

Xakanaxa

Dance for 4 couples in a 4 couple longwise set

4x40 bar Reel

Note: Throughout the description I will refer to "in" and "out". "In" means towards the middle of the dance (ie down from 1st place and up from 4th place) and "out" means away from the middle of the dance (up from 2nd place and down from 3rd place).

This dance starts with 2 chords. On the second chord, 3rd and 4th couples change sides.

- 1-4 1st and 4th couples set and cast in. 2nd and 3rd couples step out on bars 3 & 4.
- 5-8 1st and 4th couples dance right hands across once round (remaining in the centre) **while** 2nd and 3rd couples set and cast in.
- 9-12 Passing right shoulder with the person of the same sex, 1s with 2s and 3s with 4s, 1st lady dances out the top of the dance and casts off on the ladies' side **while** 1st man casts up on the men's side and dances down **while** 4th lady dances out the bottom of the dance and casts up on the men's side **while** 4th man casts off on the ladies' side and dances up **while** 2nd and 3rd couples dance right hands across once round.
In effect, 1st and 4th couples are dancing around an imaginary person standing in their original place.
- 13-16 Passing right shoulder with the person of the same sex, 1s with 2s and 3s with 4s, 2nd lady dances out the top of the dance and casts off on the ladies' side **while** 2nd man casts up on the men's side and dances down **while** 3rd lady dances out the bottom of the dance and casts up on the men's side **while** 3rd man casts off on the ladies' side and dances up **while** 1st and 4th couples dance half a reel of four across the dance, 1st lady and 4th man, and 1st man and 4th lady giving right shoulders to start.
- 17-20 1st and 4th couples dance a further half reel of four **while** 2nd and 3rd couples dance half a reel of four across, 2nd lady following 4th lady, 2nd man following 4th man, 3rd lady following 1st lady, 3rd man following 1st man.
- 21-24 1st and 4th couples dance anti-clockwise half way around the outside of the set back to their original places, 1st and 4th ladies pulling back left shoulders and dancing out the sides, and 1st and 4th men dancing out the ends to start that movement, **while** 2nd and 3rd couples dance a further half reel of four across.
- 25-28 1st and 4th couples set advancing and turn partners once round with both hands, progressing towards the centre of the set during the turn and finishing ready for a half poussette **while** 2nd and 3rd couples dance anti-clockwise half way around the outside of the set back to 1st and 4th couples original places, 2nd and 3rd ladies pulling back left shoulders and dancing out the sides, and 2nd and 3rd men dancing out the ends to start that movement.

- 29-32 1st and 4th couples dance half a poussette **while** 2nd and 3rd couples set advancing and turn once round with both hands.
- 33-40 2nd and 4th couples, and 1st and 3rd couples dance a full poussette.

Finish in the order 2,4,1,3, ready to start again.

Xakanaxa (pronounced Kakanaka unless you can do the Bushman clicks represented by the 'x's) is a camp in the Moremi game reserve in the Okovango delta in Botswana. I had trouble sleeping on the plane on the way out to Botswana, so I devised this dance to pass the time. I had some sleepless nights in Xakanaxa camp as well, but I was too busy watching the elephants and hyaenas which woke us up to write any more dances.

As you will see, it is a further experiment with canons. This time I decided to try having the canon within each repetition, so had 2nd and 3rd couples repeating what 1st and 4th couples had done 4 bars earlier. Following Anselm's comments on "The Cotton Reel" this is a fugue rather than a canon. To get a valid progression, you will notice I had to break the fugue slightly after bar 32: 2nd and 3rd couples don't move into the centre on their turns, and they dance a full poussette with the same couple.