

BAL DES MONTAGNES  
(France - Brittany)

This is a very old-style dance from Brittany. "Bal" means "Ball" or dance, and usually refers to a couple dance. There are no mountains in Brittany, only hills, but they are proud enough of the rolling hills to name a dance for these "mountains." The dance comes from Basse-Bretagne (Lower Brittany around town of Vannes) and was observed by a group of Montreal folk dancers in 1975 during a research trip to Bretagne.

Pronunciation:

Record: Dances of Brittany, DB-2 (45 rpm) 2/4 meter.

Formation: Cpls in open circle, W to R of ptr. Hands joined by "pinkies" and held down at sides (V pos). Leader on L end. Wt on R ft. Face L of ctr. Ftwk same for both.

Meas

Pattern

INTRODUCTION Solo bagpipe. Dance begins after long-held note.

CHORUS - Slow Music

- 1-12 Facing and moving RLOD: Beginning L, 12 steps, one step per meas. Arms swing fwd (in) on L steps, back on R steps.  
13-16 M release corner hand, move in CW arc twd ctr (three steps L,R,L) to face ptr: W continue in RLOD and face ptr on last ct. Both touch R ft beside L, no wt (meas 16, ct 1). Join free hand with ptr with pinkie hold on meas 16.

FIGURE I - Fast Music

Raise joined hands about chest level with elbows bent and raised outward so that elbows and hands are on a single plane. Hands start about 8 - 12" apart. They cross each other on ct 1 of each meas, and separate on ct 2 of each meas with M R, W L on top each time. Keep arms and hands fairly stiff during pattern -- movement comes from shldr.

- 1-2 Move twd ctr R,L,R, hop (cts 1,2,1,2).  
3-4 Move away from ctr L,R,L, hop (cts 1,2,1,2).  
5-12 Repeat meas 1-4 two more times, three in all. On meas 12, ct 2 all stamp R ft (no hop).  
- Long-held note in music: M return to orig pos in circle quickly.

CHORUS - Slow Music

- 1-16 Repeat Chorus except M stay in circle on meas 13-16. All bring joined hands to "W" pos on last ct.

FIGURE II - Fast Music

- 1 Point R ft fwd on floor, hands extended fwd at chest level (ct 1: pause (ct 2)).

BAL DE MONTAGNES (continued)

- 2 Bring R ft beside L, no wt, and bring hands to "W" pos (ct 1); pause (ct 2).  
3-12 Repeat meas 1-2 five times (six in all). End with sharp stamp with R ft, taking wt.

CHORUS - Slow Music

- 1-16 Repeat Chorus except W move into ctr to end facing ptr and join hands with pinkie hold.

FIGURE III - Fast Music

- 1-12 Repeat Figure I with W moving bkwd first. M R and W L hand cross on top on ct 1 as before.

Repeat dance from beginning. Dance is done twice through. Bow ptr at end.

Presented by Yves Moreau