

# Continuous, Extended, and Interrupted Figures in Smooth

by Harold & Meredith Sears



There are Roundalab Standard Figures that are Continuous in both the Latin and the Smooth rhythms, but there are no Standard Figures that are Extended or Interrupted. But we do dance them, and these three terms can be informative cues.

## Continuous

The **Chasse** is a Jive Standard, but it is also used in Quickstep (and in other rhythms). We dance side, close, side — one foot “chasing” and displacing the other. In Jive, we would dance the figure quick/&, quick, in one-half measure. In the faster tempo of Quickstep, we would use a full measure: quick, quick, slow.

The **Continuous Chasse** is faster yet but still only one measure: side/close, side/close, side/close, side (q/&, q/&, q/&, q). Each side step may be taken with a slight hop to give a sideways skipping feeling. In *It's Alright With Me*, a Quickstep by the Rumbles, the dance ends with a forward, lock, forward in banjo position; maneuver, side, close; slow Impetus To Semi and thru, hop;; to a Continuous Chasse; and Pendulum Three and hold (if you are not used to reading cue sheets, semi-colons here are used to mark the end of a measure or to indicate the number of measures just completed).

Here, the term Continuous is used to refer to a “busier” figure. There are more steps in a given period of time. Unfortunately, the term is also used to signify a figure that is not really busier; it is simply longer — more steps, but also more time to dance them (see Continuous Hover Cross below). This usage is perhaps unfortunate because we have another term that better describes a figure that is simply lengthened — Extended.

## Extended

The **Promenade Weave** is danced in Foxtrot in seven steps over two measures (sqq; qqqq;). In semi-closed position facing diagonal line and center, the man steps forward right and the woman forward left (slow). He steps forward left turning a little left-face to closed position (woman side & back right). He turns and steps side and back right (woman forward left) to banjo. He continues to turn left, steps back left, back right to closed position facing wall, side and forward left, and forward right to banjo position facing line and wall, lead feet free.

To "extend" a figure is simply to add steps, to lengthen the figure. Where a Promenade Weave is one slow and six quicks, an **Extended Weave** might contain the slow and eight quicks. Dance the first three steps of the Promenade Weave to banjo facing about reverse, add two back steps for the man (forward for the woman), and then dance the four steps of the Weave Ending. There is a nice example in *Sisters* by the Gosses. There is a bit of business called a Fallaway Ronde & Slip Lady Wheel Kick that puts you in closed position facing line and center with lead feet free. Among other things, this takes the place of the initial "slow" count of the Extended Weave. Then we finish the Extended Weave in eight quicks over two measures;; do a Turning Hover to Banjo; and a Feather.



## Continuous and Extended

We have heard it said that the **Hairpin** used to be only a Waltz figure — essentially a syncopated Curved Feather starting with the lead feet (12/&3) — and the term "feather" was reserved for Foxtrot only. But the two terms are used almost interchangeably in Foxtrot and Waltz today. The standard figure begins in closed position facing line of dance. The man steps forward on the right foot and beginning a right-face turn (woman back left), forward left with strong left-side stretch and left-side lead, forward right outside partner to tight contra banjo and thighs tightly crossed (slow, quick, quick; in Foxtrot). The strong left-side lead makes the turn sharper, like a hairpin turn on a mountain road. In a Curved Feather,

the man ends facing reverse and wall; in a Hairpin, he might be more twisted and almost facing reverse and center. You can increase the drama one more notch by stepping forward right, forward left with left-side lead but no curve to the steps, and finally forward right outside partner and with up to 1/2 turn sharply to the right. The idea is to produce a sharp, "hairpin" turn within the figure.



Now let's do **Extended Continuous Hairpins**.

Where the standard Hairpin is three steps in one measure, Extended Continuous Hairpins is eight steps in two measures (qqqq; qqqq;). So it has more steps per measure *and* more measures. In closed position, with lead feet free, the man steps forward left, forward right between the woman's feet and turning to the right, forward left, and forward right to a tight contra banjo position facing diagonal reverse and wall. The woman takes four back steps. In the second measure, he steps back left and she steps forward right outside partner pivoting right-

face to closed position facing line of dance. He dances forward right continuing to turn, forward left, and finally forward right to tight contra banjo facing reverse and wall again. In *Just Smile* by the Worlocks, there is a Curving Three Step; quick Hinge to face wall; Pivot (sqq, W-&sqq) to closed position facing line of dance; Extended Continuous Hairpins;; to an Outside Change to semi-closed position; Chair & Slip.

### **Continuous, Extended, and Interrupted**

Now let's see what happens when we make a figure Continuous, Extended, and Interrupted. The **Natural Hover Cross** is a relatively straightforward Foxtrot figure danced in seven steps over two measures. We begin in closed position facing diagonal line and wall. The man steps forward on his right beginning to turn right-face (woman back left). He steps side left continuing to turn, and the woman does a heel turn. On the second quick, he steps side right completing a three-quarter turn to face line and center in contra sidecar position. The first measure is danced slow, quick, quick. In the second measure, he steps forward left on the toes outside the woman with right side stretch, and she dances back right. He recovers right, steps side and forward left, and

finally forward right on the toes outside partner in contra banjo with left side stretch (qqqq). The last four steps of this figure are known as a Hover Cross Ending.



The next four figures are derived from the Natural Hover Cross. Where the Natural Hover Cross consists of seven steps, the **Continuous Hover Cross** consists of nine. We can think of the first four steps as the same and the last three as the same. The extra two steps in this figure are steps five and six inserted into the middle of the Natural Hover Cross making it "Continuous." So, in closed position, diagonal line and wall, step forward right beginning to turn right-face (woman back left), side left turning (woman heel

turn), side right completing 3/4 turn to face line and center in contra sidecar (sqq). Step forward left on toes outside woman with right side stretch. Now the two new steps occur: he closes right and she steps side left to closed position, man facing line and wall, and step back left (woman forward right) to contra banjo position. Step back right beginning a left-face turn and blending to closed position (qqqq in the second measure). And take the last two steps of a Hover Cross Ending with a side left, and forward right on the toes outside partner in contra banjo with left side stretch and facing line and center. For the whole figure, the count is sqq; qqqq; qq.

The **Extended Continuous Hover Cross** "extends" the Continuous Hover Cross with 2 more steps and so completes the third measure. The additional steps are two more back steps in closed position (steps 8 & 9) for a total of 11 steps. For this figure, the count is sqq; qqqq; qqqq.

The **Interrupted (or Checked) Continuous Hover Cross** "interrupts" the Continuous Hover Cross with two steps and so is another way to complete the third measure. The additional two steps are a little rock, recover in sidecar position, at steps four & five — beginning the second measure, the man steps forward left and then recovers right, still in sidecar position. With step six, he resumes the Continuous Hover Cross Ending for a total count of 11 steps: sqq; qqqq; qqqq. We have a recent example in *Irresponsible Me* by the Nelsons. There is a Hover Telemark; Interrupted

Continuous Hover Cross;;; Three Step; Open Natural to an Outside Spin;;; and a Back & Chasse to semi-closed position facing line and center;

Finally, the **Interrupted Extended Continuous Hover Cross** "interrupts" the Continuous Hover Cross with the rock, recover, and it extends it with the two extra back steps for a total of 13 steps (sqq; qqqq; qqqq; qq). We may have entered the realm of whimsy, here — I don't think we have ever danced this one, although we understand that Bill and Carol Goss have used it.

Choreographers obviously have fun taking standard figures and making more of them, and dancers enjoy the increased variety of steps that are created. We can Interrupt a figure by inserting something in the middle. In this way, a Check and Weave is an Interrupted figure. So is a Promenade Weave with Lock & Sway Change. We can Extend a figure by adding additional steps but without changing the timing of those steps — make it longer.

And we can make a figure Continuous by speeding it up. We might change a slow into two quicks, add syncopation, or we might add actions: swivels, spirals, turns — make the figure faster or busier.

