

Four-Part Harmony – What Makes a Great Evening

Class Period 7: Sun., 11:00-11:50 -- 50 minutes

Panelists

- Laura Lengnick - music
- Tyler Johnson (if willing) for sound
- Pat Petersen - calling (Pat is a well known English Country caller, early music teacher and CDSS board member)
- Stephen Stiebel - TCD board member and CDSS board member.
- Gail - caller and Sun Assembly English Dancers facilitator and caller

For each category below, what do you like or look for? 3 min. for the panelist to give their opinion, then 5 mins. for audience to add any other thoughts:

Music - Laura

Calling – Pat, Diane

Sound - Tyler

Skill on the floor (level of dance) - Stephen

Facilities – floor, other? - Gail

Atmosphere of the event – Stephen, Gail

Other? - FOOD

Notes from flip-chart during session:

Music fiddleance.net

- Phrasing
- “Close to the floor” – structured FOR dancing. – make you want to move through space. Various styles and tempos to match the dance.
- Dancers listen and respond (similar to the importance of giving weight)
- Music is really suited to the dance
- Melody, not just beat.
- Seeking musicians who work on this. (playing “close to the floor”)
- Callers who really work with the band.
- Variety
- Band watching the dancers and playing off of them.
- Training at camps
- Send local musicians for training.
- Musicians dance themselves.

Sound:

- Hear every instrument
- Not too loud
- Good friendly rapport with band
- Time to set up well --- not stressed
- Good rapport between dancers & sound person – (be nice to him/her; sound is a hard job!)
- Sound is critical! If it’s not good, there’s nothing the band can do. Can’t be an afterthought.
- Beat is clear (might be the band, not sound).
- Need good monitors; good equipment overall.
- NOT volunteer operators. Operator is dedicated to it all night long. But also dances to hear how it sounds while dancing.
- Best is when you don’t notice it.
- Attention to all parts of the floor – dead spots, hot spots, etc.
- Send sound operator for training – pay for it.
- Have the sound person join the sound listserve.
- Consultant and long-term plan.

Calling

- Prep from organizers re: skills, preferences, etc.
- Hall is right – big or small enough
- Organization easy to work with
- Music stand / podium, esp. for English
- Cordless mic.
- Water
- From the music:
 - Flexibility –to change on the fly
 - Knowledge of core repertoire
 - Pay attention to teaching
 - Fearless but also maintains basics
- From Dancers:
 - Kind and accepting of all
 - Helpful, but only as needed
 - Listen
 - Good humored
 - Appreciative
 - Interested in learning/growing
- Concise!
- Clear
- Not too long
- Name of dance and author
- Spot and fix problems – elegantly
- Watch ends of the line
- Keep calling if needed
- Watching dancers and taking care – bring it together when it falls apart
- Not blaming the dancers
- Compassionate, caring, relaxed – put dancers at ease
- Not too much info
- Get out of the way as soon as possible. Judgement.
- Style – get attention, but not overbearing, etc.
- Floor management – fine line.
- Not condescending.
- Dancers listen – trust caller
- Caller fulfills organization's vision

Dancers

- Safety – dance within space available. Good judgement regarding flourishes
- On time. Good flow. (Know how to skip a move, or adjust) vs. patience when not on time (impatience?)
- Experienced take newbies under wing.
- Break up clumps of new dancers – with grace.
- Kind, gentle guidance – don't push! Gentle correction
- Trust caller
- Etiquette
- Not too complicated
- Support each other – like on a sports team
- Invite others to not have to apologize for messing up.
- Dancing TO the music.
- Greater vision – individual, set, line, whole hall!
- Playfulness – not always too fancy
- Respect caller – pay attention. Come with willingness to learn something new – open to teaching.
- Motivation of dancers and building community.
- Connecting with each person up and down the line.
- Partner attends to needs of Partner.
- Open to various styles.
- Help only when needed. Educate dancers.

Atmosphere:

- Different age levels – diversity in community – everyone can meet as equals
- Sense of community vs. just entertainment
- Inclusiveness – politics, value systems, reasons for dancing
- Appropriate level for all to have fun.
- Accommodate others' style
- Inclusiveness, but respect community nature
- Truly non-competitive to find Partner.