

A photograph of three people standing outdoors in front of a large tree and a cityscape in the background. The person on the left is a woman with long brown hair wearing a light blue sleeveless top. The person in the middle is a man with long hair, a beard, and glasses, wearing a purple button-down shirt. The person on the right is a woman with glasses and her hair in a bun, wearing a dark patterned top. The scene is lit with warm, golden light, suggesting late afternoon or early evening.

Improvising Historical Dance to Live Music

Online Lecture on
Practical Dance History by
un'altra volta

February, 27th

Origin of un'altra volta

- Meaning of the name:
 - another Volta
 - again
- *sharedDance*¹ – aims & functions:
 - contact
 - shared moments
 - experience emotions
- work with live music
common ground for dancers
- foundation in late 2017 in Vienna



https://i2.wp.com/earlymusicmuse.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Volta_anonFrance16thC.jpg?resize=1024%2C860&ssl=1

¹ <http://sharedance.de/>

Origin of un'altra volta

- merging our individual backgrounds and studies of dance, early music & musicology
- first workshop at Folkmarathon 2017/2018 in Brno, CZ
- folk dance & folk music background
 - ⇒ experience with dances and music that passed down
 - ⇒ experience of fluent interaction and development among dance & music



Type of events:

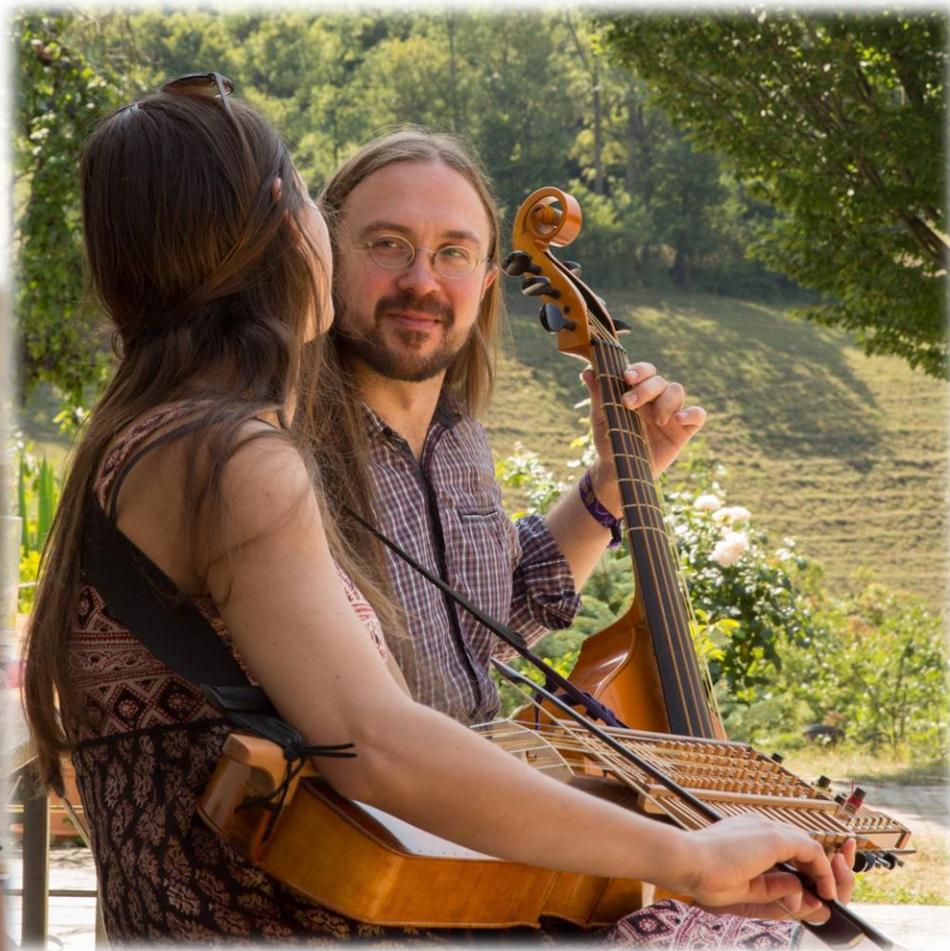


Improvising Historical Dance



Festivals

Festivals



Balls



guest musician:
Susanne Herwelly

Workshops



Dance lab



Improvising Historical Dance



un'altra volta | Anna Breger, Johannes G. Schwarz & Monika Ritthaler

Approach

Our major goals

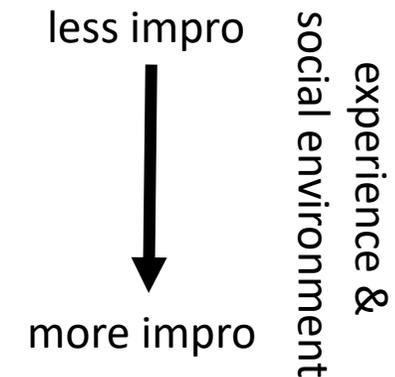
- keep & spread early music and historical dance
- permit its development whilst preserving its meaning
- stimulate folks to move to early music and feel comfortable in doing so
- offer effective exercises
- contributing to a social environment with
 - dancefloors that offer the opportunity to experiment
 - reflection on social roles and attitudes

How to achieve this?

Improvisation

`The act of inventing and executing simultaneously`¹

- Enable to dance without a set choreography
- 3 stages on a continuum:
 - varied figures in a set choreography
 - set frame / pillars for orientation
 - many degrees of freedom / internal & external stimuli



“In fact, improvisation is not ‘free’, it is a highly constrained practice, worked out within physical, contextual, aesthetic, and cultural parameters.”²

¹ Figueroa-Dreher, 2016, p. 10

² Shay, 2019, p.706/707

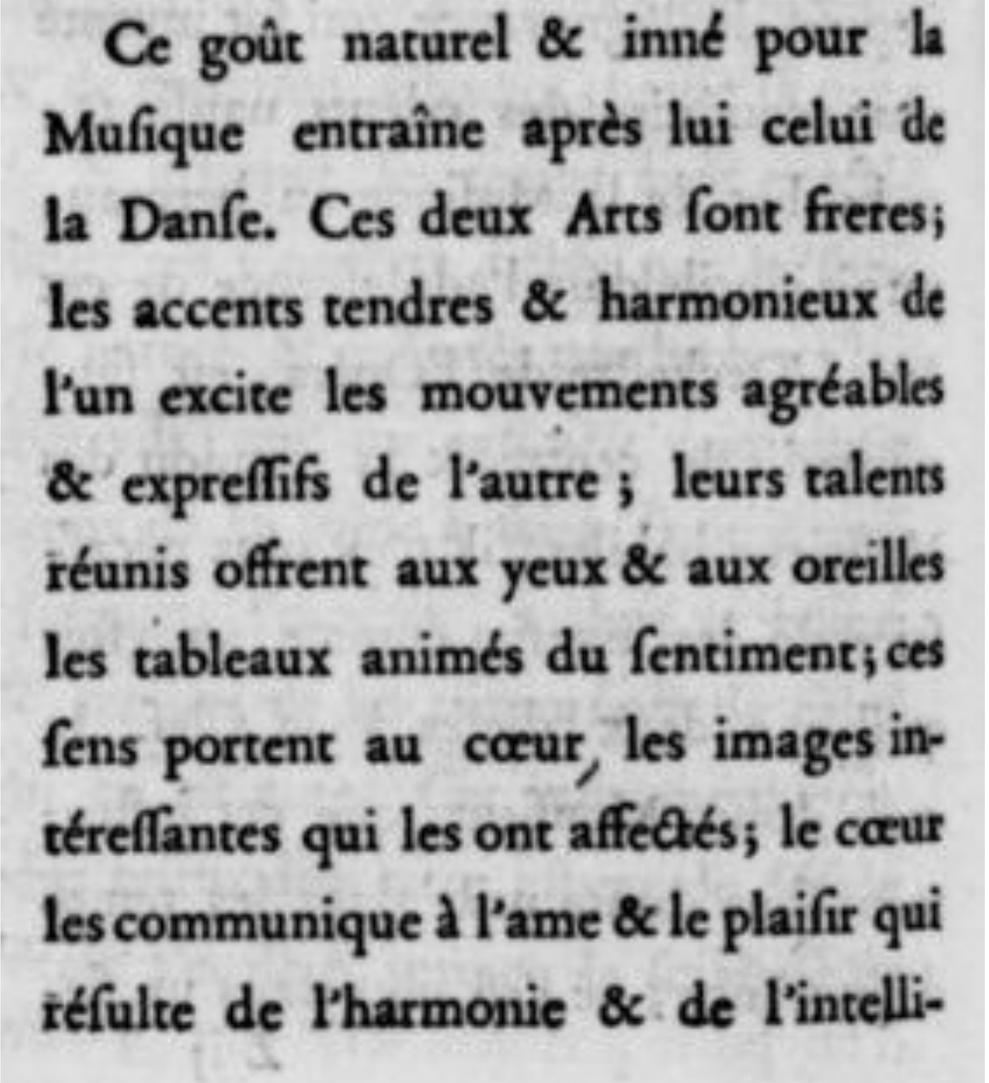
➤ Teach historical dances that allow & emphasize impro elements

Approach

Basic principle 1

Music and dance complement each other - act in unity

music & dance are siblings;
tender and harmonic sounds
awaken enjoyable and
expressive movements



Ce goût naturel & inné pour la
Musique entraîne après lui celui de
la Danse. Ces deux Arts sont freres;
les accents tendres & harmonieux de
l'un excite les mouvements agréables
& expressifs de l'autre ; leurs talents
réunis offrent aux yeux & aux oreilles
les tableaux animés du sentiment; ces
sens portent au cœur, les images in-
téressantes qui les ont affectés; le cœur
les communique à l'ame & le plaisir qui
résulte de l'harmonie & de l'intelli-

Noverre, 1760, p. 356

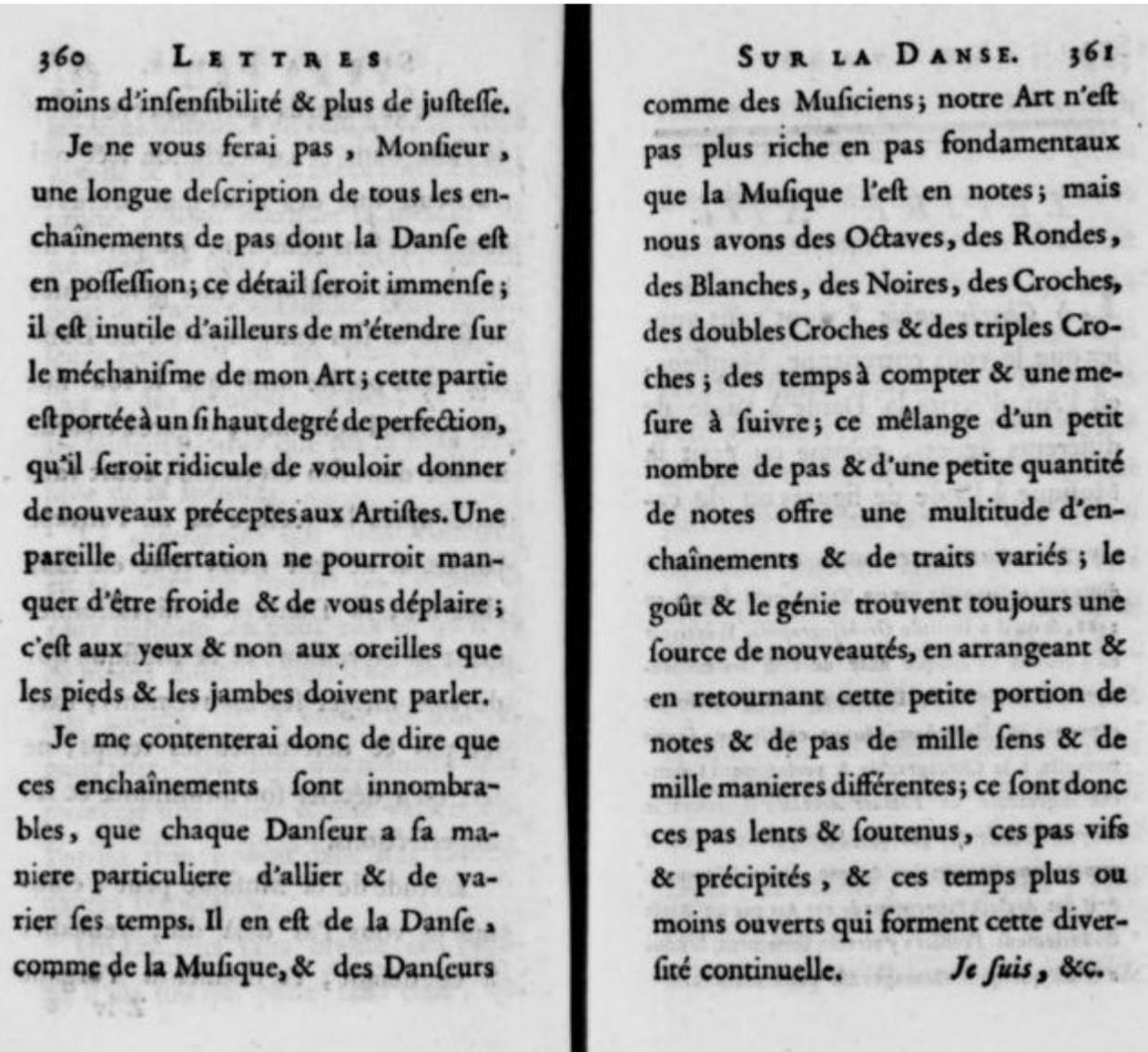
Approach

Basic principle 2

Basic components in music & dance

- enable a variety of compositions
 - can be variegated in style
- ⇒ can be used by dancers to create their own dance

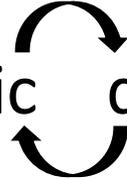
Basic steps in dance as basic note values in music offer innumerable ways of composition, with each dancer having their own style to combine and alter their steps.



Noverre, 1760

Approach

Our educational goals

- acquire tools to create historical dance fluently
- improve communication skills between dancers and musicians
- open up for impulses & change: music  dance as reciprocal inspiration
- play and experiment
- be present in your body / move from your body
- find own style
- create your *own* dance
- overcome right and wrong
- experience & increase enjoyment
- tacit knowledge ¹

¹Lemke, 2003

Approach

Our method

Historically informed performance practice as basis for further development

1. very basic movements

2.+ inspirations to variation

- research in dance and music sources
- instructions based on these sources and shaped by the music
- interchange of experiences / joint reflection
- experience all roles

Methods regarding dance

⇒ acquire steps regardless of role (leading / following)

- influencing factors on creation and style
 - internal: personal aims and motives, physical abilities, mood etc.
 - external: 1. music 2. dancing partner/group 3. space 4. clothes etc.
 - Ad 1: the body as an instrument
 - Ad 2: nonverbal interactions
- perception based, implicit¹ & differential² learning

¹Lemke, 2003

²Schöllhorn, 2012

Methods regarding music

- interaction between music and dance
 - musicians adapt to needs of the course/dancers
 - dancers inspire musicians to new interpretations
- music as basis and partner
 - create atmosphere for free movements
 - let dance develop naturally based on the provoked movements
 - improvisation with the partner inspired by the music
- historical sources

Earlier Repertoire

Couple dances

Allemande, Pavane, Galliarde

Music: Danserye (T. Susato, 1551)

Löwener Tanzbuch (G.P.Phalese , 1571)

Group dances

Branles, Contredanses

Music: Orchésographie (T. Arbeau, 1588)

Il primo libro de' balli (G. Mainerio, 1578)

The English Dancing Master (J. Playford, 1651)

Our approach in the Minuet

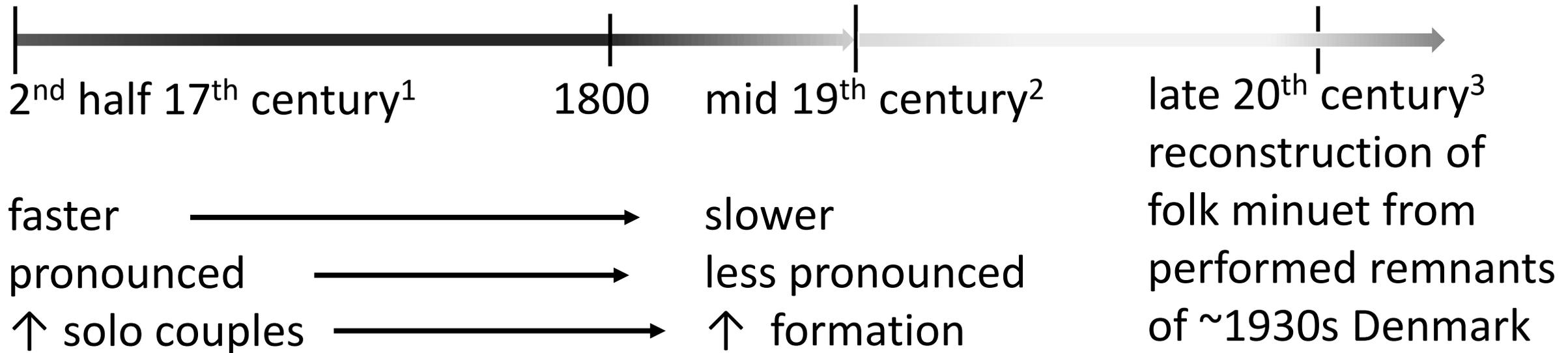
- Regarding music
 - Revitalize Minuet melodies
 - Finding a tempo that
 - ✓ fits the dance and
 - ✓ keeps the character of the music
- Regarding dance
 - Provide a simple basic step to play with
 - Playground for improvisation

Musical sources (Collections)

- ❖ Dahlhoff (1767-1799)
Germany
- ❖ Blidström (1715)
Sweden / Siberia
- ❖ Waasbohm (1718-1740)
Sweden
- ❖ ...

Development of the Minuet

very popular couple dance for ~1 ½ centuries



¹ Sutton, 1985

² Lange & Lange, 2000

³ Nilsson, 2017

Folk Minuet: 1990s reconstruction

Danced to slower music, similar to Slängpolska¹:

“the music for the minuet resembles the semiquaver music of the slängpolska”

- ❖ Polska ur Trästadsamlingen (bar= ~35, ~3 minutes)
- aim: feel unity with the music (eyes closed?)
 - music = leader: *feel the touch of the music*
 - dynamic / sonority / intensity / volume -> range of movement
 - step on each downbeat ♩ (forward, backward, sideways)
 - keep the weight for two beats ♩♩ = ♩
 - 

¹ (Norlind, 1911 cited in) Nilsson, 2017



Practice

feel unity with the music

music leads you &
your range of movement

step on each beat ♪

keep weight for 2 beats

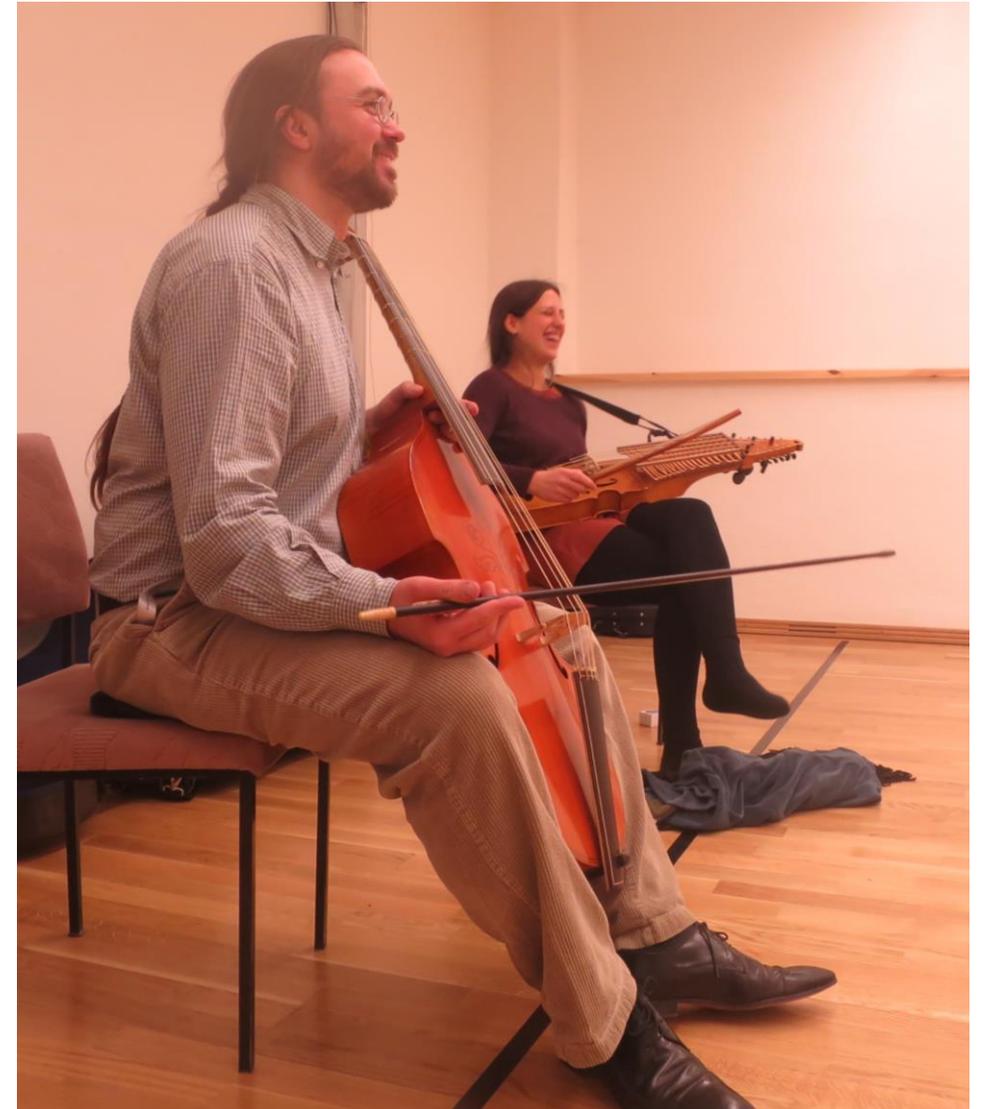
♪♪ = ♪

♪♪♪♪
r | r |

Concert by Wiener Miniorchester

Research of Minuet tunes

- development towards Waltz
- change in tempo over time
- difference between folk and historical Minuet melodies



Research: components of Menuet ordinaire

- danced in couples
- 'standard Minuet' sequence ¹
 - ✓ reverences + introduction
 - ✓ Z/2-like change of places
 - ✓ right hand turn
 - ✓ left hand turn
 - ✓ (Z/2)
 - ✓ turn with both hands
 - ✓ conclusion
- basic step:
 - ✓ 4 shifts of weight
 - ✓ first on right foot (r-l-r-l)
 - ✓ on two $\frac{3}{4}$ measures
 - ✓ forward, backward, sideways

¹ Biskop, 2015

Research: components of Menuet ordinaire

Probably most common step in 18th / 19th century¹ & our suggestion following K. Tomlinson (UK, 1735):

dC dC P P

v | d. v | d. d. d. |

6+1+2+3+4+5+6+ 4+5+6+

R L R L

- *'pas de Menuet en fleuret'*,
- *'one and a fleuret'*,
- *'New Minuet Step'*,
- *'French Minuet step'*
- *'Court Step'*

dC = demi coupé
P = pas / straight steps
v = plié

¹Cobau 1984

Research: components of Menuet ordinaire

Probably same rhythm in J. H. Kattfusz (DE, 1800, p.86)

man durch zwey theatralische Pas, den Pas demi coupé und den Pas bourrée. Jener ist ein gebogener Schritt. Diesen setzt man aus einem gebogenen und zwey gehobenen Schritten zusammen. Rechnet man daher einen Pas demi coupé auf den einen, und einen Pas bourrée auf den andern Takt, so bringt man das Maas der Cadence richtig heraus. Um leichterem Bes

Variation in the 18th century Minuet

Ad libitum variation by the dancers in... (fashion!)¹² :

- frequency and order of basic figures
- step-pattern and ornamental foot & hand movements
- commencement & duration of dance (independent from music)
- step on ball or whole foot

Variation and ornamentation also applied ad libitum by the musicians.

¹ Sutton, 1985

² Tomlinson, 1735

Our approach

Degrees of freedom in the dance

- **pathway** e.g. how many steps (for change of place)
- **lead** e.g. offer for right hand turn

⇒ **contact!**

- **style** e.g. step on whole or ball of the foot
- **variations / figures**

3 Minuets

Berlin national library, Mus. ms. 40182, collection Dahlhoff (bar = 52-60):

- ❖ Menuet (Bd. 1, pag. 73)
 - ❖ Men. (Bd. 1, pag. 44/45)
 - ❖ Menuet Laschene (Bd. 1, pag. 65)
- aim: feel the rhythm
 - 1 step per bar with elevation forward, backward or sideways
 - bend knees as preparation
 - step on stretched leg
 - then add 2 straight steps
- aim: clear direction of body in space
 - take your chair
 - dance transverse
 - pass by
 - circle around
- > how is your upper body oriented to the chair?
- => find your Minuet step in the music or dance your favourite minuet step



**feel the rhythm &
find your Minuet step**

1 elevated step on each bar
(forw., backw., sideways)

add 2 straight steps

direction of body in space

take your chair

dance transverse

pass by

circle around

How is your upper body oriented to the chair?

Practice

Example for pace



slower version of Dahlhoff's Menuet (Bd. 1, pag. 73)

Review: own findings

Advantages through live music

For the dancers

- creating atmosphere
- facilitating music appreciation & teaching (tempo, accentuation,...)
- expanding the variety of composition and style of movements
- picking up and enhancing dancers' impulses

For the musicians

- gaining inspiration from dancers for different ways of playing
- understanding the music in the context of functionality for dance

Review: participant's quote

„Tolles Aufwärmen bei dem man schon viele Schritte gelernt hat; das ‚Einschleichen‘ in die Tänze; die Blindenübung; die Live-Musik und die Geduld der Musiker und von Monika“

[Anonymous participant]

“Great warm-up that already included to acquire a number of steps; the ‘creeping in’ into the dances; the exercise with closed eyes; the live-music and the musicians’ and Monika’s patience”

Thank you for your attention!

Anna Breger

Monika Ritthaler

[<https://annabreger.com/>]

Johannes Georg Schwarz

[<https://www.tanzdersinne.de>]

[<http://www.joge.org/>]



Target group

Positioning according to main focus (aim & content) of dance class

acquiring high number of dances – un'altra volta – training for performance

Participants:

- novices partially experienced in
 - ❖ folk,
 - ❖ 'medieval – style' group dances,
 - ❖ classic dance,
 - ❖ contact improvisation or
 - ❖ other modern dances
- musicians
- historically trained dancers

Variation in the 18th century Minuet ordinaire

“I have shewn the Method or Manner in which the Minuet Dance is to be performed, when reduced to a just and regular Dance; yet in Effect it is no more than a voluntary or extemporary Piece of Performance, as has already been hinted, in Regard there is no limited Rule, as to its Length or Shortness, or in Relation to the Time of the Tune, since it may begin upon any that offers, as well within a Strain as upon the first Note or commencing thereof. It is the very same with Respect to its ending, for it matters not whether it breaks off upon the End of the first Strain of the Tune, the second, or in the Middle of either of them, provided it be in Time to the Music.”¹

¹ Tomlinson, 1735, p. 137

Variation in the 18th century Minuet ordinaire

“The said Dance and its Steps, as I have already observed, altogether depend on Fancy, and are in their Performance various and uncertain; for it is left to the Pleasure of every one to perform them in the Order here set down, in any better Method of their own, or without any Steps. Indeed, it must be confessed that the Steps well performed in a Minuet are great Ornaments to that Dance, in filling it with Variety; yet at the same Time it must be owned the performing the plain Minuet Steps alone is extremely graceful, if well accomplished, and in Effect the most Gentleman-like, or at least the safer of the two.”¹

¹ Tomlinson, 1735, p. 141

ist aber richtig: man tanzet keine Menuet so gleich vom Haus aus gut, bis die Muskeln erst ausgedehnet worden sind. Zwingt man sich, so spüret man ein gewisses Zittern der Füße, welches von der Steifigkeit der Muskeln herrühret. Aus dieser Ursache sollte man alle Bälle mit einem Ländler, oder Dreher, oder auch einer Polonoise anfangen, anstatt daß man der Menuet den Vorzug giebt und mit ihr den Ball eröffnet, um erst in den Gang zu kommen:

Kattfusz,
1800

Let's dance!

Polonaise

Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Mus. ms. 40182,
Tanzsammlung Dahlhoff:

- ❖ Polonoise Nach Blitz (Dahlhoff Bd. 4, fol. 24r)
- ❖ Polones (Dahlhoff, Bd. 1, pag. 55)

1. change of direction

- **step on each downbeat**
- have a **clear** movement **direction**
- find an impulse in the **music** for a **change of direction**



Let's dance!

2. body in space

- how deals your **(upper) body** with direction changes?
- integrate your room: **walls, furniture,..** as opportunity to change direction (as people on a dancefloor). **Touch**, push, pull – react!

Folk Minuet: 1990s reconstruction

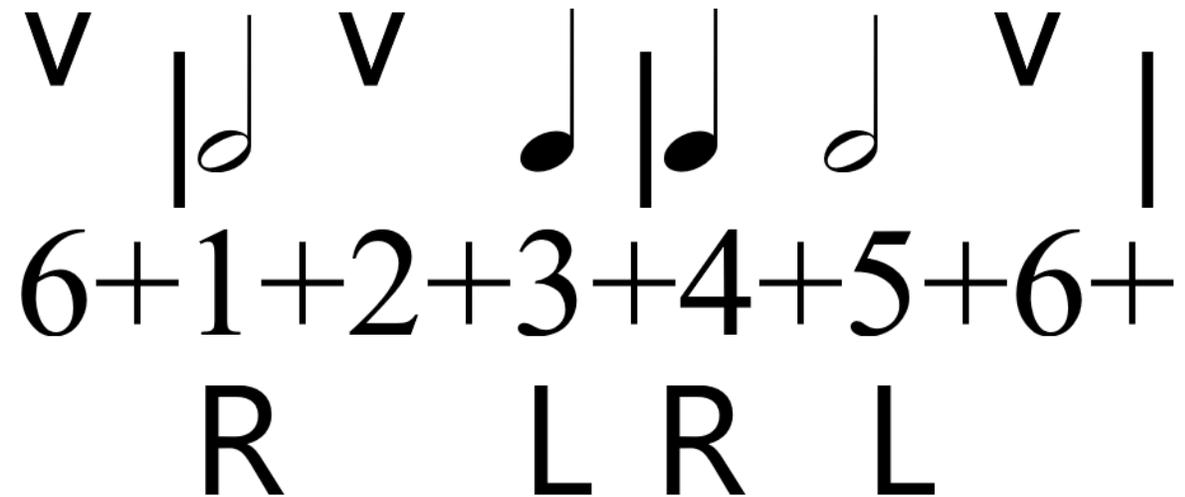
Monnewet fra Randers: couples in 2 lines, similar to 'standard Minuet'¹:

- solo of first couple
- T-like change of places
- giving of the right hand; $\frac{1}{4}$ turn
- giving of the left hand, ; $\frac{1}{4}$ turn
- T
- giving of both hands; $\frac{1}{4}$ turn
- waltz
- reverences + introduction
- Z/2-like change of places
- right hand turn
- left hand turn
- (Z/2)
- turn with both hands
- conclusion

¹ Biskop, 2015

Folk Minuet: 1990s reconstruction

Rhythmical step pattern:



The diagram illustrates a rhythmical step pattern for a Folk Minuet. It consists of three rows of symbols. The top row features a 'v' above a vertical bar, followed by a quarter note, a 'v' above a vertical bar, followed by two eighth notes, a quarter note, and a 'v' above a vertical bar. The middle row shows a sequence of steps: '6+', '1+', '2+', '3+', '4+', '5+', and '6+'. The bottom row indicates the foot used for each step: 'R' under '6+', 'L' under '1+', 'R' under '2+', and 'L' under '3+'.

v = pli 

each step with downward bounce

(Folk) Minuet in the 18th/19th century North

- Quote after a party at Carl von Linné's (1707 – 1778) country house Hammarby, Sweden¹: *“it is true that our balls are not particularly brilliant (...) the dances not varied, just the interminable minuet and polska.”* + *“In Sweden, but above all in Finland, they have often existed historically side-by-side.”*
- The Minuet might have been followed by the faster rundpolska¹
- Peasants probably danced the ‘*standard Minuet*’ in Norway in 1836²
- Minuet used to be danced at weddings in Denmark (1800-1900); a bottle of brandy being passed through the men’s row.²
- Jørgen Glad Lund’s Minuet step description (1823) differs in rhythm

¹ (Norlind, 1911 cited in) Nilsson, 2017 (p.69, p.80)

² Biskop, 2015