchetto, passo grave, ripresa and fioretto a pie pari. Now we come to the problem steps: only in the first section of the dance passi gravi are indicated and in the pattern of this section they fit neatly in one bar each. Later in the dance Caroso gives passi presti. Where these occur after the ritornelli, where the one who leads starts with two passi presti and cadenza, I would tend to see these as a little sequence in itself, with one bar for the two passi and one bar for the cadenza. This brings us to the timing of the next problem step: five seguiti battuti del Canario he says, or four trabuchetti. Either the five is an error, or (and this seems more likely): five seguiti battuti del Canario are, for firework and rhythm, the more interesting sequence and it's only for the dummies he condescends to give the four trabuchetti. I would then take 1 bar each for the first four seguiti battuti and 2 bars for the fifth, after which the 2 riprese, 2 trabuchetti, spezzato and cadenza neatly fit into the rest of the A section. As the number of the seg. battuti is uneven, it seems OK to give the last one (or, if you prefer, the first one) an extra bar; the same thing often happens when you do 3 trabuchetti and keep your balance one bar longer on the last one.

But we're not finished with the passi presti yet. In later sections of the dance they pop up again. After the fioretti a pie pari, they seem to need the duration of the passo grave (one bar each) and then this section and its repeat fit neatly into the 2x 8 bars of an A section. Whatever fiddling around with the duration of steps only gets this section into a muddle, not fitting to the musical phrasing at all. For those of you who don't like or don't believe in fast tempi: I did try a two bars' fioretto a pie pari, also a two bars' seguito battuto, but there seems no way to fit sections of dance to sections of music then, and inserting the ritornello more often doesn't seem to help either.

Then there's the last mentioning of the passi presti, after the catena. The chain in 6 spezzati would take 12 bars, and the two passi presti and cadenza go into the last four bars of the A section. So again they seem to have the same duration as the passi gravi here.

Even the last section of the dance fits into the 16 bar A section, without the ritornello even only played once at the end. On the other hand, if you would take two bars for each seguito battuto (but this wouldn't be consistent with my 1 bar each in the earlier section), you would need the ritornello played once for the spezzato and cadenza at the end.

There might be an error in the writing of those first two passi gravi – he might mean passi presti taking one bar each. Still I realise that my passi presti-cadenza timing would be inconsistent with the duration I set for these movements. I think Diana Cruicshank has a similar idea in mind when she says she slips in the first seguito battuto with the cadenza.

Sorry if I just repeated what others already have said - but I hope to have given some new fuel to the discussion.

Dorothee Wortelboer

Discussion on SCA-dance

After sitting dormant on rendance for about 6 months, the subject popped up on the sca-dance mailing list, with similar disagreement between all concerned. I have trimmed some of these posts as they repeated what was said earlier on rendance.

From: Kirsten Garner
Subject: Re: [SCA-Dance] we're here to make music for you! (long)
Date: Wed, 25 Sep 2002 17:47:25 -0700

Greetings all...

Ok, in addition to the suggestions I sent privately, I second the motion for a danceable recording for BELLA Gioiosa.

Which begs a question. I have a beautiful recording of Bella Gioiosa (which was the first 16th century Italian I ever learned, btw), but it does not accord with the dance as taught by y'all out east. A friend of mine taught the dance here a few weeks ago (the eastern version), and while similar to what I learned in Europe, it had a very odd repeat structure as well as some moves which, to my mind, were rather extraneous. Could someone explain the eastern version to me? Where it came from, that sort of thing?

In search of knowledge...

Julian ferch Rhys

From: David Reyes

Subject: Bella Gioiosa WAS Re: [SCA-Dance] we're here to make music for you! (long)

Date: Thu, 26 Sep 2002 05:46:04 -0700

I can't speak for Etienne, but I think he might object to being credited as an easterner. Of course, for us in the dance wasteland, even Northshield is east... Yes, this one is my fault. Sigh. I think that I got a lot more out of the experience than the dancers I tried teaching it to.

The main difference between Etienne's reconstruction and the one Julian had learned was that some of the verses did not repeat the chorus in Julian's version. These probably correspond to the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th verses in Etienne's reconstruction, the solos. The recording Julian just got appears to work to her version, which means it must have an uneven repeat structure, whereas Etienne's reconstruction uses the same music for seven repeats.

There was also disagreement with the reconstruction of the fioretti a pie pari. Julian and I didn't actually discuss at the time how she learned it, so I'll let her elaborate on that.

Bartolo

From: Steven Bush

Subject: [SCA-Dance] Re: Bella Gioiosa

Date: Thu, 26 Sep 2002 19:00:56 -0500

Greetings from Etienne.

The Eastern-Rite ;-) version is my fault.

So, why did I reconstruct the dance the way I did? There was a discussion of this on Rendance, recently. Well, that could be answered in two possible ways. The simple and not really correct answer would be to say that the recording I had for the music ran through seven times, for both the verse and the chorus.

The actual reason is that I felt the dance worked the best that way. Unfortunately, with reconstruction, there are some ambiguities and we can never be sure exactly what the original author really meant, whether it is due to changes in the language (or our lack of familiarity with it), things the author assumed everyone should know or typos.

In reading through the original Italian and examining the music, I decided that instructions could be interpreted one of two ways, either the individual turns (Spez, Cadenza) happen only once, at the end of the first verse [repeat structure Ax2, Bx3, Ax10] or they happen after every verse [(Ax2, Bx3)x7]. Though the first "seems" to be suggested by the text, the latter made more sense to me, from both a musical point of view and because I have never seen another Cascarda with an irregular repeat structure. So, in essence, it was the music that "told" me how to do the dance.

The text never says that the individual turns should repeat, but the music suggests this to me. Caroso also appears to say that the solos (starting Passo, Passo, Cadenza) should come one after another, before the joust*. If this were true and the solo turns come after every verse then the repeats would be Ax2, Bx3, Ax4, Bx3, (Ax2, Bx3)x3. To me, this makes even less sense than the first version I listed. I chalk up the differences between my version and literal translation as one of those ambiguities.

*For those not familiar with my reconstruction, the 2nd - 4th verses are: (solo, joust, individual turns)x3. If anyone would like a copy of my reconstruction, email me directly and I will send you a copy (text, Word doc or PDF). If there is enough interest, I will post a copy to the list (text). If you want to compare mine to the original, it is available on Greg's website.

From: Kirsten Garner
Subject: [SCA-Dance] Re: Bella Gioiosa
Date: Fri, 27 Sep 2002 15:03:44 -0700

My "best guess" reconstruction of what Il Ballarino is saying repeats what Caroso says to repeat only after he says to repeat it, however this makes the dance have a very odd chorus / repeat structure

It makes it look like AABBBAAAA AAA AA AA (as I believe Etienne later posted). Caroso only explicitly states that one dances the steps we've come to associate with the "B" music in verse one (using the paragraphs in the original as "verses" and ignoring, for the time being, the commonly-accepted "missing" paragraph indicator after the spezz-cadenza passages in verse one).

It also means that it doesn't match the structure of any of the other Cascarde.

I don't know if I'm comfortable with saying something is explicitly, absolutely, wrong. After all, we extrapolated what we consider the "rules" of a cascarda from Caroso's dances, so I'm not entirely certain I'm happy with throwing one out the window or declaring it's wrong just because it doesn't fit with our pre-conceived notion of what the dance should look like. Look at the debates over 'Il Bel Fiore' and 'Argeers', where elaborate reconstructions were made to fix what were perceived by modern standards as errors in the text (resulting in very interesting variations from the original source), and where it was later demonstrated that if one simply followed the text as written, while the result was not what modern eyes conceived of as "correct", the dance did work. I'm an archaeologist by profession, and a lot of my discomfort at the idea that "the source is just wrong" comes from seeing professional archaeologists discount (and indeed in some cases destroy or bury) evidence which did not accord with their theory of what should be coming from a particular site. It's something of which we should all be wary.

It also doesn't match the instructions for the music which say to play ABBBB each time.

With this, I cannot argue. I believe it comes down to a choice of whether one wished to be guided by the text or the music. I believe Etienne declared that he was guided by the music. I cannot see that either side is more correct than the other, although personally I tend more towards the text. Matter of personal choice, however. :)

Etienne makes the additional compensation of suggesting that the solo is done 3 times, and not once, as is suggested by one of the phrases in the original.

Yes, Caroso does say that each person is to do an individual solo made up of 2 passi, a cadenza, 5 seguiti battuti, 2 riprese, 2 trabuchetti, a spezz and a cadenza. However, it is the addition of the jousting section into each verse following the solo that I cannot agree with, and I think it is the heart of my difficulties with the "Eastern Rite" Bella Gioiosa (thanks Etienne! What a great phrase! :). Caroso very definitely states that *all three* solos are done first and *then* the jousting part begins (Cio fatto, giostraranno insieme...). {BTW, getting the 5 seguiti battuti in there isn't all that difficult. Just takes some getting used to. ;}

Since the wording in Caroso is obviously somewhat faulty, getting a workable and correct dance out of it is probably more important than fitting exactly with his instructions.

I will agree that the wording is somewhat odd. I will also agree that getting a workable and enjoyable dance out of it is of utmost importance. However, I think that we are placing undue emphasis on the symmetry and regularity of the dance in stating that changing it to the degree that Etienne has done (making it AABBBx7 and therefore "regular") makes it "correct". Many of Caroso's dances do not have this type of extreme regularity in *Il Ballarino*. After all, he did make a point in *Nobilita* of saying that his earlier dances were often incorrect, being, as they were, most asymmetrical and irregular. He then goes on to "fix" some of his earlier creations! One can only wonder what he would have done with *Bella Gioiosa* had he chosen to include it in *ND*.

Postings on the Lochac Dance mailing list

From: Adina Hamilton
Subject: [lochac-dance] bella gioiosa
Date: Thu, 14 Nov 2002 18:49:40 +1100

Here's a reconstruction of *Bella Gioiosa* from *Il Balarino*. I've just knocked it out and am in the mulling it over stage, and may well change my mind about some bits. Input sought! If you want a nicely formatted copy in Word, email me and I'll send it to you direct. I assume Del will get upset if we start sending great planetkilling attachments to the list. I can email you a noteworthy file of the music, too, or you can download Mathilde's transcription in various formats from

<http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/caroso/music/>

(note the noteworthy version won't play my repeat schedule unless you fiddle with it).

First, though, here are the notes on what I thought I was doing:

1) Fitting it to the music.

The first variation obeys the instructions on the tablature to play the A music twice and the B music three times. Otherwise, the 'ritornello' B music always goes with the dance unit of a spezato turned over the left shoulder followed by a cadenza (notated as spez(l) cad(r)). The one exception is in the second section of the third variation, where the spez-cad unit seems to be in the middle of the main piece of music to enable people to change direction easily as they dance round the circle and back.

Despite mulling over Del's suggestion of using teh BBB spez cads as a chorus, and looking at another reconstruction that did so, I have not inserted any extra of the spez cad units, except possibly at the end, where I have made the assumption that each persion does their own, as specified in the first variation. As you will see, the this means the repeat pattern of the music is not regular. However I think that this way it responds to the dance ideas in an appropriate way that a forced regularisation would not. It also applies Occam's razor by assuming the minimum number of misprints or badly written sections on the part of Caroso and his printers. Real musicians should have no trouble with the repeat schedule; in period improvising variations on the tune repeated 5 times in a row would have been second nature. But does anyone else have a theory about this?

riverinza in balzetto - 8 bars

seguiti spezzati, scambiate, passi gravi, cadenze, seguiti battuti del

canario - all 2 bars

passi presti, trabuchetti, riprese - all 1 bar

2) Textual problems

The paragraphs are weird; the way I read it the first para encompasses the first two variations and the first playing of the A music in the third, each para thereafter deals with one playing of the A music in the third variation (which is the idea-heavy variation).

Where I have put 4 bats, the text says 5. It then says you can do 4 trabs instead if you want. I have assumed 5 is the misprint, and that if you were wimping out of canary steps you would do nice slow (grav = 2 bar) trabs. This is where I feel dodgiest about the whole thing, what do others think?

3) Anything else?

Cheers

Eleanor

From: Del

Subject: [lochac-dance] bella gioiosa

**Date: Fri Nov 15
14:39:00 2002**

In summary: this dance is a bit strange because the dance instructions don't fit the music. It's unusual for Caroso to give us instructions on how to play the music, but in this case he does -- it's AA BBB. So that's significant. The problem is that unless you mangle the dance, you aren't going to get AA BBB except for the first time through.

Opinions differ about whether you should be mangling the dance to match the music or mangling the music to match the dance -- see the fairly long-winded discussion as to the rationale different people chose to use for doing either.

Etienne de Clermont's reconstruction, which is the one I think Adina has seen, does AABBB x 7. The recording on the Waits of Southwark album "Silence is Deadly" does AABBB x 5. Neither Adina's reconstruction nor one by Diana Cruickshank match AABBB times anything. There's no right or wrong answer. Etienne's one is the one commonly danced in the barn at Pennsic.

Despite mulling over Del's suggestion of using the BBB spez cads as a chorus, and looking at another reconstruction that did so, I have not inserted any extra of the spez cad units, except possibly at the end, where I have made the assumption that each person does their own, as specified in the first variation. As you will see, the this means the repeat pattern of the music is not regular. However I think that this way it responds to the dance ideas in an appropriate way that a forced regularisation would not. It also applies Occam's razor by assuming the minimum number of misprints or badly written sections on the part of Caroso and his printers. Real musicians should have no trouble with the repeat schedule; in period improvising variations on the tune repeated 5 times in a row would have been second nature. But does anyone else have a theory about this?

Yeah, actually I don't have problems with either but then it's something best debated by the likes of Cormac and Mathilde than myself.

I certainly have no problems going up to the likes of Geoffrey et al and saying "play this AABBBCCBAAABBBCCCBAAAABB" or any other such squiggly incantation, but I do find that musicians do tend to trip over themselves a bit if it's complex. e.g. even in *Contentezza d'Amore*, which is AAAAA BBCBBC, I find that a lot of the time the musicians have trouble counting to 5 while concentrating on playing all of the bits that make up the A section.

Even in *Conto dell'Orco* I've had problems getting the musicians to play AABBAABBBCC, and each bit is only 8 bars long.

The paragraphs are weird; the way I read it the first para encompasses the first two variations and the first playing of the A music in the third

That seems to be pretty much a consensus opinion.

each para thereafter deals with one playing of the A music in the third variation (which is the idea-heavy variation).

Depends on how you break up the variations. Your variations are quite long.

I would have called the second playing of A "variation 4". Etienne has your second A taking up more music -- AAA in fact. I guess his *seguiti semidoppii* are longer. The *seguito doppio* in *Conto dell'Orco* takes 4 bars -- as long as 4 *passi gravi*, however a *seguito semidoppio* in a *cascarda* is unusual so it's anyone's guess as to how many bars it should take.

**From: Adina
Hamilton**
**Subject: lochac-
dance] bella gioiosa**
**Date: Fri Nov 15
23:23:00 2002**

Yep. And I figure that throughout his 2 books Caroso wrote the text out deliberately in considerable detail, and then provided a piece of tab detailing the main musical phrases to be used in the dance. Only very occasionally with instructions as to which bit got played where how many times. I also figure that the aspect of his reputation as a dance master that his two texts seek to further is the aspect of choreographer (and general suck to his patrons and potential patrons, viz the oft overlooked and undervalued poems); my reading of the differences between Nobilta and Il Ballarino is that by the 1600 text this desire to be known as a choreographer shaped the text's discourse even more strongly, and must further be understood in the context of humanist ideas about the structure and meaning of art. I'd also write a little essay about how Il Ballarino is effectively the first time that this sort of dance language has been transmitted in a big way through a textual process rather than an oral one, and that Nobilta is probably Caroso's response to a now unknown audience's response to experiencing choreography in a new - textualised - way through Il B.

Um. I am seriously wandering. I'll save all that for life post thesis. What I'm trying to say is that I think there are good reasons

- 1) within Caroso's texts themselves, and
 - 2) from what we know about the 16th C culture Caroso operated in
- to generally give the text primacy over the music when interpreting the structure of his dances.

Opinions differ about whether you should be mangling the dance to match the music or mangling the music to match the dance -- see the fairly long-winded discussion as to the rationale different people chose to use for doing either.

Yes, it seems to mostly come to a quasi-religious divide over which a priori assumption you make. As I indicated above I think this should be the realm of evidence not faith, and I think the evidence is on my side (like all good religious maniacs, I guess). Which isn't to say that the music doesn't have real value for making sense of the dance, and that I don't use my ears to help me reconstruct.

Having scanned through the list discussions I would emphasise more heavily my use of Occam's razor. I have assumed the minimum necessary differences from what is written.

A few people on both sca-dance and rendance think you can do 5 bats in this time, it's just tricky. See Dorothee Wortelboer's post in the pile of stuff I picked up from rendance.

Hmm - I can't do this without assuming non-uniform step lengths, which I am loathe to do, since Caroso is pretty keen on the steps having fixed relationships to each other. Haven't seen her full reconstruction though obviously.

From: Del
Subject: [lochac-dance] bella gioiosa
Date: Sat Nov 16
 18:01:02 2002

Yep. And I figure that throughout his 2 books Caroso wrote the text out deliberately in considerable detail, and then provided a piece of tab detailing the main musical phrases to be used in the dance. Only very occasionally with instructions as to which bit got played where how many times.

Yup, this is my point. It's unusual for him to do this, but he does it on this one occasion.

I'm prepared to accept, however, that he meant for the tune to be played that way the in the first figure of the dance, and then all bets are off. I just think it's an interesting point.

From: Del
dance@sca.org.au
lochac-dance] bella gioiosa
Date: Wed Nov 20
 18:17:01 2002

There are only 3 cascarde for 3 from *Il Ballarino*, in the order in which they appear:

- Squilina
- Allegrezza d'Amore
- Bella Gioiosa

Alta Sergarda appears to be for as many as will in a circle, as does Fedelta. Vita, e quanto Haggio doesn't say, but it is probably for two since it says "l'Huomo" and "la Dama" in the singular.

Spagnoletta Nuova isn't labeled as a cascarda, but follows the typical cascarda pattern and is in triple time, and is for 3, but for the purposes of evidence gathering I'd ignore it. It's worth noting that it's entirely regular, however.

Even if Squilina and Allegrezza d'Amore were regular cascarde, saying that Bella Gioiosa contains typographic errors because it is irregular would only be based on 1 out of 3. I'd prefer 1 out of 20 or so before I bang the gavel. There are 55 or so regular basse dances in the Brussels manuscript, plus a dozen or so irregular ones, plus La Danse de Cleves which is wildly irregular, but that doesn't mean it doesn't exist.

Reconstructions

I have listed the reconstructions that I have available. In particular what I've done is highlighted what I consider to be variations from the original text in *Il Ballarino*, by placing them in italics.

Reconstruction by Etienne de Clermont

- Verse 1 – AA** Take hands and Riverenza, Trab L, R, L, R & drop hands.
Turn single L in Spez L & R, passi L&R, Cadenza.
Face L in wheel & Spez LRLR, Scambiate L & R
-
- Chorus – BBB** Leader turn single L: Spez L, Cadenza. Person 2 same. Person 3 same.
-
- Verse 2 – AA BBB** Leader passi L&R, Cadenza; Trab LRLR or Canario LRLR
Leader RpL&L, Trab L&R, Turn single L with Spez L, Cadenza.
Joust all: L side in: Spez L forwards; Spez R backwards, Spez L&R to switch.
Repeat chorus.
-
- Verse 3 – AA BBB** Verse 2 with person 2 (to right of leader) as leader, *repeat the chorus with person 2 leading.*
-
- Verse 4 – AA BBB** Verse 2 with person 3 (to left of leader) as leader, *repeat the chorus with person 3 leading.*
-
- Verse 5 – AA BBB** Face L in wheel: seguito semidoppio L&R, RpL&L, Trab L&R
Turn single L: Spez L, Cadenza.
Face R in wheel: seguito semidoppio R&L, Rp R&R, Trab R&L
Turn single R, Spez R, Cadenza
Repeat chorus with person 1 leading.
-
- Verse 6 – AA BBB** Fioretti a pie pari L&R, passi L&R back.
Spez L&R, changing places, leader passes between.
Fioretti a pie pari R&L, passi R&L back.
Spez R&L, changing sides as in joust, leader passes between.
Chain with 6 spez, leader between then L.
Passi L&R, cadenza.
Repeat chorus with person 1 leading.
-
- Verse 7 – AA BBB** 4 trab LRLR, 4 seguiti batt del canario LRLR
Rp L&L, Trab L&R, turn single with spez L & cadenza
4 trab RLRL, 4 seguiti batt del canario RLRL
Rp R&R, Trab R&L, turn single with spez R & cadenza
Repeat chorus with person 1 leading.
-

Reconstruction by Adina Hamilton

First Variation -- AA

A
 All take hands in the circle:
 Riv in balzetto
 trab(l) trab(r) trab(l) trab(r)
 drop hands
 turning out over own left shoulder:
 spez(l) spez(r)
 A
 coming forward back into your place:
 p grav (l) p grav ®
 all moving around the circle:
 spez(l) spez(r) spez(l) spez(r)
 scamb(l) scamb(r)

Chorus – BBB

1st person
 turned over own left shoulder:
 spez(l) cad(r)
 2nd person (on the right of the first person):
 turned over own left shoulder
 spez(l) cad(r)
 3rd person:
 turned over own left shoulder
 spez(l) cad(r)

Second Variation – Music ABABAB

A
 1st person:
 forwards into the circle
 p pres(l) p pres(r) cad(l)
 bat(l) bat(r) bat(l) bat(r) [or 4 trabs]
 rip(l) rip(l) trab(l) trab(r)
 B
 CHORUS:
 spez(l) cad(r)
 AB
 2nd person does this
 AB
 3rd person does this

**Third Variation –
Music AAAAAA**

JOUSTING!

A

Each turns so that their left side points into the circle
spez(l) forward spez(r) backwards

forwards so that the first person passes between the other two:

spez(l) spez(r)
spez(l) forward spez(r) backwards

forwards so that the first person passes between the other two and
everyone is back in their own place:

spez(l) spez(r)

A

all moving around the circle:

segd(l) segd(r)
rip(l) rip(l) trab(l) trab(r)

turn over own left shoulder, use it to end up facing the other way:

spez(l) cad(r)

A

all moving back around the circle:

segd(r) segd(l)
rip(l) rip(l) trab(l) trab(r)

turn over own left shoulder, use it to end up facing :

spez(l) cad(r)

A

fpp(l) fpp(r)
p pres(l) p pres(r) backwards

forwards so that the first person passes between the other two:

spez(l) spez(r)
fpp(l) fpp(r)
p pres(l) p pres(r) backwards

forwards so that the first person passes between the other two:

spez(l) spez(r)

A

making a hay, the first person goes between the other two and to the left to
start it, all finish back in their own places:

spez(l) spez(r) spez(l) spez(r) spez(l) spez(r)

forward into the circle:

p pres(l) p pres(r) cad(l)

A

trab(l) trab(r) trab(l) trab(r)

bat(l) bat(r) bat(l) bat(r)

rip(l) rip(l) trab(l) trab(r)

Chorus – Music B

All together

turn over own left shoulder:

spez(l) cad(r)

Summary

The basic problem is that the dance doesn't match the music. This can be solved in one of two ways – by changing the music to match the dance, or changing the dance to match the music. There are arguments for and against each solution.

Music

The music has two sections, A and B. A is 16 bars long and B is 4 bars long in the lute tablature.

The repeat structure of each reconstruction will be different. Etienne's reconstruction is (AABBB) x 7. Adina's reconstruction is AABBB ABABAB AAAAABB.

Note that another reconstruction by Diana Cruickshank evidently exists, based on her postings to the mailing lists, however I haven't seen it. The music for her reconstruction is AA BBB, AAAA BBB, AAA BBB, AA BBB.

Regularising the dance to match the music – Etienne's solution

The dance music as given is in two parts, A and B. The instructions with the music say to play the dance as AA BBB.

Note that it is fairly unusual for Caroso to give detailed instructions on how to play the music. For example, in his lute tablature sections he often gives us the tune in multiple sections, with dividing lines between each section, however with no instructions as to how many times each section should be played. In this dance, the instructions above the lute tablature clearly read “farassi duoi Tempi senza li Rotornelli” and in the second section “Questo ritonello farassi tre volte.” meaning play the first section twice and the second section three times. This is significant – especially because it is out of the ordinary for Caroso to do this.

The other argument in favour of changing the dance is that all of the two person cascarde are regular – in that they repeat the same piece of music some number of times with no changes in the way that it is played. We have about 30 or so cascarde of this type, and so there is sufficient evidence to say that all of them did.

The problem with the argument is that there are only 3 cascarde for three people in Il Ballarino. The other two are also regular, but the rules for a 2 person cascarde do not necessarily apply to a 3 person one. Having 2 regular and one irregular cascarde doesn't necessarily give us enough evidence to prove this argument.

Changing the dance music to match the step descriptions – Adina's solution.

There are no obvious typographic errors in this dance, and Caroso does not list it in his errata section at the back of Il Ballarino, therefore there is no specific reason to believe that this dance wasn't done as per the text.

Adina Hamilton's solution is that we should be applying the minimum number of changes to the text of a dance in order to make it match the music, and so we have to play the music in an irregular manner to match the dance description.

Of course, all of the arguments in favour of changing the dance are also arguments against not changing it, and vice-versa.

Neither solution can be proven – nobody has a time machine.
