

# The English Dancing Master



JOHN PLAYFORD

# *John Playford's The English Dancing Master:*

OR, *Plaine and easie Rules for the Dancing of Country Dances,*  
*with the Tune to each Dance.*

Reprinted from the 1933 edition, in which the text was completely reset and the music transcribed into modern notation from the original 1651 edition; with prefaces by Hugh Mellor and Leslie Bridgewater from the 1933 edition.

One of the series of republications by Dance Horizons, New York.

## PREFACE

THE ORIGINAL edition of *The English Dancing Master* is a small quarto. The later editions are oblong duodecimos. In the original edition the text is printed along instead of across the pages, facing outwards, so that each pair of pages, at an opening, is set head to head. We have thought it to be more convenient to set the text in the way afterwards used as the original form entails much turning of the volume around during examination.

Otherwise the shape and size of the book is exactly the same as the original.

The copy in the British Museum is part of the Thomason Collection; the date in ink on the title page is in his writing and is presumably the date of purchase. When this book was printed the year did not commence until March 25, hence the alteration in the date.

There are errors in pagination, whilst other misprints and inconsistencies are numerous.

Playford's own preface is a most interesting piece of writing, and one wishes that the copy full of errors which he states

is in the hands of someone else were available for study.

The collection is representative of one type of Folk Dance—the community Country Dance—as danced by the people of England in Playford's time. A close examination of the book seems to lead one to the conclusion that some six or, possibly, eight different 'friends' noted them down. Peculiarities in diction and spelling (though the latter may be caused by different compositors) seem to class certain dances together as having been noted by the same person. It is an interesting exercise to endeavour to sort the different dances according to their original 'collectors'

Despite the great work which Cecil Sharp did in connection with English Folk Dances there still remains much that is obscure regarding their history and development, and it is not too much to hope that, hidden away in old houses, there may still be manuscripts or hitherto unknown old books which will throw more light on the subject.

Meanwhile let us be thankful to old Playford for his collection—the Country Dance is such a fluid and constantly changing

form that, had the work been delayed but a few years, many of these charming dances, and particularly the 'set' dances, would have been lost to us, for by the end of the century everybody was dancing 'longways' only, probably caused by the gradual transference of dancing from outdoors to indoors.

I wish to place on record the kindness of Mr Douglas Kennedy, of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, in allowing full access to the Society's photostat copy of the work.

Mr Bridgewater has written a separate foreword to the

music explaining the alterations. The remaining text, dances, titles, etc., are an exact copy.

We hesitated at first whether to issue a facsimile copy, but decided against it as, firstly, the original is so badly printed that a satisfactory facsimile is difficult, and, secondly, to have the music in facsimile would be rather bewildering to the ordinary dancer or reader, who would, in many cases, be unable to decipher the old forms of notation.

HUGH MELLOR

19 Sydenham Hill, S.E.26.

## PREFACE TO THE MUSIC

I MUST thank the British Museum for so kindly placing their copy of *The English Dancing Master* at my disposal for the purpose of bringing out, in collaboration with my friend Hugh Mellor, this, the first reprint of that remarkable collection of Dances.

In making this copy I have endeavoured to give as true a reproduction of the music as possible, and only where obvious errors in the printing had taken place have I thought fit to adjust a bar (e.g., in 'Grimstock' the three quavers in small type I have added from comparison with the second edition, which was supposed to have corrected the faults of the first. Without these quavers the rhythm would be completely upset). Whenever I have added an accidental I have done so in brackets to show that it was not present in the first edition.

At the same time, while preserving the original as far as possible, I saw no reason why it should not also be of practical use. Many of the tunes are in what is known as the 'French Violin Clef'; these in common with the others I have put into the ordinary treble clef, a procedure Mr Playford himself soon adopted after the first edition; also I have modernized the notation of the 6-8 tunes.

The original being unbarred, I have carried out this part of the work in accordance with that of the seventh edition, with the exception of a few first and second time bars which I thought less confusing in the particular tunes I used them in. Barring, of course, at this period was used not so much to show accent as to measure time. The repeats otherwise I have left to the dancing directions.

It was very interesting to watch these tunes grow, as it were, through the editions that followed, and many of the tunes did last through the entire eighteen. Even in the second edition, which was published only two years later, great changes had taken place in the melodic line—some to the extent that they were almost unrecognizable, and later still, one noticed with no little regret, the old modal forms make way for the newer diatonic forms with their sharpened leading notes, and sometimes wholesale changes to a major key.

LESLIE BRIDGEWATER

Linhope,

Sudbury, Middlesex.

1933.

# The English Dancing Master :

O R,

Plaine and easie Rules for the Dancing of Country Dances, with the Tune to each Dance.



L O N D O N,

Printed by *Thomas Harper*, and are to be sold by *John Playford*, at his Shop in the Inner  
Temple neere the Church doore. 1651.

## *To the Ingenious Reader*

THE Art of Dancing called by the Ancient Greeks *Orchestice*, and *Orchestis*, is a commendable and rare Quality fit for yong Gentlemen, if opportunely and civilly used. And *Plato*, that Famous Philosopher thought it meet, that yong Ingenious Children be taught to dance. It is a quality that has been formerly honoured in the Courts of Princes, when performed by the most Noble *Heroes* of the Times! The Gentlemen of the Innes of Court, whose sweet and ayry Activity has crowned their Grand Solemnities with Admiration to all Spectators. This Art has been Anciently handled by *Athenæus*, *Julius Pollux*, *Caelius Rhodiginus*, and others, and much commend it to be Excellent for Recreation, after more serious Studies, making the body active and strong, gracefull in deportment, and a quality very much beseeming a Gentleman. Yet all this should not have been an Incitement to me for Publication of this Worke (knowing these Times and the Nature of it do not agree) But that there was a false and surreptitious Copy at the Printing Presse, which if it had been published, would have been a disparagement to the quality and the Professors thereof, and a hinderance to the Learner: Therefore for prevention of all which, having an excellent Copy by me, and the assistance of a knowing Friend; I have ventured to put forth this ensuing Worke to the view, and gentle censure of all ingenious Gentlemen lovers of this Quallity; not doubting but their goodnes will pardon what may be amiss, and accept of the honest Intention of him that is a faithfull honourer of your Virtues, and

*Your servant to command*

J. P.

*A TABLE of the Dances contained in this Booke*

	<i>A</i>		<i>Cuckolds all a row</i>	<i>fol.</i> 67
<i>Adsons Saraband</i>		<i>fol.</i> 28	<i>Chestnut, or Doves Figary</i>	85
<i>Al-a-Mode de France</i>		49		
<i>Argeers</i>		58		
<i>All in a Garden greene</i>		71	<i>D</i>	
<i>Aye me, or the Simphony</i>		73	<i>Daphne</i>	30
<i>An old man is a bed full of Bones</i>		76	<i>Drive the Cold Winter away</i>	39
			<i>Dissembling Love</i>	59
			<i>Dargason, or Sedany</i>	71
	<i>B</i>		<i>Dull Sir John</i>	81
<i>Blew Cap</i>		2		
<i>Boat-man</i>		4	<i>F</i>	
<i>Beggar Boy</i>		5	<i>Fine Companion</i>	33
<i>Bobbing Joe</i>		7	<i>Faine I would if I could</i>	46
<i>Bath</i>		51	<i>Fryar and the Nun</i>	84
<i>Broome</i>		74		
	<i>C</i>		<i>G</i>	
<i>Confesse his Tune</i>		19	<i>Grimstock</i>	14
<i>Chirping of the Larke</i>		26	<i>Greenwood</i>	16
<i>Castabella</i>		35	<i>Gun</i>	40
<i>Chirping of the Nightingale</i>		64	<i>Godesses</i>	52
<i>Cheerily and Merrily</i>		78	<i>Glory of the west</i>	94
<i>Country Coll</i>		79	<i>Gathering Peascods</i>	96
			<i>Graies Inne Maske</i>	103



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<b>H</b>				<b>L</b>	
<i>Hit or misse</i>		fol. 18	<i>Lady Spillers</i>		fol. 24
<i>Health to Betty</i>		21	<i>Lord of Carnarvons Jeg</i>		44
<i>Have at thy Coat old woman</i>		38	<i>Lady Cullen</i>		50
<i>Halfe Hanikin</i>		43	<i>London Gentlewoman</i>		60
<i>Hearts ease</i>		54	<i>Lavana</i>		61
<i>Healths</i>		55	<i>Lady lye neare me</i>		92
<i>Hockley i' th hole</i>		82	<i>Lulling beyond thee</i>		93
<i>Hide Parke</i>		91		<b>M</b>	
	<b>I</b>		<i>Mage on a Cree</i>		20
<i>If all the world were Paper</i>		27	<i>Milisons Jeg</i>		22
<i>Irish trot</i>		45	<i>Merry Milke Mayds</i>		31
<i>Irish Lady, or Aniseed Robin</i>		48	<i>Millfield</i>		32
<i>Jog on</i>		53	<i>Mayd peept out of the window</i>		42
<i>Jack Pudding</i>		56	<i>Mayden Lane</i>		62
<i>Jack-a-Lent</i>		63	<i>Milke Mayds Bob</i>		75
<i>Jenny pluck Pares</i>		95	<i>Mundess</i>		90
	<b>K</b>			<b>N</b>	
<i>Kemps Jeg</i>		25	<i>Night Peece</i>		3
<i>Kettle drum</i>		89	<i>New Exchange</i>		8
			<i>Nonesuch</i>		29
			<i>Newcastle</i>		77

*TABLE of the Dances, etc.—continued*

<i>New New Nothing</i>	fol. 98	<i>Spanish Jepsies</i>	fol. 23
<i>New Boepeepe</i>	83	<i>Skellam fago</i>	34
O		<i>Spanyard</i>	36
<i>Old Mole</i>	13	<i>Souldiers Life</i>	65
<i>Once I loved a Mayden Faire</i>	47	<i>Saints Martins</i>	66
P		<i>Saturday Night and Sunday Morne</i>	80
<i>Parsons farewell</i>	6	<i>Staines Morris</i>	87
<i>Picking of sticks</i>	12	<i>Scotch Cap</i>	99
<i>Peppers black</i>	41	<i>Step Stateley</i>	100
<i>Prince Ruperts March</i>	57	<i>Shepherds Holyday</i>	101
<i>Petticoat wag</i>	68	<i>Slip</i>	104
<i>Pauls Steeple</i>	69	T	
<i>Punks delight</i>	72	<i>Tom Tinker</i>	88
<i>Pauls wharfe</i>	86	U	
R		<i>Upon a Summers day</i>	1
<i>Rose is red, and Rose is white</i>	37	<i>Up Tayles all</i>	97
<i>Rufty, tufty</i>	70	W	
<i>Row well ye Marriners</i>	102	<i>Whish</i>	9
S		<i>Whirligig</i>	11
<i>Stingo, or the Oyle of Barley</i>	10	<i>Woody cock</i>	15
<i>Saraband</i>	17		

# A TABLE Explaining the Characters which are set downe in the Dances.

*A Double is foure steps forward or back, closing both feet.*

*A Single is two steps, closing both feete.*

*Set and turne single, is a single to one hand, and a single to the other, and turne single.*

D.	Is for a Double.
S.	Is for a Single.
Wo.	Stands for woman.
We.	Stands for women.
Cu.	Stands for Couple.
Co.	Stands for Contrary.
2.	Stands for second.
3.	Stands for third.
4	Stands for fourth.
$\dot{\cdot}$	Stands for a straine playd once.
$\ddot{\cdot}$	Stands for a straine playd twice.
$\ddot{\cdot}$	Stands for a straine playd thrice, &c.

*These Characters expresse the Figure of the Dance.*



*This stands for the Men*



*This for the women.*