

Teachers' Pet Dances: Moira Korus



Moira Korus

I find it very hard to choose my favourite dances. I like so many dances – some for the music, some for the memories they evoke, some for the patterns they make, and some for the energy. If you ask me for this list in another few months, or had asked me six months ago, it might be different. I have a propensity for intricate or difficult dances, and I love dances where there's opportunity to work with the rest of the set to cover, and to make the dance look good. Here is my selection.

[Macdonald of Sleat](#), (J120, Mary Isdal MacNab, *MacNab Dances 1*)

You probably won't find this dance on any dance program you attend, but it's still one of my favourites. I first taught it to the Rosedale teenagers when we were looking for a dance to do for the Woodglen Scottish Country Tea (remember how great those were?). It's a very energetic dance, with about 56 setting steps, and so well suited to the energetic youth of Rosedale. When they performed it at the Tea, during the "pick up figure" where one dancer starts and eventually they end up with four dancers linked, and then all four dancers turn as one to face up, they received applause during the dance – the only time I remember that happening. The teens were invited to perform at the Eglinton Cinema for the premiere of the Disney/Pixar movie *Brave*, and we were able to adapt the dance to perform at the front of the theatre. That was a very special evening.

[J.B. Milne](#), (R8x32, Hugh Foss, *Angus Fitchett Album*)

I have always liked the energy of this dance. I have a special memory of dancing it at a monthly dance with Laurie's daughter Sam. She had not been dancing for a while as she had recently outgrown the Rosedale group, but she attended the dance and I invited her to dance this with me. I am sure she had little idea how the dance went when the first bar chord sounded, but Sam watched and absorbed, and (as can be done by those with some experience and beautiful steps like Sam), she picked it up immediately and danced it beautifully. The dance was encored, which added to the enjoyment.

[Autumn in Appin](#) (S4x32, John Drewry, *RSCDS Book 31*)

I love the different shape this dance creates and the intricacies of making sure you end up back in the correct spot. The set changes from longwise to square set during the dance and, therefore, makes for a lovely demonstration dance. You end up with a different partner for part of the dance, and then get your original partner back at the end. Dances like these have me admiring the deviser. How do they think of putting all the different movements together and work out the patterns to get everyone to their new position?

[The Elephant's Stampede](#) (J4x48, MacDonald & Mackintosh, *Aurora 10*)

Both the dance and music are fabulous. Marian Anderson's recording (*Fisherman's Reel* CD) truly makes the dance. It is energetic, and everyone is moving all of the time. If you lose your place, it's hard to figure out where you need to be, so you must keep your wits about you all the time. This is a great dance for everyone during an evening of dance, and it makes for a fabulous demonstration dance.

[Alltshellach](#) (S8x32, Elizabeth D. Gilroy, *RSCDS Book 23*)

This is the most traditional dance I have chosen – I do love traditional dances, too. This was one of the dances from my Teacher's Certificate, and it was *so good* when we got it right! It has many opportunities for covering, and good teamwork can make the dance look fabulous. It has the tourn e, and while I know some people might like to avoid any dance with this formation, I really like the elegance, and particularly the covering in the last four bars. *Alltshellach* is an excellent dance for a technique class at an advanced level, and I have used it to teach at a workshop.

...Moira Korus

Teachers' Pet Dances: Gavin Keachie



Gavin Keachie

Gavin Keachie started dancing at Rosedale Children's Group at age 4. He began occasional teaching with Moira Korus at Rosedale about 2015, and in 2019, he achieved his full SCD Teaching Certificate. Along with Moira, he currently teaches Saturday morning online dance classes to Rosedale youth. He is also pursuing (remotely at the moment) a PhD at the Catholic University of Leuven, in Belgium, studying the 8th century theologian Saint John of Damascus. He hopes to return to Belgium, and dancing this fall, Covid permitting.

Most of my choices are connected to good dancing memories.

[Alltshellach](#) (S8x32, Elizabeth D. Gilroy, *RSCDS Book 23*)

I first learned *Alltshellach* doing Unit 2 of the Teaching Certificate. I thoroughly enjoyed perfecting tricky dances with a group of skilled dancers, and this was my favourite. It has beautiful music and contains two of my favourite formations: strathspey pousette and the tourn e.

[Shiftin' Bobbins](#) (R8x32, Roy Clowes, *Thirty Popular Dances, Vol 2*)

I like how it flows; I like the music, and I have many fond memories of dancing it at various balls.

[Dashing White Sergeant](#) (Rnx32, *RSCDS Book 3*)

This was my absolute favourite as a kid. It was always the last dance at the Christmas and end-of-year Rosedale parties. It has wonderful music and lots of opportunities for fun flourishes.

[Tam O'Shanter](#) (R4x32, Ann Malley, *Leaflet*) – A dance I've used many times in teaching kids and new dancers, always telling the story as we go through each phrase. Few dances have as fun a story.

[Petronella](#) (R8x32, *RSCDS Book 1*) – Dancing double Petronellas at the St. Andrew's Ball is always a good time. ...Gavin Keachie

Tam O'Shanter

R4x32, 4C set, by Ann Malley

They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleekit / Till ilka carlin swat and reekit.

- 1-8: 1st man CROSS set above his partner, dance behind her, in front of 2L, behind 3L, cross over to his own side, dancing behind 3M & 2M to place.
[\[Tam winding his way down the road\]](#)
- 9-16: 1s SLIP STEP down & up
[\[Tam galloping down the road with his horse Meg\]](#)
- 17-24: Others CIRCLE round & back.
[\[witches dancing – raucous cackling is encouraged\]](#)
- 25-32: Everyone CHASE C'W. Finish 1s facing down, others make bridge with partner.
[\[witches chase Tam\]](#)
- 33-40: 1s DANCE down under the bridge to 4th place.
2s TURN right hand.
[\[Tam crosses Brig o'Doon as witch snatches Meg's tail\]](#)
[Video of Tam O'Shanter dance at 2016 Family Ceilidh](#)



Click to see Rosedale demo: [Macdonald of Sleat at Brave premiere](#)