

The Set of Mezerts

(Country)

When Jer McAuliffe was about 15 years old (c. 1928), he saw and danced five sets: the Polka Set, the Plain Set, the Ginny Ling, the Victora, and the Set of Mezerts. He first learned them from Nicolas Fitz, a farmer in Meens, Kishkeam. There used to be a pattern back in the area and Nicolas knew all the sets. Another set danced in the area that Jer McAuliffe does not remember how to do was the Set of Erin (included in this book). Before Jer's time the sets were danced in the homes and at patterns at crossroads. "There would be six months working and six months dancing. Most of it was done in halls when I got the sets. I only just saw the tail end of them [the Plain Set, the Ginny Ling, the Victora, and the Set of Mezerts]." The halls were in Ballydesmond, Gneeveguillia, Newmarket, Mountcollins, Rock Chapel, Scartaglen, Knocknagree, Boherbue and a hall below Clon Banin Cross.

In Jer's youth the old couples would dance in the "waltz position" with the man holding the lady's right hand in his left hand close to her chest. "If you held hands out it would blind people. You're always supposed to dance tidy. "It was good steady music long ago. You'd get time to dance. You can put life into your music for dancing and you needn't fly at all. The man would say long ago, you'd have to have a certain amount of execution in your music for to be able to dance. With the execution you would have life in the music and when you play too fast you haven't it. Any dancer in my day would keep on the ground and he could do anything with his two feet on the ground. Any man going up in the air was no good. There was no pounding at all. You'd get an odd man who would batter: a short batter, a tip of the toe and a tip of the heel with no hopping. You must have balance. You must start on time and stop on time and be back in your own place. You must keep your place. Padraig O'Keefe told me one time 'Most dancers today have no balance.'"

The Set of Mezerts has not been danced since sometime between 1935 and 1940. "That's why the youth are no longer able to dance today." The spelling used, Mezerts, is based on the pronunciation of Jer McAuliffe.'

Pronunciation:

Music: Jigs, for example, *Meelin Jig*, *House in the Glen*, *Connie the Soldier*, *The Lark in the Morning*. 138 beats per minute. *2/4 meter*

Hornpipes, for example, *Boys of Bluehill*, *Kitty's Wedding*, *Off to California*, *Home Brew*. 107 beats per minute.

Set Dances of Ireland, vol II, Side A

Formation: Square set of 4 cpls.

Set of Mezerts—continued

I. CHANGING PARTNERS

Around the house 8: All four cpls face in a CCW dir in the set (M in the ctr with W on the outside). W place L hands on M's waists. Meanwhile M place R arms behind W's backs over W's arms with M's R hands on W's waists. All four cpls dance eight threes in an CCW dir around the set passing through each succeeding pos and back to starting pos.

Around the house 8: All four cpls dance the slide step and one three, four times, in a CCW dir around the set until all four cpls are back in starting pos. Each time while dancing the three, cpls turn CW (one quarter turn). M alternate facing out from the set, into the set, out from the set and finally into the set dancing into starting pos while W alternate facing into the set, out from the set, into the set and out from the set dancing into starting pos.

The following four-meas sequence is danced twice:

W:	R - - L - -	R - L R - -	L - - R - -	L - R L - -
M:	L - - R - -	L - R L - -	R - - L - -	R - L R - -
Beats/meas:	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6

Figure in 8: 1st cpl, the “lead cpl,” dances eight threes in a CCW dir around the ctr of the set and back to starting pos using two meas to turn CW four times. The other three cpls remain in starting pos.

Wheel 8: 1st cpl in “waltz pos.” During the seventh meas, 1st M leaves 1st W in starting pos; during the eighth meas, 1st M dances in a CW dir to 3rd W.

Wheel 8: 1st M and 3rd W. Meanwhile, 1st W walks in a CW dir to the outside of the set to wait along side 3rd M in 3rd cpl's starting pos. During the seventh meas 1st M leaves 3rd W in front of 3rd cpl's starting pos; during the eighth meas 1st M dances in a CW dir to 2nd W.

Wheel 8: 1st M and 2nd W. Meanwhile, 3rd W walks in a CW dir to the outside of the set to wait along side 2nd M in 2nd cpl's starting pos. During the seventh meas 1st M leaves 2nd W in front of 2nd cpl's starting pos; during the eighth meas 1st M dances in a CW dir to 4th W.

Wheel 8: 1st M and 4th W. Meanwhile, 2nd W walks in a CW dir to the outside of the set to wait along side 4th M in 4th cpl's starting pos. During the seventh and eighth meas 1st M and 4th W move into 1st cpl's starting pos ready to begin around the house.

Around the house 8: All four cpls with new ptrs.

Around the house 8: All four cpls with new ptrs.

Figure in 8: 3rd M and 1st W.

Wheel 8: 3rd M and 1st W.

Wheel 8: 3rd M and 3rd W.

Wheel 8: 3rd M and 2nd W.

Wheel 8: 3rd M and 4th W. During the eighth meas 3rd M and 4th W move into 3rd M's starting pos ready to begin around the house.

Around the house 8: All four cpls with new ptrs.

Around the house 8: All four cpls with new ptrs.

Set of Mezerts—continued

Figure in 8: 2nd M and 1st W.

Wheel 8: 2nd M and 1st W.

Wheel 8: 2nd M and 3rd W.

Wheel 8: 2nd M and 2nd W.

Wheel 8: 2nd M and 4th W. During the eighth meas 2nd M and 4th W move into 2nd M's starting pos ready to begin around the house.

Around the house 8: All four cpls with new ptrs.

Around the house 8: All four cpls with new ptrs.

Figure in 8: 4th M and 1st W.

Wheel 8: 4th M and 1st W.

Wheel 8: 4th M and 3rd W.

Wheel 8: 4th M and 2nd W.

Wheel 8: 4th M and 4th W. During the 8th meas 4th M and 4th W move into starting pos ready to begin around the house.

Around the house 8: All four cpls with original ptrs.

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

House your set 8: All four cpls dance sevens, four times, in a CCW dir around the set using two meas to dance sevens sideways turning CW (one quarter turn) on the 4th beat of each 2nd meas until all four cpls are back in starting pos. M alternate facing out from the set, into the set, out from the set and finally into the set dancing into starting pos while W alternate facing into the set, out from the set, into the set and out from the set dancing into starting pos. The following four-meas sequence is danced twice:

W:	R - L R - L	R - L R - -	L - R L - R	L - R L - -
M:	L - R L - R	L - R L - -	R - L R - L	R - L R - -
Beats/meas:	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6

M slap the ground in front with L ft on the 4th beat of the 8th meas to end the FIRST PART.

II. THREE IN A SWING

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

Figure in 8: 1st cpl. During the 7th meas, 1st cpl ends with held hands (M's L and W's R) in front of 3rd W. During the 8th meas, 1st cpl raise held hands into an arch. 3rd W passes under the arch and places her arms around waists of 1st cpl; 1st cpl lowers held hands around 3rd W's back to waist level; 1st W lowers L arm around 1st M's back at waist level.

Three in a swing 24: 1st cpl wheels each of the W in succession.

(8) 1st cpl wheels 3rd W in the ctr of the set. During the sixth meas 1st cpl and 3rd W end in the ctr of the set with 3rd W's back to her starting pos. 1st cpl raises held hands into an arch and 3rd W backs into her starting pos. During the 7th and 8th meas 1st cpl rotates in a CW dir for 2nd W to pass under the arch ready to wheel.

(8) 1st cpl wheels 2nd W.

(8) 1st cpl wheels 4th W. During the 7th and 8th meas 1st cpl backs into starting pos.

Set of Mezerts—continued

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

Figure in 8: 3rd cpl.

Three in a swing 24: 3rd cpl wheels each of the W in succession.

(8) 3rd cpl wheels 2nd W.

(8) 3rd cpl wheels 4th W.

(8) 3rd cpl wheels 1st W.

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

Figure in 8: 2nd cpl.

Three in a swing 24: 2nd cpl wheels each of the W in succession.

(8) 2nd cpl wheels 4th W.

(8) 2nd cpl wheels 1st W.

(8) 2nd cpl wheels 3rd W.

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

Figure in 8: 4th cpl

Three in a swing 24: 4th cpl wheels each of the W in succession.

(8) 4th cpl wheels 1st W.

(8) 4th cpl wheels 3rd W.

(8) 4th cpl wheels 2nd W.

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

House your set 8: All four cpls. M slap the ground in front with L feet on the 4th beat of the eighth meas to end the SECOND PART.

III. UNDER THE FINGER

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

Figure in 8: 1st cpl.

Under the finger 8: 1st cpl drops hands. 1st M takes 1st W's R hand in his R hand and raises held hands high over W's head. 1st W dances eight threes turning CW (one full turn) four times under 1st M's R hand while 1st M batters to jig time in place. Sometimes M choose to dance threes or stand in place. A common jig time batter done to two meas and repeated four times is the following:

M	L R R L R R	L R R L - -
Beats/meas	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6

Set of Mezerts—continued

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

Figure in 8: 1st and 3rd cpls dance eight threes in a CCW dir (completing a circle two times) turning CW in the space between starting pos and the ctr of the set. cpls end in starting pos.

Under the finger 8: 1st and 3rd cpls.

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

Around the house 8: All four cpl.

Figure in 8: 1st, 2nd, and 3rd cpls dance eight threes in a CCW dir (completing a circle two times) turning CW in the space between starting pos and the ctr of the set. cpls end in starting pos.

Under the finger 8: 1st, 3rd, and 2nd cpls.

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

Figure in 8: All four cpls dance eight threes in a CCW dir (completing a circle two times) turning CW in the space between starting pos and the ctr of the set. Cpls end in starting pos.

Under the finger 8: All four cpls.

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

House your set 8: All four cpls. M slap the ground in front with L feet on the 4th beat of the eighth meas to end the THIRD PART.

IV. THE HIGH GATES

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

Figure in 8: 1st cpl.

High Gates 8: 1st cpl and 3rd W dance eight threes. 1st cpl drops hands.

(2) 1st M takes ptr's L hand in his L hand and 1st cpl dances toward 3rd W. 1st W dances forward while 1st M backs up turning CCW. 1st cpl is now facing out from the ctr of the set toward the space between 1st cpl's starting pos and 3rd cpl's starting pos. 1st cpl raises held hands into an arch.

(2) 1st M reaches under the arch with his R hand, takes 3rd W's R hand in his, and pulls 3rd W under the arch while 1st W passes on the outside moving in a CCW dir and turns CW (3/4 turn) under M's L hand. On passing under the arch 3rd W turns CCW (3/4 turn). 1st cpl and 3rd W keep held hands high above their heads. 1st M and both W are facing out from the ctr of the set into 1st cpl's starting pos.

(4) 1st W passes under the arch and drops hands returning to starting pos while 1st M turns CCW (1/2 turn) into starting pos. Meanwhile, 3rd W passes on the outside moving in a CW dir and drops hands. After 1st W passes under the arch, 3rd W drops hands and returns to starting pos.

Set of Mezerts—continued

(During high gates, 1st W forms the arch the 1st time and moves in a CCW dir around 1st M; 3rd W forms the arch the 2nd time and moves in a CW dir around 1st M; 1st M turns CCW continuously and smoothly until back in starting pos, pausing only to let W turn under his arms during 3rd and 4th meas. Hands are held high overhead until the 7th and 8th meas of high gates.)

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

Figure in 8: 3rd cpl.

High Gates 8: 3rd cpl and 2nd W.

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

Figure in 8: 2nd cpl.

High Gates 8: 2nd cpl and 4th W.

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

Figure in 8: 4th cpl.

High Gates 8: 4th cpl and 1st W.

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

House your set 8: All four cpls. M slap the ground in front with L feet on the 4th beat of the 8th meas to end the FOURTH PART.

V. THE STALLING

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

The stalling 32 All four cpls.

(8) 1st cpl figure in. 1st cpl ends in starting pos, hands at their sides, with backs to the ctr of the set facing out from the set and remains standing until all other cpls finish figure in.

(8) 3rd cpl figure in. 3rd cpl ends in a column behind 1st cpl.

(8) 2nd cpl figure in. 2nd cpl ends in a column behind 3rd cpl.

(8) 4th cpl figure in. 4th cpl ends in a column behind 2nd cpl.

(No name) 8: All four cpls. 1st M turns CCW (one half turn) and dances threes down the outside of the column with all M following. On reaching the bottom of the column 1st M again turns CCW (one half turn) and follows 4th M around in a CCW dir turning the circle a 2nd time and ending in starting pos facing out from the set after completing a circle two times. 1st W does the same, but turns CW (to her R). 3rd, 2nd, and 4th cpls end in a column behind 1st cpl. W place L hands on M's waists. Meanwhile M place R arms behind W' backs over W' arms with M's R hands on W's waists.

Set of Mezerts—continued

Around the house 8: All four cpls dance eight threes beginning in column formation and on reaching 1st cpl's starting pos dance through it in a CCW dir around the set ending in starting pos.

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

The stalling 32 All four cpls.

(8) 3rd cpl figure in. 3rd cpl ends in starting pos facing out from the set.

(8) 2nd cpl figure in. 2nd cpl ends in a column behind 3rd cpl. (8) 4th cpl figure in. 4th cpl ends in a column behind 2nd cpl. (8) 1st cpl figure in. 1st cpl ends in a column behind 4th cpl.

(No name) 8: 3rd M and 3rd W start the movement.

Around the house 8: All four cpls begin in a column and end in starting pos.

Around the house 8: All four cpls.

House your set 8: All four cpls. M slap the ground in front with L ft on the 4th beat of the eighth meas to end the FIFTH PART.

Sometimes, for variation, the stalling was doubled. 1st and 2nd cpls figure in by dancing eight threes in a CCW dir (completing a circle two times) turning CW in the space between starting pos and the ctr of the set. 1st cpl ends in starting pos, hands at their sides, with backs to the ctr of the set facing out from the set and then remains standing until all other cpls finish figure in. 2nd cpl ends in starting pos facing the same dir as 1st cpl. 3rd and 4th cpl figure in: 3rd cpl ends in a column behind 1st cpl and 4th cpl ends in a column behind 2nd cpl. The column is formed with 1st cpl followed by 3rd cpl followed by 2nd cpl followed by 4th cpl. The stalling is repeated a 2nd time with the column formed facing out from the set behind 3rd cpl. Whether danced single or double, the stalling was danced two times and not four times, "I never saw it danced four rounds."

VI. THE HORNPIPE

Around the house 16 All four cpls dance sixteen hornpipe threes in an CCW dir using four meas to reach each succeeding pos to their R:

(4) All four cpls dance one three into the ctr of the set, one three out to starting pos, and two threes in a CCW dir turning CW to reach pos to their R. The hornpipe three begins on the last beat of the eight meas introduction:

W	---	L	R L R R	L R L L	R L R R	L R L L
M	---	R	L R L L	R L R R	L R L L	R L R R
Beats/meas	1 2 3 4		1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4

On the 4th beat of each meas all hop low off the ground. The hop is not a leap into the air. Sometimes the hop is simply a lifting of the heel off the ground and dropping it again without raising the ball of the foot. cpls often dance the Tailor's Twist (hop step, hop step, hop step, hop step turning CW two times) during the 3rd and 4th meas. The 1st hop is on the last beat of the 2nd meas:

W	---	L	R R L L	R R L -
M	---	R	L L R R	L L R -
Beats/meas	1 2 3 4		1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4

Set of Mezerts—continued

(4) Again, all four cpls dance one three into the ctr of the set, one three out, and two threes in a CCW dir turning CW to reach pos opposite starting pos. During the 7th and 8th meas cpls often dance the Tailor's Twist.

(8) All four cpls repeat, beginning in pos opposite starting pos and ending in starting pos.

Around the house 8: All four cpls dance eight hornpipe threes in an CCW dir around the set using two meas to turn CW into each succeeding pos to their R until all four cpls are back in starting pos. During the seventh and eighth meas cpls often dance the Tailor's Twist.

M dance their step while W change ptrs 8: All four M remain in starting pos. M face the ctr of the set and batter or dance eight hornpipe threes in place until the eighth meas when they take new ptrs in “waltz pos” in M's starting pos. M sometimes dance eight hornpipe threes: one into the ctr and one back out again four times.

(6) Meanwhile all four W face the ctr of the set and dance six hornpipe threes: one into the ctr and one back out again three times;

(1) W dance one three in a CCW dir to the next pos on the R passing behind M on the R and to the outside of the set;

(1) W dance one three turning CCW (one half turn) to face new ptrs in M's starting pos. 1st W ends with 4th M; 3rd W with 1st M; 2nd W with 3rd M; 4th W with 2nd M.

Around the house 16: All four cpls with new ptrs.

Around the house 8: All four cpls with new ptrs.

M dance their step while W change ptrs 8: All four cpls. 1st W ends with 2nd M; 3rd W with 4th M; 2nd W with 1st M; 4th W with 3rd M.

Around the house 16: All four cpls with new ptrs.

Around the house 8: All four cpls with new ptrs.

M dance their step while W change ptrs 8: All four cpls. 1st W ends with 3rd M; 3rd W with 2nd M; 2nd W with 4th M; 4th W with 1st M.

Around the house 16: All four cpls with new ptrs.

Around the house 8: All four cpls with new ptrs.

M dance their step while W change ptrs 8: All four cpls. All four W end with original ptrs in starting pos.

Around the house 16 All four cpls with original ptrs.

Around the house 8: All four cpls. M slap the ground in front with L feet on the 3rd beat of the eighth meas to end the Hornpipe.

Description by Larry Lynch

Presented by Larry Lynch