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## Basics of Contra Calling 1

Seminardauer / Duration: 90 min with  
mic time

### Seminar content:

- Equipment
- Enunciation
- Presence
- Setting up a contra
- Walk through
- Timing

### Equipment (see also Equipment part I and II EEP General Level 2 and 3)

Before you are going to call a dance be sure to know the equipment used on stage.

#### Microphone

-handheld - headset -acoustic characteristics of micro

#### Amplifier

-controls for volume and tone (bass / treble)

#### Loudspeakers

-position (feedback)

#### Player for recorded music

-turn-table / CD-player / MD-player / MC-player

-hookup for the audio-out of PC

### Microphone Technique (see also: Working with a Microphone EEP General level2)

-Hold the microphone approx. 2 cm away from your mouth

-Do not touch the microphone with your lips.

-Speak directly into the microphone, not over it.

-Speak with your normal voice as you would if talking to a someone or small group standing nearby (Let the microphone do the work, don't yell into it.)

-Speak clearly

Be aware of the loudspeaker position. Avoid feedback.

Do not curl the cable.

### Enunciation / Delivery

-speak clearly and not too fast

-project your voice

-create the sound at the front of your mouth, not in your throat

-use your voice as an instrument that carries the rhythm of the music

-sound positive and vary delivery style to fit the music and the mood

-use your voice to emphasize the important information in the call.

### Presence

wear proper and clean clothes

watch your posture

be sure to know what you are going to do

be confident and sound it  
do not apologize for things you are not responsible for, but if you make a mistake don't deny it.

Setting-up a contra (see also Setting up a Contra EEP CT Level 2)

get the dancers' attention

Have them take a partner and promenade - preferable in counterclockwise direction  
for a contra line have them promenade towards the music and then face across to partner.

for a circle dance have them promenade into a big circle

for set dances explain exactly what you need. (triplets, squares, etc.)

Once they are in the basic formation put them in the arrangement you need for that particular dance

for longways / improper duple: use hands four and ones cross over

for Becket: use hands four, ones cross over, circle left one quarter

If the dance requires a special orientation, tell them now.

-all face your partner (across in longways)

-all face your neighbor

-the ones stand between the twos

Walk through

Explain the dance as simply and effectively as possible

-understand the dance

-think beforehand of ways to explain movements, possibly a demo?

-be patient and look for new ways to explain if unsuccessful the first time. Show transitions?

-better an extra walk through especially after a longer explanation in the middle of the sequence

Timing

*delivery time* of the call

dancers need the command just before they are expected to execute the movement.

Each movement starts with the musical phrase, requiring that the call to be delivered in the preceding phrase.

The first call has to be delivered before the first phrase starts. If the intro is too short, say the first call before starting the music and "go" with the music.

Newer dancers need more *reaction time* (one or two beats or inverted text i.e. chain the ladies)

Don't give the calls too early as dancers will tend to clip figures and be a head of the phrase.

Pay attention to the music and not the dancers for the correct call delivery point. The dancers need *execution time* and you need to deliver before they finish with one figure so they can start the new figure on beat one of the phrase.

Prompting is giving a hint beforehand

Cadence calling is giving the call on the downbeats of the phrase

Nr.	Changes	Release	Contrib.	Date
1.	First edition		CDB	2013/05/15