

DANCE PATTERN with Lissa Bengtson

Contra Hall

Plans for Contralab activities and the contra room at the 66th National Square Dance Convention in Cincinnati are moving along, and excitement is building. The convention is June 21-24, 2017, with Contralab Energizer Dance on June 20 and the Contralab educational segment and business meeting on June 21. All activities will be in the Duke Energy Center in Cincinnati—contra activities will all be in the Contra Room, which is 206.

Contralab's Energizer Dance will be Tuesday evening, June 20 and will feature live music by Full Moon Country Dance Orchestra and calling by one of Contralab's founders, Tony Parkes of Massachusetts. Since 1964 Tony has learned from many of the finest callers of the time and has managed to keep his dances simple and accessible. He has helped to preserve square dancing as an activity that everyone can learn and enjoy. Later in his career he added New England contra dances and the folk dances of other countries to his repertoire, and has written his own dances, allowing him to achieve his goal of providing the most fun to the most people.

Tony has authored several books on the subject of contra dance, including a basic text "Contra Calling," as well as "Shadrack's Delight" and "Son of Shadrack", which are full of Tony's original dances. He has appeared on many recordings as caller, pianist, or both. He has led dances and workshops for experienced dancers in 35 states, Canada, and Europe.

Positive reviews of Tony's calling ability abound. For example: "...Most people attributed the evening's special flavor to your particular calling style – enthusiastic, knowledgeable, flexible, encouraging, charming, and graceful." – Middlesex School

Tony will also join us Wednesday morning for the Educational Program, so if there are specific topics you would like for him to address, please forward them to Contralab President Duane Olson or Finance Officer Lissa Bengtson.

Full Moon Country Dance Orchestra is a quartet that has played in the Cincinnati and Dayton area for years. Organizer Judy Waldron plays keyboard, Warren Waldron plays fiddle and banjo mandolin, Frank Fitch plays mandolin, fiddle and harmonica and Astrid Mast plays flute. The band submitted sound files of tunes that sound terrific!

Tony Parkes can only be with us at the convention for Tuesday night and Wednesday morning—he must return to work for the rest of the week, so let's dance our socks off to his terrific calling

and learn as much as we can. Tony's websites: <http://dancecallers.com/> and <http://www.hands4.com/> He is also on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/tony.parkes.9?fref=ts>

For the remainder of the convention, the Contra Room will be also busy and exciting. Vice-Chairman of Contra Programming, Judy Weger and Assistant Vice-Chairman of Contra Programming Lissa Bengtson have put together an impressive schedule. Each evening will feature live music.

Thursday night will feature a band from Florence, Kentucky called "Cull Hollow," a duet of two brothers, one on banjo and one on guitar. They are versatile musicians, most comfortable with bluegrass music, but also eager to please our dancers. They were located using a website called "GigSalad," which is serving more and more traditional musicians and some callers. Cull Hollow's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Cull-Hollow-1560507180858817/>

Friday night's band is "Wild Rumpus", a trio from Yellow Springs, OH and Louisville, KY. Leader Deborah Colón plays fiddle, Karl Clark Colón plays guitar and Robert Gene Douglas plays percussion/drums. This talented band has performed for large contra weekends in the area, such as Cincinnati's Pig Town Fling and Lexington's Dance Trance Weekend. A video of last year's Pig Town Fling can be seen here: <https://www.facebook.com/WildRumpusEngine/posts/593339464149101>

"The Ripples" will be playing Saturday night. The quartet features Gabrielle Lanza on percussion, Kristen Planeaux on keyboard and flute, Christopher Wood on guitar and bass and Andrew Taylor on fiddle. Their website is: www.theripplesband.com, which has some sample listening tracks (with a previous fiddler, who is also quite good!) Gabrielle is a dance organizer and Kristen is also a contra caller, and both live in Cincinnati, so perhaps we can talk them into attending the whole convention.

The 66th NSDC has agreed to sponsor one evening of live music. Another evening will be sponsored by the International Folk Culture Center. Judy's quilt raffles and the generous donations by Bob Tomlinson toward live music at the 66th will help pay for the Energizer Dance. A sponsor for the fourth night is being sought while I have several leads, let me know if you have a hot lead!