

Piano Workshop — FOLKMadness 2017

Part I: Basic contra dance requirements.

Contra dances have eye contact, momentum, and phrasing.

Tempo: walking pace, 116-120 bpm, a narrow range. And **steady!**

Tunes: A contra dance is 32 bars (64 beats) long. Each time through the tune is once through the dance. So — 32-bar tune, usu. AABB form, simple and clear is best.

Downbeats: Each move is eight beats long. Strong downbeats (“fenceposts”) every eight beats helps the dancers.

Evening: A dozen dances, each about eight minutes (sixteen times through).

Technique: Piano accompaniment sounds like ‘boom-chuck’.

Part II: How to play for dancers.

Pound on the balances.

- both hands at once
- LLF&B, B&S, balance-the-wave, Petronellas, etc.

Drive to the top.

- don’t “stop” on eight, push through to “one” (the next fencepost)
- many possibilities: volume, chords, bass line (but don’t speed up!)

Lead with your closer.

- energy and enthusiasm are infectious

Part III: Shop talk — special topics.

Combining tunes into sets; matching sets to dances; styles of tunes.

Developing chords for tunes. Bass lines. Matters of taste.

Caller interaction. Jigs or reels? Potatoes. Reading a card. Flying starts.

Tune types: marches, jigs, reels. Combining them: “jig to reel”.

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<http://www.ericdancepiano.com/Piano.html>
<http://www.ericdancepiano.com/Socorro14.html>

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SIGN-UP SHEET

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