

The Allemande

by Derek Haynes

The starting position for the Allemande is with the dancing couples in the centre of the set, facing the top in a Promenade hold i.e. right hand in right hand and left hand in left. The men then lift the ladies' right hands over their heads so as to be approximately level with her right ear, in a comfortable position. The left hands do not move and should be used by the men to guide the ladies through the figure.

a) **The Two Couple Allemande** With 1st couple leading the phrasing is:-

Bar 1 Both couples dance diagonally out towards the ladies' side of the dance.

Bar 2 1st man takes a very short step to bring his partner round so that they face the men's side, while the 2nd couple dance up behind them.

Bar 3 The 1st couple dance across to the men's side while the 2nd couple pivot to face across the dance.

Bar 4 The 1st couple dance down the men's side to 2nd man's original place while the 2nd couple dance across into the 1st man's original place. At the end of bar 4 both couples should be on the men's side facing down the dance.

Bar 5 Both men take a very short step bringing partners round into one straight line facing the ladies' side.

Bar 6 Both couples dance into the centre of the dance where the men turn their partner to face them by lifting their right arm over their partner's head.

Bar 7/8 Both couples release hands and dance two retiring steps to finish on the sidelines.

b) **The Three Couple Allemande**

Bar 1 All three couples take a step diagonally out towards the ladies' side of the dance, 1st couple turning to face the men's side.

Bar 2 The 1st couple dance across the dance, 2nd couple dancing up to face across while 3rd couple follow 2nd couple up the ladies' side.

Bar 3 The 1st couple dance down the men's side one place, while the 2nd couple dance across towards the men's side and 3rd couple dance up to the top and face across.

Bar 4 The 1st couple dance a further place down the men's side, while the 2nd couple dance one place down the men's side and 3rd couple dance across the top of the set. At the end of bar 4 all three couples are facing down the men's side of the dance, having reversed their order.

Bars 5 - 8 are exactly the same as for the two couple Allemande.

c. **The Four Couple Allemande**

Should it be required to dance a four couple Allemande the leading couple dance into 1st man's original place on the 1st bar, and the following couples dance up the centre. The leading couple then dance three steps down the men's side to 4th man's place followed by the other three couples again to finish bar 4 with all couples facing down on the men's side.

General Comment: This figure consists of six forward travelling steps (of varying length for the men) culminating in the strong movement of sweeping the ladies into the centre and turning them to face their partners before quietly retiring to the sidelines. The first six bars are danced smoothly and continuously and the figure should be contained within the "home" positions of the dancing couples. In the variants of the Allemande the couple or couples who are following are each 1 bar (1 step) behind the preceding couple.

Common Faults in Dancing Allemande

1. Not dancing towards the ladies' side on bar 1 (this does not apply to a four couple Allemande), and/or dancing too far up the dance on bars 1 - 2.
2. Facing across the dance on bar 4 - they should be facing down the dance.
3. The men turning their partner to face them with a long arm so that the ladies are essentially back to their lines at the end of bar 6.
4. Using pas-de-basque to retire to places on bars 7 - 8 (In reel or jig time).
5. Leading couple lifting right hands (at start) before 2nd couple are in position. All right hands must come over together and not before left hands are joined.

Linking Allemande to a Following Figure

1. **Allemande to corners.** The traditional way of doing this is for a normal Allemande to be danced by the 2nd couple, and for the leading couple to take a short retiring step on bar 7, letting go the right hands and then advancing past partners, letting go left hands and passing left shoulders to finish back to back facing 1st corners on bar 8.

If the next figure is to start with setting to 1st corners, it would be in keeping for the leading couple to set to their right, letting go right hands on bar 7, and set to their left sliding in back to back, having let go left hands on bar 8.

Example "ADIEU MON AMI"

It has now been written into at least one dance, where the next figure involves turning 1st corners with the right hand, that the dancing couple let go right hands at the end of bar 6 and on bars 7-8 turn each other one and a quarter times by the left hand to finish facing corners. This then makes a smooth flow from one figure to the next, especially in Strathspey time.

2. **Allemande to Double Triangles** On bars 7 - 8 the leading couple dance two pas-de-basque on the spot turning back to back (lady turning left about, man right about, with the man giving his left hand to the lady's right to control the turn).

Example "THE EXPRESS".

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