

Teaching Notes: Allemandes

The Inns of Court dances from late sixteenth and early seventeenth century England are possibly the simplest known dances from the renaissance.

Introduction

Teaching Notes

Most of these dances are very similar in structure, like the Burgundian basse dances. I usually begin by teaching the basic steps and then a few of these dances in order of increasing difficulty.

These dances are entirely suitable for beginners. Even the most complex of these dances, the Black Allemande, can usually be learned by a beginner dancer in one or two lessons.

Repertoire

I have included here a basic repertoire of 3 allemandes that can be taught in 3 easy lessons (or one harder one). Generally it doesn't take more than half an hour to teach each dance, or perhaps longer for the Black Allemande. I suggest that you begin with this repertoire and then if you feel the need to do so, go and look in some of the other sources for these dances and teach some from there, in pretty much any order.

One warning: Because these dances are relatively simple, it's possible to get bored with them. Don't bore your students, you'll lose them. I would suggest switching to something more interesting after a few weeks of these dances.

Sources

Primary Sources

There are two main primary sources for the Almans, these are:

- Orchesography, by Thoinot Arbeau, which lists the music and tabulature for one Alman.
 - The Inns of Court manuscripts. These are transcribed in an article *Dancing in the Inns of Court*, in **Historical Dance**, The Journal of the Dolmetsch Historical Dance Society, Vol 2 No 5 (1986-87).
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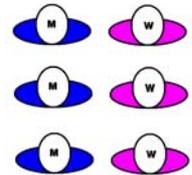
Reconstructions

There is also a book by Patri Pugliese, titled "Practice for Dauncynge" which contains transcriptions and reconstructions of most of the almans in the latter source, however it is out of print. More recently, there is also a book and CD titled "Dances from the Inns of Court" containing many of these dances, by Peter and Janelle Durham, which contains concordances from the various manuscripts.

It's worth getting hold of a copy of these sources, as they are not expensive and list a good number of dances that are not contained in this book. Allemandes are fairly easy to re-construct from the primary sources as Arbeau is available in translation, and the Inns of Court MSS are in English.

Starting Positions

It appears that all of the allemandes were done as line dances, for as many couples as will, as shown in the diagram.



Lesson 1: Basic Allemande Steps

Doubles and Turns

DL/DR --Double Left/Right, going forwards

In the English style of allemande, these are done in the same way as for a pavane. In the French style, these conclude with a pied en l'air, where the last step ends by bringing the trailing foot forwards and into the air, instead of just closing the step. This should be done by bending the raised leg at the knee, with the foot relaxed, while the rear leg is straight, and without a jump.

DLb/DRb -- Double Left/Right, going backwards

These steps are similar to the above steps, except going backwards.

DLh/DRh -- Double Left/Right Hop

Perform a DL or a DR. On the last step, instead of closing feet, take a small hop with the foot that is currently grounded, and finish with a small kick forwards, in the style of a "pied en l'air". This is the commonly danced "Allemande double", and there is some evidence that all of the doubles in allemandes not otherwise marked can be done with these hops. Where an allemande has doubles that are marked with hops, however, the rest of the doubles should be done without them.

TL -- Turn Left

Make a full turn (360°) over the left shoulder with one DL.

Lorayne Almayne

This is one of the simplest Allemandes. Like all of the other dances in this section, it is a dance for a line of couples.

Part A

1 - 8 DLh DRh DLh DRh 4 doubles forwards with hops.

Part B

1 - 8 DL DRb DL T(L/R) The last turn is a double turning away from your partner -- men turn to the left, ladies to the right.

9 - 16 DL DRb DL T(L/R) Repeat the above.

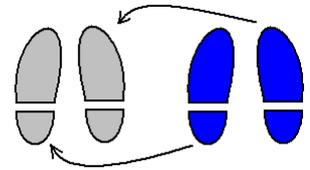
The dance then repeats from the beginning, one or several times.

Lesson 2: More Allemande Steps

Set and Turn

SLs -- Single Left, to the Side

Starting with feet closed (or wherever the feet ended up after the last step), step to the left with the left foot, and then join feet, stepping to the left with the right foot.



SRs -- Single Right to the Side

Step to the right with the right foot, then join feet, stepping to the right with the left foot.

STL -- Set and turn Left

Do a side single left, then a side single right, then do a Turn Left (SLs, SRs, TL).

Queen's Allemande

Part A

1 - 8 DLh DRh DLh DRh Four doubles forwards with hops.

Part B

1 - 4	DL DRb	A doubles forwards and a double back, finish by turning to face your partner
5 - 8	SLs SRs TL	Set and turn, turn to face forwards again.
9 - 16	Repeat	Repeat bars 1 - 8 as above.

The entire dance then repeats until the music runs out.

Lesson 3: The Black Allemande

This is by far the most complex of the Allemandes, which isn't really accusing it of much when you look at the complexity of the others. It's a fun dance.

Part A 1 - 8 DL DR DL DR Four doubles forwards. Finish by turning to face your partner, and drop hands.

Part B

1 - 4	DLb DR	Walk away from your partner, then back towards your partner. Turn 90°, to face your own left. Double left, men moving up the line, ladies moving down the line. Then turn 180° to the right. Double right, re-joining your partner. Turn to face your partner.
5 - 6	DL	
7 - 8	DR	

Part C

1 - 4	Men SLs SRs TL	Men set and turn
5 - 8	Ladies SLs SRs TL	Ladies set and turn

Part D To start this section, take both of your partner's hands.

1 - 2	TL	Walk around into your partner's place. These steps are done up the line, while holding hands. The singles here are actually slides, which are done in the same way as a quick single, sliding the trailing foot into place rather than stepping.
3 - 4	Men SRs SRs SRs SRs Ladies SLs SLs SLs SLs	
5 - 6	TL	Walk around back into your original place.
7 - 8	Men SRs SRs SRs SRs Ladies SLs SLs SLs SLs	Slide back down the line again.

Drop hands.

Part E 1 - 4 DLb DR Walk away from your partner, then back towards your partner.

Join hands and face forwards, to restart the dance with part A.

Repeat the dance until the music runs out. On the second and fourth times through, part C is done with the ladies doing the first set and turn, and the men doing the second set and turn.
