

## THE IRISH WASHERWOMAN (Ireland)

This familiar and happy tune is used for Irish group and step dancing, for American squares, a Virginia Reel, and even for a grand march! It is also commonly used to teach the steps of the "Irish Lilt." The instructions here are for a popular square-dance version.



**OPENING FORMATION:** Square sets of four couples, girls on the right, all facing center.

**CALL:** "All four gents to the right of the ring

And when you get there you balance and swing."

Boys step behind their own partners and to the next girl on the right, "Balance" and swing once around in place so that the new partners are on boys' right.

**CALL:** "Now Allemande left with your corners all

And Grand Right and Left around the hall."

Facing "Corners," all "Allemande Left" and move directly into the "Grand Right and Left" as a natural extension of the "Allemande." Continue until boys meet same new partners.

Repeat dance from the beginning as often as desired or until boys meet *original* partners in a final "Grand Right and Left."

There are several possible variations: the first call can be "Four *ladies* to the right,"

instead of "gents," for instance. Or, instead of a "Grand Right and Left," the call can be, "and *Promenade* around the hall"—so that, after an "Allemande Left" with the "Corners," all "Promenade" with partners around the circle and back to home position.

A possible introduction before the first call can be: "Into the center and everyone shout! Back to your places and circle about."—All join hands, skip to the center and shout, back to place, and circle left until reaching original position.

The following explanation of American square-dance terms may be helpful:

**Allemande Left**—Boys face left and girls right, join left hands with a new partner and walk once around each other to face *original* partners.

**Balance**—Facing partners take a short step forward and back in an "honor" (i.e., a courtesy).

**Corner**—The girl on the boy's left (*not his partner*) and, of course, the boy on the girl's right.

**Grand Right and Left**—Facing partners grasp right hands, pass on to the next person with a *left-hand* hold (boys walking counterclockwise). Continue around the circle, alternating right and left-hand holds.

**Promenade**—Partners side-by-side, with girl on the right, join both left and right hands (skating position) and walk or skip around the circle counterclockwise.

