# Sam Sherry The Waltz Routines

C Metherell

Sam Sherry.

The Waltz Routines.

Chris Metherell.

Newcastle Series.

Chris Metherell. 1990.

### Introduction.

A full biography of Sam Sherry is already available (Actual Step Dancing. S. Sherry. English Dance and Song. Vol 41. No 2. 1979. p2.) and accordingly a brief resume is all that is appropriate here.

Sam was born in 1912 at Costock, Nottinghamshire. His father was a professional music hall singer, although he had begun his career as a dancer and comedian. He was a self-taught dancer having watched performers in the Glasgow music halls during the 1850s. Sam was taught to dance by his father almost "as soon as I could walk".

Sam left school at the age of fourteen and it was then that he joined his elder brothers who were travelling with a show. It seems to have been at this point that Sam learnt his waltz steps from his brother Jim, who was considered to be the best dancer in the family. Jim had learnt from such people as Scott and Whaley, Horace Wheatley and Victor Andre.

From then on Sam toured the halls with various combinations of the family until 1956 when he retired from show business and went into a boat hire and repair partnership.

## The Routines.

The waltz steps which Sam uses consist of three groups of steps, used to make up two separate routines. When he first started dancing again in the mid 1960s, Sam evolved a routine consisting of 5 steps recalled from his brother Jim's teaching (which he considers to be "traditional", and a further 5 steps which Sam made up using segments of steps recalled from his years on the halls. This "A" routine was thus steps 1 - 10 of the notations which follow. Steps 1/2/3/9/10 are the "traditional" 5. When Sam began teaching this routine, many dancers found steps 4-8 too difficult and so he evolved a "B" routine with 5 simpler steps replacing steps 4-8 of the "A" routine. These are steps 4a/5a/6a/7a/8a in the following notations. Thus the "B" routine is 1-3/4a-8a/9/10.

### Notations.

It is not perhaps surprising that over the years Sam's dancing has subtly changed. Although I have written down Sam's waltz routines on several occasions, I felt it essential to provide a "snapshot" of Sam's dancing at a particular time. In fact I have provided several. The "A" routine appears on two easily available videos. Firstly, "Sam Sherry. Lancashire Step Dancer. Garland Films. 1978." and secondly - a film in 8mm format, shot by Paula Earwaker and available through Garland Films. The main notations given are taken from the 1978 film. Differences noted in the later, Earwaker

film are given in the footnotes to each step in italics. The "B" routine does not appear on either of the above and I have provided one notation for steps 5a-8a taken from a private video kindly sent to me by Melanie Barber of Sam dancing in February 1985.

It should be borne in mind that doubtless further variations have crept into Sam's dancing since the above films were taken, indeed it would be surprising if this were not the case. There is no final, correct version of any set of steps, and one is only ever able to record a "snapshot" of a routine at a particular date.

# Style Notes.

Sam's A:A position is rather wide. For most dancers it would be noted as A/F:A/F. This should be borne in mind when interpreting the notations.

I have made no attempt to describe Sam's carriage. Sam has always viewed notations as an "aide memoire" and clearly there is no substitute for personal tuition. It is most valuable to closely study the available film and video material if one is interested in capturing Sam's style and flair.

# Bibliography.

S.Sherry. "A

"Actual Step Dancing" and Autobiogrphy transcribed and edited by Ann-Marie Hulme

and Peter Clifton.

English Dance and Song. Vol 41. No 2. p2.

S Sherry.

Notes on Clog Dancing.

Folk Music Journal. Vol 2. No 2. p122.

S Sherry.

Wortley MSS. C.E.C.T.A.L. University of Sheffield. File P.II. No3.

# Acknowledgements.

Firstly I must thank Sam himself for allowing these steps to be published. Madelaine Smith provided the initial impetus for the production of this booklet, and I must also record my particular thanks to Melanie Barber for checking the proofs so painstakingly and also for tracing the 1985 video. Any errors are of course entirely my own.

Platform.

1 and	spring	) shuffle	A: , , : E , E
2 and		) step	: A
3 4	step	anvina	A:
and	) shuffle	spring	;:A E,E:
5	)		·
and	step		Α:
6		step	: A

### Notes:

- 1. The concept of a Platform unit is not known to Sam. Its use is, however, of considerable benefit in notating the waltz steps from Sam's repertoire, as this unit frequently occurs within the structure of a step.
- 2. The movement is given above as performed off the L foot.
- 3. In the following notations the Platform sequence is abbreviated to P. Thus the above becomes:

P

4. Note the differentiation between the spring and step movements which give this step unit a particular lilt.

Step is P A P A P A and Finish.

Finish.

Begin Platform R then:



- 1. Attention should be paid to the foot positions used in the catch out movements, particularly the final D position. As can be seen from the positions given the swing of the leg is essentially a straight.
- 2. Entire step and Finish are performed off the L foot.
- 3. Foot positions for all catch out movements is :RB1,B, $\hat{D}$ 1.

Step 2.

A 1 and 2	spring	) shuffle	A: :É,É
and		step	: xβ/ć
3	step		A:
4		spring	, ;:A
and	) shuffle		È,Ė:
5 and	()		xB/C:
6 and	step	step	:A
Ü		<u> </u>	• • • •
B 1	spring		A: ,
and	****	) shuffle	:E,E
2		)	
and 3	) shuffle	<u>step</u>	E,Ė:
and	) Shalle		ь,ь.
4	step		A: ,
and	· , t.	) shuffle	:É,È
5	'	)	
and		step	:A
6	touch		C:

Step is A B A B A B and Finish.

# Notes.

- 1. The A part is essentially the Platform unit but with the step after the shuffle done in crossed position. It is of note that the shuffle is made in the same position as the uncrossed Platform unit, that is the crossing does not commence until the shuffle has been completed.
- 2. On the third repeat of the B part, beat 6 is made in A:.
- 3. The Finish is the same as that used for Step 1, that is using the original Platform, with no crossing of the feet.
- 4. As in the standard platform unit pay particular attention to the differentiation between step and spring.
- 5. Entire step and Finish performed off the R foot.
- 6. Feet are crossed in the Platform unit used in the Finish in the same positions as in the step itself.
- 7. Touch at beat 6 of step unit is in B/C, but see note 2. above.

Step 3.

1 2 3 & a	spring hop	catch out ) shuffle )	A: :RC1,A,C1 A: :É,È
4 5 6	catch out	step hop	:A RC1,A,C1:
& a	) shuffle	пор	È,È:
and	) shuffle	step	:A È,E:
2 and 3 and	step	) shuffle	A: / : E, E
4 and 5	) shuffle	step	È,Ė:
and 6 and	step	) shuffle )	A: :É,É

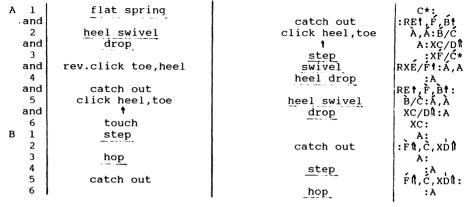
Step is three times through off same foot and finish.

Finish.		l R	
1 and ) 2	shuffle	spring	È, È:
and 3 and	step step	step	A: :A A:
4 and ) 5 )	shuffle	step	È,È:
and 6 and )	step shuffle	step_	A: : A È, E:
1  ) and 2	step	step	A: :A
2 3 4 5 6	_step_	step=	A: :A
6	Ţ		

## Notes.

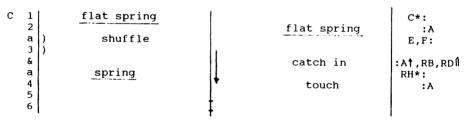
- 1. If the step is performed as part of routine B, a quarter turn counter-clockwise may be made on the last two steps of the finish (i.e. on beats 3 and 4 of the finish). This places the dancer in the correct position to dance step 4a. But see the notes to that step.
- 2. Entire step and Finish performed off the L foot.
- 3. Foot positions for catch out movements are :RB1,B,C1, shuffles in A part are in C,C.

Step 4



Finish.

Begin with A part from step, off L then:



Thus Finish is A C I I L L

- 1. As an alternative, beat 4 of C part may be in :XC.
- 2. Step is performed moving. Turn to L on first Platform unit, and perform rest of step facing L, moving on the A parts. If space is restricted drift slightly backwards on the Platform units. Although performed on the film in this way, clearly the step could equally be performed moving forward.
- 3. Note the use of the swivels and heel swivels of the supporting foot during the clicking movements. This has the effect of increasing the closing speed of the feet when contact is made, thus producing a crisper sound.
- 4. Beat 1 of C part is flat step in C/D\*:, beat 2 is flat step in A:.

A (& 1 2 3 4 & a 5 a 6	spring spring tap ) flop step)	spring spring spring shuffle step	:HMT) XE/HM:A A:RC/DM RDM:XD* A: :E,E :A B: Aex:
B 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 5 and 6	step heel step	heel step  rel click toe=  step  heel step  rel click toe=  step  step  step	: c : c : c : c : c : c : c : c
C 1 & a 2 a 3 a 4 a 5 a 6	spring  step hop hop step step	touch heel drop  click toe,heel  rev.click toe,heel  step  step	A:

Finish.

a 1	,	tap ) flop <u>step</u> )	:B :Aex
a	tap ) flop		B:
2	step)		Aex:
a		) shuffle	:E,É
3	la a sa	,	
&	hop	ton ) flon	A: :B
a		tap ) flop	1
4		step)	:Aex
a	tap ) flop		В:
5	step)		Aex:
а		) shuffle	:E,È
6		)	1
&	hop		A:
a	<del></del>	tap ) flop	:B
1		step)	:Aex
а	tap ) flop		В:
2	step)		Aex:,
a		heel step	, :B
3	heel step		
&		rel click toe=	B, B, B: B, B, B
a		drop	:B
4	drop=		в:
5			
6	}	•	
3		†	I

- 1. Turn to face front to commence step.
- 2. Alternative foot positions are :A for beat 5 of the A part and E\*: for beat 2 of the C part. Sam uses  $B^*$  for the final repeat of the B part.
- 3. The use of the R and L feet in the B parts is somewhat variable. Sam has suggested that it is not strictly necessary to keep to any particular pattern of rights and lefts "Just do what comes naturally". Sam always performs the B part off the L foot, except for the very first heel step on the first occasion when the B part is performed, when the R foot is used.
- 4. Sam performs the A part slightly inconsistantly off different feet.
- 5. The drops at beats "a 4" in the Finish are performed off the opposite feet to those given in the main notation.

- 6. First and second repeats of the A part are begun with the free foot in E  $\P$  and not in H  $\P$  as given in the main notation.
- 7. When the B part is repeated, beat 6 is in :B\*.
- 8. Beat 5 of the A part is in :A.
- 9. In the finish, the drops onbeats a 4 are reversed. i.e. beat a is on the L foot in B: and beat 4 is drop= on the R foot in :B.
- 10. Foot positions for the  ${\it C}$  part are rather different, these are thus given in full:

C 1 & a 2 a 3 a	spring step hop	touch heel drop  click toe,heel  rev.click toe.heel	A: :E/F :E/F E*: :RB† XA*:RE† :RÈ/F†
4 a 5 a 6	hop step step	step step	F*: :A A: :A A:

This gives the effect of making the movement appear slightly more compact. Note also the sideways movement of the supporting foot during the clicking movements. This movement increases the speed of the feet when contact is made, thus producing a much crisper sound when contact is made.

Shuffle   E,E				1	3
& hop       tap ) flop       A:       :B       :Aex       .Aex:       .	Α	a	spring	) shuffle	A: :É,É
a       tap ) flop         4       step)         5       hop         6       tap ) flop         a       tap ) flop         b       step)         catep)       shuffle         catep)       touch         catep       touch         catep       touch         da       catep         catep       touch         da       catep         catep       RC**:         catep       RC**:         catep       a         catep       step         catep       a         catep       catep         catep       a         catep       catep         catep       catep </td <td></td> <td>&amp; a</td> <td>hop</td> <td></td> <td>:В</td>		& a	hop		:В
Shuffle   E,E		а		step)	A:
& hop       tap) flop       A:       :B       :Aex       :Aex       A:       :Aex       A:       Aex:        Aex:        Aex:        Aex:         Aex:         Aex:         Aex:         Aex:         Aex:         Aex:         Aex:         Aex:         Aex:         Aex:         Aex:         Aex:         Aex:		а	step)	) shuffle	Aex:
6       tap) flop       :Aex         1       step)       :Aex:         1       step)       :Aex:         2       hop       touch       A,A:XE/H*         3       catch out       heel drop       :A         4       heel drop       :A       RXDM,A,HM         5       step       RC**:       A: (RB*:         6       step       hop       A: (RB*:         6       hop       A: (RB*:		&	hop	tan ) flon	
1 step) 2 hop 3 swivel 3 catch out 4 heel drop 5 step  B 1 spring a 2 hop hop Aex: .:E,E  Louch heel drop .:A RXDM,A,HM RXDM,A,HM RC**:  B 1 spring a 3 shuffle  B 1 spring A: (RB*: .:É,E		6	tap ) flop		:Aex
& hop swivel       touch heel drop       A,A:XE/H*         3 catch out       heel drop       RXDM,A,HM         4 step       RC**:         B 1 spring       Shuffle       A: (RB*:         a shuffle       E.E.E         b hop       A: (RB*:		1		) shuffle	
Step   Shuffle   Shuffle				)	, A;
##		3	**************************************		: A
6 step  B 1 spring  a		4	catch out	heel drop	RXDW,A,HW: :A
a   ) shuffle :E,E 2   ) A:			step		RĆ*.*:
& hop A:	В	а	spring	) shuffle	A: (RB*;) :É,É
		& a	hop		A: :XĆ/É :XĆ/É*

Finish.

1 2 3 4 and 5 and 6 and 1 and 2 and 3	swivel hop spring  shuffle  spring  step	step ) shuffle ) spring ) shuffle ) spring	A: RXC/E †, A, H f A: A: E, E  A: A
4 5 6		step	1

- 1. The first flop of any pair is consistantly a larger movement. Compare A part beats "a 3" with beats "a 4".
- 2. Note particularly the slight body turn at the end of each  $\ensuremath{\mathtt{A}}$   $\ensuremath{\mathtt{Part}}$
- 3. An alternative foot position is the use of RB\*: at beat "&" of the B part.
- 4. Note the use of RB\* in repeats of the B part, A: being used on first occasion only.
- 5. It should be noted that in the full length shot of Sam performing this step he makes an error on the finish on the final two beats and then has to make an adjusting beat to get onto the correct foot for the next step.
- 6. The body turn mentioned at 2. above is rather inconsistantly performed.
- 7. The spring on beat 2 and of the Finish is in :RB/C.

Step 7.

	•		
A 1   a   2	spring	) shuffle	A: :F/G, F
& ! a !	click ball,heel	spring	RB¶:A¶
3	step	***************************************	RC:
	) shuffle	step	: A F/G, F:
5 & a	) spring	click ball,heel	A†:RB† A:
6		step	:RC B*:
and	step	catch out	:RB1,A,C/D1
2 and	hop	step	A: :C
3 and	step	step	A: :C/D*
4	catch out		RB1,A,C/D1:
and 5	step	hop	:A C/D*:
and 6	hop	catch out	:RB†,A,C† A:
B and	giás i ta	catch in	:Ct,A,RCt
B and	shunt		A,B*:
and 2	tup catch in	<u>step</u>	:RC* C1,A,RC1:
and 3	ston	shunt tup	:A,B* RC*:
	step		:C*
C and	heel step=	heel step	) : C*
and 2	heel swiv	el click toes=   step	A,A:A,A :A
and	step		A:
3	swivei	click heels=	A,A:A,A
D and		) shuffle	:ć,ċ
and		step	:В
5 and	step	step	A: :A
6	step		A:

- 1. It will be seen that this is essentially a half length step, performed twice, using parts C and D as alternate "finishes".
- 2. Use the first bar of the first A part to turn to face L, the remainder of the A part moves forward, facing L, two B parts moving backwards, the third B part to turn to face front, and the C part is performed facing front. Same pattern of movement for the second half of the step. Obviously other movement patterns are possible, and indeed Sam often performs this step moving forwards.
- 3. Note the extension used on the catch out movements. The foot finishes the catch out in C/D and is then brought in slightly to step in C.
- 4. Movement pattern as 2. above but whole step is performed facing to the L, i.e. no turn to face front half way through, nor at the end of the step.

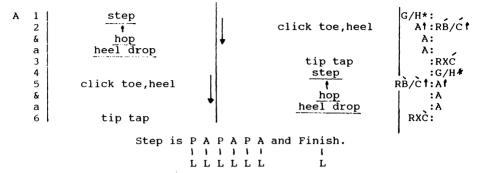
. Step 8.

A 1   &   a   2   &   a   3   a   4     a   5   a   6	hop (spring) hop hop hop step	Shuffle
	B part = B	part of step 7
C 1 and 2 and 3 and 6 and 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 5 6	step swivel heel swivel catch in spring step swivel heel swivel catch in spring step swivel step swivel step step	heel swivel   A: c, c
D 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 5 6	spring	step   :A   E, E:   A:   :E**   RCN, RB, DM:   :A     :A

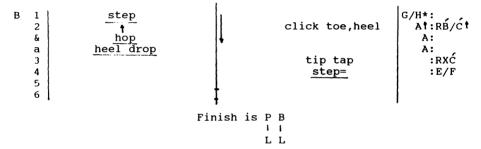
# 

- 1. The step is commenced facing front.
- 2. Note the pattern of steps and springs which give the step a particular character.
- 3. Note the slight sideways movement (to A/F) after each heel swivel in the C part. This has the effect of appearing to unwind the feet.
- 4. As can be seen from the notation the body is turned slightly to the R during the D part.

Step 9.

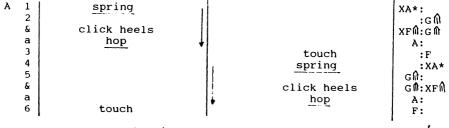


Finish.



- 1. Note that beats 1 and 4 of the step unit involve a step to the side (in fact to G/H). Other variants of this step unit, not necessarily in waltz time (e.g. step 8 of Ivy Sands' Double Hornpipe) begin with a jump=.
- 2. Beats 3 and 6 of the step unit and beat 3 of the Finish are touch in RC instead of tip tap. This gives the step a quite different visual appearance.
- 3. Beat 4 of the Finish is in :F.

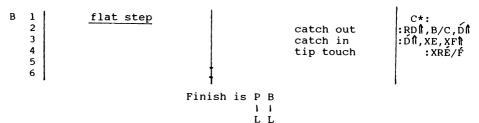
Step 10.



Step is P A P A P A and Finish.

Finish.

Begin Platform L then:



# Notes.

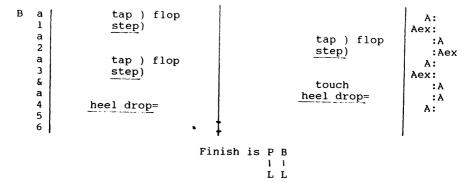
- 1. The exact foot positions are a little irregular depending upon which foot  $\operatorname{Sam}$  is dancing.
- 2. Arms are held by the side on beat 4 of the Finish. (see 3. below.)
- 3. Arms are folded in front of chest on beat 4 of the Finish.

Step 4a.

A 1	step		A: _ \
and	1	) shuffle	:É,È
2		( )	
and		touch	:В
3		heel drop	:B*
and	) shuffle	-	È,Ė:
4	)		-/
and	touch		в:
5	heel drop		B*:
and		) shuffle	:É,É
6		)	12,2
and		touch	:в
1		heel drop	:B*
and	touch		В:
2	heel drop		B*: ,
and	where we are an executive	) shuffle	É,É
3		)	,.
and		touch	:B
4		heel drop	:B*
and	) shuffle	meet drop	È, E:
5	,	i	L, L.
and	touch		в:
6	heel drop touch		B*:
			۰ " ط

Finish.

Begin Platform L then:



- a) A part moving fwd, 2 x P turning c.cl to face rear, A part facing rear, turn c.cl to face front on platform movement of finish.
- b) Having turned c.cl at the end of the previous step to face L. Perform the first A part moving to L. Half turn c.cl on the two Platforms to face R and perform second A moving to R. Turn c.cl to face fromt on Finish.
- 2. The use of the B position is determined by how far the dancer chooses to move. C or C/D or even D could equally well be used to increase the distance travelled.
- 3. Note particularly the shuffles in  $\dot{E}$ ,  $\dot{E}$  in this step, the feet being back under the body to perfrom the toe/heel movements.

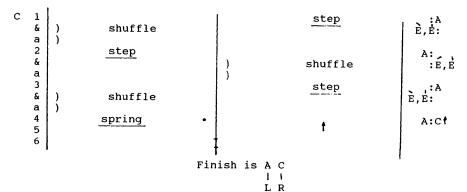
Step 5a.

A	1 a 2	step	) shuffle	A: , , ; ; E , E
	a 3 4 & a	step= hop	step ) shuffle	: A A: A: E, E
	5 a 6	tap ) flop step )	spring	:A B: Aex:
В	1 &	<u>spring</u>	) shuffle	A: :F/G,RE/F
	a 2 a 3 4 &	step ) shuffle	spring step hop	:RĆ* XC:, :A :A E,F:
	a 5 a 6 1	spring step shuffle	step step	RC*: XC A: : A È, E:
	a 2 & a 3 &	step step ) shuffle	) shuffle ) <u>step</u>	A: , ; :E,E :A E,E:
	a 4 a 5 & a	step_	) shuffle ) spring heel drop	A: :F/Ġ,F/RE :RÉ :RÉ*
	6	touch		xc:

Step is A A B A A and Finish.

# Finish.

Begin A off the L then:



Step 6a.

•			
1	hop		A:
a		1)	
2	hop		A: _ \
&	error of the	) shuffle	:É,É
a			
3	hop		Α:
4		catch out	:RBN,A,CN
5	hop		Α:
6		step	:A
1	step		λ.
and	and the same of th	) shuffle	∷É,È
2			, .
and		step	, :A
3	) shuffle		È,È:
and	)		-,
4	step	i	A: ,
and		) shuffle	É,É
5		i i	,_
and		step	`: A
6	touch		xċ:
		l	no.

Step is three times through off alternate feet and Finish.

R Finish. 1 hop & shuffle а 2 hop & shuffle а hop 4 catch out 5 hop : A 6 step 1 step & shuffle а 1) 2 hop & shuffle а 3 hop & shuffle а 1 4 shunt 5

Step 7a.

A 1 and 2	step	shuffle	A: ,
and 3 and 4	step	step ) shuffle	:A A: :C,c
and 5 and 6 and	<u>hop</u> ) shuffle )	toe tap spring	A: :RC :B È,E:
B 1 and 2	) shuffle	step	:A E,E:
and 3 and 4	step tap ) flop step)	<u>step</u>	A: :A C: Bex:
5 6 and	tap	step	:B* A: A <b>†</b> :

- 1. This step is essentially a half length step, the B part effectively being the "finish".
- 2. Note the use of the shuffle in C,C in the A part.

Step 8a.

A 1 and 2 and	step_	heel touch heel step	A:, :C :C
3 and 4 and 5 and 6		) shuffle ) toe tap spring	: C, C A: : RC ; : A E, E:
and	step		A:
B 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and	step step step shuffle	step step step step	:A A: :A A: :A A: :A E, E:
and 6	step	tap	A: :A

# 

- 1. This step, as with step 7b. above is essentially a half length step.
- 2. The B part of the step has been notated as though the dancer was performing on the spot. In fact the dancer should move forward on the first B part (i.e. off the R foot) and backwards to place on the second B part. (i.e. off the L foot). Clearly other movement patterns could be used. The degree of movement depend entirely upon the space available.
- 3. Note the C C and C,C positions.

