La Mezavolta

Qtr 1, 2013
Volume 4, Edition 1

L'Academie Atlantienne de la Danse

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Contents

L'Academie Atlantienne de la Danse

La Mezavolta

Qtr 1, 2013
Volume 4, Edition 1

Dance Practices

If your local group has a dance practice not listed here, or you would like to start a practice, please let us know!

Bright Hills
1st Friday each month at 8pm during the fighter practice and A&S night, in conjunction with garb night (back a week when events conflict)
Christ the King Church, 1930 Brookdale Road, Baltimore, MD 21244
Contact: Faye de Trees
at feataure@yahoo.com

Black Diamond
2nd Tuesday from 7-9pm
Lexington, VA
Contact: Lord Stefan of Cambion
4th Tuesday from 7-9pm
Salem, VA at the library
Contact: Lord Stefan of Cambion
at lanhamlaw@att.net

Dun Carraig
Site and Time TBD
Contact:
Lady Serena Giovanna de Verona
at wavqueen1@yahoo.com

Isenfir
3rd Wednesday
See http://isenfir.org/dance/home.php for more information

Lochmere
2nd Tuesday
See lochmere.atlantia.sca.org/calendar for more information

Rencester
During monthly meetings on Monday nights.
Contact: Lady Alyna of the Ilex
at ilexhal@yahoo.com

Storvik
Every Monday from 8-10pm during fighter practice
St Andrews Episcopal Church in College Park, MD
Contact: Lady Sonja Flicker
at patches023@verizon.net

Sudentorre
Every other 1st Tuesday (swapping months with bardic) and every 5th Tuesday (when they occur)
Campus Christian Center near Mary Washington College in Fredericksburg
Contact: Lady Helena Hrolfsdottir
at penelilady@gmail.com

Yarnvid
4th Thursday from 7:30-9pm
Church of the Epiphany, 11000 Smoketree Dr., Richmond, VA
Contact: Kat Ferneley
at brockenspectre@yahoo.com

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L'Academie
Atlantienne
de la Danse

La Mezavolta

Qtr 1, 2013
Volume 4, Edition 1

Upcoming Events with Dance

Lion's Head Tavern — January 5 — Bright Hills
Dance Mistress: Lady Mirabella Walmesley of Grimsby
Come enjoy a day of feasting, music, dancing, and tale telling.

Kingdom Twelfth Night — January 12 — Charlesbury Crossing
Dance Master:
Messer Giuseppe Francesco da Borgia, OL, OP, and Baron of Gyldenholt in Caid
The Queen of Hearts Ball: Ladies of the Atlantian Court will be choosing their escorts for the Queen of Hearts Ball long before their journey to Hampton Court Palace. Lucky Lords, look for your Queen of Hearts dance invitations at any number of Atlantian events prior to Twelfth Night. Haven't found your Queen of Hearts by the Ball's first dance? Rest assured, you'll have your chance.

Lochmere's MidWinter's Revel — January 19 — Lochmere
Dance Mistress: Lady Margaret Roe
Their Excellencies have sent out invitations, inviting one and all to their great hall for the evening performance of Gli Zelanti upon their freedom from captivity by the Hugenots! Feast will be French and Italian let alone scrumptiously good. Bring a date, have dinner and theatre with a most delicious meal created by Sir Christian Darmody and Lady Lisette La Roux and his devoted staff. Dancing sets throughout the day between the theatrical acts.

Ice Castle — January 26 — Black Diamond
Dance Master: Master Stefan of Cambion
Once again the chill winds of winter are blowing through the mountains and valleys of Black Diamond and thoughts turn to friends, family, and times gone past. Join us once again for day full of revelry and warmth of company and fighting.

Gulf Wars — March 10-17 — Gleann Abhann
Contacts: Banbharun Alina nic an Bhaird and Lord Benedict Longsword at europeandance@gulfwars.org

L'Academie
Atlantienne
de la Danse

La Mezavolta

Qtr 1, 2013
Volume 4, Edition 1

Announcements

Upcoming Changes to *La Mezavolta*

Your dance newsletter is changing this year! In addition to moving to quarterly issues, *La Mezavolta* is adding several new columns. Last year, we focused on dance reconstructions to add to your repertoire. This column is has now been retitled *Dance, Reconstructed*. In addition, each issue of *La Mezavolta* will now include an article about Medieval and Renaissance dance, and, starting with our next issue, a column all about Middle Eastern dance. If you have any suggestions about topics you'd like to see explored, or articles you'd like to submit, please email Chronicler Lady Margherita Battistina at mlysett@yahoo.com.

Pennsic School of European Dance

Unto to the members of *L'Academie Atlantienne de la Danse* does Lady Margherita Battistina send warmest holiday greetings!

With the new year comes new opportunities and new goals . I am very excited to announce that this year, it is my great honor to serve as the Dean of the School of European Dance for Pennsic 42.

It takes many volunteers countless hours of work to make the Pennsic School of Dance such a wonderful experience, and I am grateful for every contribution, big or small. There are many ways you can volunteer or participate in the Pennsic Dance Pavilion. We always have need of staff, teachers, evening revel hosts, musicians and, of course, dancers!

This year, there is also one more way you can help: I am asking all revels' hosts to celebrate their home kingdom through dance. This year's Beginner's Ball is being hosted by Lady Sonja Flicker, in celebration of Atlantia. Come help her celebrate all that Atlantia is and has to offer with refreshments, music, or decorating the tent. Contact Lady Sonja at patches023@verizon.net to lend your hand. Or just come celebrate our great kingdom by joining in for a dance!

Vivat Atlantia! Vivat Pennsic! And Vivat the Pennsic European School of Dance!

I look forward to working with you all!

Lady Margherita Battistina (Margaret Roe)

L'Academie Atlantienne de la Danse

La Mezavolta

Qtr 1, 2013
Volume 4, Edition 1

Defining Historical Dance

by Lady Margherita Battistina (Margaret Roe)

Although the SCA focuses on "researching and re-creating the arts and skills of pre-17th-century Europe," like many art forms, the study of Medieval and Renaissance European dance in the SCA typically focuses on a more precise period, beginning in the mid-fifteenth century and extending slightly beyond the SCA's timeframe into the early 1650s. This is due entirely to the sources that have historically been known and available for study. On the early end, there is evidence of several styles of dance being performed in the thirteenth an fourteenth centuries through both descriptions mentioning dancing and music composed for it, but no explanations of how the dances were performed remains.[1] The earliest dance manual we have is Domenico di Piacenza's treatise *De arte saltandi et choreas ducendi*, dated by different sources to about 1425-1450. On the later end of our study, John Playford's *The English Dancing Master*, published first in 1651, was the only source for English Country Dance for many years, and we continue to use it to understand the earlier sources of English Country Dance which have lately come to light.

However, while the dates of this study of dance can be defined fairly easily, classifying the genres of dance therein is more problematic. In "Breaking Down Barriers in the Study of Renaissance and Baroque Dance," Barbara Sparti examines the methods by which historians have classified historical dance, from the Middle Ages through the Early Modern Period. In the nineteenth century, when historical dance study as we know it today day was in its infancy, dance historians classified danced as "Renaissance dance" or "Baroque dance." By the 1930s, it was clear that there was a distinct difference in the approach and execution of earlier and later Renaissance dances, and that the terms "Renaissance" and "Baroque" carried overtones in some fields of study that were inappropriate to apply to dance. Curt Sachs therefore reclassified the genres into Fifteenth Century dance, Age of the Galliard dance (c. 1500 – c.1650), and Age of the Minuet dance (c. 1650 – c. 1750).[2] However, as the twentieth century progressed and more materials became available for study, these classifications also became inadequate. Sparti notes that some communities of

> English and American dance reconstructors and historians began to identify dance styles according to their own historical perspectives, so that Italian fifteenth-century dances were considered on the border between Medieval and Renaissance; the 1581-1602 Caroso and Negri dances, which corresponded chronologically to Shakespeare's and Elizabeth's England, were dubbed "Renaissance," while the new seventeenth-century French style, very much in fashion in both England and Germany in the eighteenth century, was referred to as "Baroque."[3]

L'Academie Atlantienne de la Danse

La Mezavolta

Qtr 1, 2013
Volume 4, Edition 1

In the SCA, we tend to break these classifications down even further, identifying the genres by the time and location of the source. Using this system, we have reclassified dance as Fifteenth Century Italian dance, Burgundian Basse Dance, the Gresley dances, Sixteenth Century French dance, Sixteenth Century Italian dance, English Country Dance, and Almans, Inns of Court dances or Old Measures, the last classification having interchangeable names, dependent only upon the user. However, this classification can be misleading – while a single dance will only fit into one category of time and location, the steps and dance structure of the dance may in itself fit into several. Fifteenth Century Italian dance, the Gresley dances and the Burgundian Basse Dance all seem to use the same basic doubles and singles, or simples, and created step variants based upon these two steps. Sixteenth Century French dance, English County Dance and the Inns of Court dances also use a similar doubles and singles, this time all ended by closing the step, and Sixteenth Century Italian dance uses a system of steps clearly based off of both groupings of steps. Similarly, at the turn of the Sixteenth Century, the Spanish took the Burgundian Basse Dance and added Alta and Gioiosa dance styles to it to create a suite of dances that later appear in late Sixteenth Century Italian dance manuals. Because dance of the Medieval and Early Modern Eras is at the same time both fluid and discrete, dance historians will continue to revise their methods of describing and classifying the dance that we study.

Dance Genre	Source Location	Approx. Date Range
15th C. Italian	Italy, France, Germany	early 15th-early 16th C.
Burgundian Basse Dance	France, Spain	late 15th-early 16th C.
Gresley dances	England	early 16th C.
16th C. French	France	mid-late 16th C.
Inns of Court	England	late 16th-mid 17th C.
16th C. Italian	Italy	mid 16th-late 17th C.
English Country Dance	England	late 16th-mid-18th C.

[1] See Jennifer Nevile's "Dance in Europe 1250-1750," page 30 and notes 163-168, and Karen Silen's "Dance in Late Thirteenth-Century Paris," pages 67-79, both in Dance, Spectacle, and the Body Politick, 1250-1750, for more information and other sources of thirteenth and fourteenth century dancing.

[2] See Curt Sachs, A World History of Dance (English translation, New York: W.W. Norton, 1937) for more information about his classifications for historical dance.

[3] Barbara Sparti, "Breaking Down Barriers in the Study of Renaissance and Baroque Dance," in Dance Chronicle, 19.3 (1996): 256.

L'Academie Atlantienne de la Danse

La Mezavolta

Qtr 1, 2013
Volume 4, Edition 1

If you would like to look at the sources and dances available, the following books, articles and websites contain either major collections of works or lists of the works available:

http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/del/

Del's Dance Book provides reconstructions of many period dances, as well as a bibliography of period sources, though this bibliography is somewhat out of date and does not include more recent finds.

http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/lod/vol1/biblio.html

The **Letter of Dance** newsletter includes an article in its first volume with an annotated bibliography of primary sources for dance.

http://www.rendancedb.org/

The **Renaissance Dance Database** is a database of period dances for which information is available on the Internet. Each entry notes the original source for the dance, some basic information about the dance itself, and provides links to scans of the original source, transcriptions thereof, reconstructions of the dance, or music for the dance.

http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/dance.html

The **SCA Renaissance Dance Homepage** is a links page directing users to primary sources available on the Internet, many hosted by the same website, including both dance manuals and contemporary texts describing or discussing dance.

Carboni, Fabio, Barbara Sparti and Agostino Ziino. "*Balli* to Dance and Play in a Sixteenth-Century Miscellany." *Music Observed: Studies in Memory of William C. Holmes*. Edited by Colleen Reardon and Susan Parisi. Warren, MI: Harmonie Park Press, 2004.

The introduction to **"*Balli* to Dance and Play in a Sixteenth-Century Miscellany"** contains a chart of all currently known primary sources of Italian dance from the mid-Sixteenth century through the mid-Seventeenth century.

Nevile, Jennifer. *Dance, Spectacle, and the Body Politick 1250 – 1750.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008.

Dance, Spectacle, and the Body Politick 1250 – 1750 contains a list of the primary sources discussed within the book, including modern translations.

Smith, A. William. *Fifteenth-Century Dance and Music: Twelve Transcribed Italian Treatises and Collections in the Tradition of Domenico da Piacenza* (v. 1 & 2). Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1995.

Volume 1 of ***Fifteenth-Century Dance and Music*** contains analysis and partial transcriptions of the beginnings of several fifteenth century dance manuscripts, while volume 2 contains a line-by-line comparison of the transcriptions for the dances within twelve manuscripts, including a translation of the most description of the dance.

L'Academie Atlantienne de la Danse

La Mezavolta

Qtr 1, 2013
Volume 4, Edition 1

Dance, Reconstructed: Contra Passo

reconstructed by Lady Margherita Battistina (Margaret Roe)

In 2004, a "new" collection of dances from the Chigi manuscripts, now held in the Vatican libraries, were brought to light. This collection of manuscripts contains fifteen choreographies of thirteen discrete dances - two entries being duplicates of the same dance, Torneo, and one entry being incomplete - which all seem to pre-date the dances of *Il Ballarino* (published in 1581). Variants of eleven of those dances are also found in *Il Ballarino*, as well as other later works, and two dances are completely new. No music or step explanations were included with these dances, so this information has to been drawn from contemporary sources, including *Il Ballarino*. Transcriptions of these dances, including a brief analysis, were published by Fabio Carboni, Barbara Sparti and Agostino Ziino, in *Music Observed*, and reconstructions of all of these dances, with music for the eleven dances also in *Il Ballarino*, can be found on my website, at http://www.ageofthegalliard.com/chigi.html.

The *Contra Passo* is one of the most common dances of sixteenth century Italy, and six versions can be found in the extant works of this period, though only one version of the music is currently known, from *Il Ballarino*. All versions except one are for couples in a wheel, though the number of couples changes from version to version. Nearly every version includes similar steps and spatial movements, even the version for a single couple. The dance alternates back and forth between different parts of the music, so this reconstruction has labeled the parts to indicate the changes in the music.

Steps

Riverenza (Riv)

Beat 1: Stand facing your partner, with half of the left foot forward of the right and four finger-widths to the side of it, with the body and head erect and the feet pointing straight forward.
Beat 2: Pull the left foot behind in a straight line so that the toes are even with the right heel and the foot is flat on the ground.
Beat 3: Bend the knees, spreading them apart a little and lower the head and body a little.
Beat 4: Rise again, pulling the left foot forward next to the right, straightening the knees and the body and raising the head.
Note: The Riverenza that opens a dance should be made to your partner, not to the bystanders, because to make it to the bystanders would appear disrespectful to your partner.

Continenza (Cont)

Beat 1: Step to the left about four finger-widths from the right.
Beat 2: Close the right to the left, either by stepping on the right foot parallel to the left or by drawing the right heel to the arch of the left foot, while bending the knees a little.
Half beat: Rise again gracefully, keeping your weight mostly on the left to begin the next movement on the right foot.

Do you have a favorite dance you'd like featured in an upcoming issue of *La Mezavolta*? Let us know! Email the Chronicler at mlysett@yahoo.com

L'Academie Atlantienne de la Danse

La Mezavolta

Qtr 1, 2013
Volume 4, Edition 1

Passo

Beat 1: Step forward onto the left foot, four or five finger-widths in front of the right.

Seguito ordinario (Seg)

Beat 1: Step forward with the left so that the heel is in line with the right toes.*
Beat 2: Step similarly with the right.*
Beat 3: Step similarly with the left again.*
Beat 4: Pause with both feet level on the ground.
Note: In *Il Ballarino*, Caroso seems to have been instructing the dancer to make these steps on the toes, but in *Nobiltà di Dame*, changes the explanation so that the dancer steps first on the toes, then lowers the heel before raising the heel of the following foot. Santucci uses a similar explanation, but also has the dancer rise onto the toes in the fourth beat and then lower back down onto flat feet. Negri copied Caroso's explanation from *Il Ballarino* for the *Seguito semidoppio*, nearly word-for-word, labeling it the *Seguito ordinario*, and similarly copied the explanation for the *Seguito ordinario* as the *Seguito semidoppio.* It remains unclear whether this was a clerical error or he actually performed them differently. This explanation therefore gives a general explanation of the execution, based on Caroso and Santucci's explanations.

Contra Passo

4 couples, all in a wheel, each man on his partner's L & clasping her L hand in his R

Part A1 (played 2A)
1 Riv (to your partner), 2 Cont
Turning in the wheel: 2 Passi, 1 Seg, 2 Passi, 1 Seg

Part B1 (played 4*BC)
Clasp R hands with partner: 2 Passi, 1 Seg
Clasp L hands with partner: 2 Passi, 1 Seg
Drop hands: 2 Seg turning to L in own circle, 2 Seg turning to R in own circle
Repeat all of B1 twice more, clasping arms instead of hands the first time, and clasping both hands the second time

Part A2 (played 2A)
Hey: 8 Seg
Clasp R hands with partner first & change places with 1 Seg, then clasp left hands with next person & change places, continuing around the circle alternating hands as you move

Part B2 (played 4*BC)
Clasp R hands: 1 Riv, 2 Cont
Drop hands: 2 Seg turning to L in own circle, 2 Seg turning to R in own circle
Man forward & Woman back: 2 Passi, 1 Seg
Man back & Woman forward: 2 Passi, 1 Seg
2 Seg turning to L in own circle, 2 Seg turning to R in own circle
Man: 1 Riv
Woman: 1 Riv
2 Seg turning to L in own circle, 2 Seg turning to R in own circle
1 Riv