

# 15 VARIATIONS for the CROSS-STEP WALTZ MIXER

Taught at Friday Night Waltz, October 21, 2011

Richard Powers

Doing variations during the four bars of the Cross-Step Waltz Mixer presents a unique challenge. The variations must travel uniformly LOD, to fit in with the couples ahead and behind. Instead of finishing a variation in closed position with the lead facing out, as usual, you must finish side-by-side facing in, with his R hand holding her L. You have very little time to adapt to your new partner's frame and style. The lead must instantly ascertain how experienced his new partner is, if he wishes to lead something tricky. And *both* partners must be careful about exiting smoothly, without crashing into the next partner.

The majority (two-thirds) of 240 Cross-Step Waltz variations don't work in the Mixer. Many stop traveling LOD or go the wrong way. Many don't resolve within four measures. Then many of the remaining 80 don't flow or resolve very smoothly. So there is an art to finding the best variations. Here are some that work especially well in the Cross-Step Waltz Mixer.

**GRAPEVINE UNDERARM (OUTSIDE) TURN** 3 steps of the Grapevine followed by lead turning her once CW under his L arm. 1) Leader crosses R behind as she crosses L in front; 2) Side step toward LOD; 3) Leader crosses R in front as she crosses L behind; 4) Side step letting her face forward LOD; 5-6) Follow's Outside Underarm Turn.

**OPEN 2-HAND GRAPEVINE FREE SPIN** He leads her into a Free Spin instead of Underarm Turn on 4-5-6, which is much easier to follow from open 2-hand position. He can change to open 2-hands during the first basic, or during the grapevine itself. He gives a gentle lead to the free spin, not pushy.

**TRAVELING SWINGOUT TO GRAPEVINE FREE SPIN** He sends her into a swingout diagonally toward the center, and back (her travel path is the same as a Zig Zag), taking her free hand at the end. (1-6) Then he leads her into an open 2-hand Grapevine (1-2-3) then Free Spin on 4-5-6.

Same with **TRAVELING SWINGOUT TUCK-TURN** Traveling Swingout except instead of returning to closed position, he braces his L hand into her R hand on counts 2-3, then leads her into a CW outside underarm turn on 4-5-6 letting her footwork pivot down LOD. She crosses L behind R on ct 3, then steps R forward LOD on 4 into the underarm turn.

**1 BASIC STEP + TRAVELING SWINGOUT TUCK-FREE SPIN** He sends her past him, into Swing-out Position, braces his L hand into her R hand on counts 2-3, as she faces back toward him. Push away with a *lowered* connecting hand on 4 then she free-spins on 5-6, to end facing in.

**LONG GRAPEVINE, DOUBLE OUTSIDE TURN** Six steps of a lateral grapevine: 1) Leader crosses R behind as she crosses L in front; 2) Side step toward LOD; 3) Leader crosses R in front as she crosses L behind; 4) Side step; 5&6) Same as 1 & 2. (Note: he must *lead* her grapevine.) Then she crosses behind on 1, winding up, then she turns forward CW under his raised L arm on 2-3. She turns a second time on 4-5. face in on 6, as he backs out of her way to face in.

**LONG GRAPEVINE, OUTSIDE TURN, FREE SPIN** It's the same except you push away with a *lowered* connecting hand on 4 then she free-spins on 5-6, to end facing in.

**1 BASIC STEP + LEAD'S WRAP, FOLLOW'S INSIDE TURN EXIT** Lead slips away to 2-hand hold at the end of the Turning Basic, faces LOD as he raises his R hand, leads his R elbow into the frame as he passes by her and darts into the outside lane on 2, then drops his R hand down in front of himself on ct 3, into Lead's Wrap. That extra low drop of the hand on 3 leads her into an Inside Turn on 4-5-6. End facing in, holding inside hands.

**WATERFALL GRAPEVINE INSIDE TURN** 1-3) The first half of a Turning Basic; 4-6) Waterfall Grapevine (he crosses L behind on 4; she crosses R behind on 6) traveling LOD; 7-9) Follower's Inside Turn (as He-Goes-She-Goes); 10-12) He sweeps her by and takes her other hand to face in.

**INSIDE TURN TO CRADLE WALK** He leads a Follow's Inside CCW Turn on ct 2, catching her L hand with his R hand as she turns in, to end in Cradle Position facing LOD. Just Waltz Walk forward LOD on 4-5-6, 1-2-3. Unwind Cradle Position (opposite hand path as 1-2-3) on 4-5-6 to face in.

**UNFOLDING EXIT FROM CRADLE POSITION** Exit by releasing the above hand, keeping the lower hand, simply unfolding on 4-5-6 to face in.

**OPEN 2-HAND CHAINED INSIDE AND OUTSIDE TURNS** He leads a Follow's Inside CCW Turn on ct 2, catching her L hand with his R hand as she turns in, to end in Cradle Position facing LOD on 3. She steps directly forward R LOD on ct 4 as he leads her into a CW Outside Turn. Hands are always raised on ct 2, not 1. Repeat 1-2-3. Release the above hand, keeping the lower hand, unfolding on 4-5-6 to face in.

**TRIPLED SINGLE PIVOTS** This is a favorite. 1) Crosstep; 2) Pivot: he steps L across in front of her and looks back at her, taking a squarer frame waltz position as she steps R fwd between his feet; 3) Another pivot step; 4) Both face toward held hands and step forward, with the lead passing the follow. Repeat these 4 counts twice more.

**HE-GOES-SHE-GOES ENTRANCE TO PIVALOOP** Just that. Instead of sweeping in front of him on the 4<sup>th</sup> bar, she remains at his L side with held hands fwd LOD, Pivaloop at the beginning of the next measure 5, then a CW Free Spin on 456.

**CROSS-BODY INSIDE TURN INTO PIVALOOP FREE SPIN** (Chained Inside and Outside Turns) Cross-step toward the center of the room and he immediately leads her into a CCW inside turn for cts 2-6, ending w/ connecting hand raised fwd LOD. Then he leads her to a CW Pivaloop outside turn then a CW Free Spin on 4-5-6.

**TURNING BASICS, NO VARIATIONS** Sometimes the simplest is the best. Enjoy being with your partner.