

· **What is Round Dancing?**

Round dancing is best described as **choreographed ballroom dancing for couples**. It is a social, non-competitive activity, for fun rather than competition. On the dance floor, choreography is directed verbally by a round dance cuer, enabling all couples on the floor to dance the same steps, at the same time. Round dance has many choreographed sequences of steps that are borrowed from, or can be transferred directly to normal ballroom dancing. Dances include the two-step, waltz, foxtrot, quickstep, jive, cha cha, rumba and more. There is no prize for being perfect - dance for the fun of it! If you make a mistake the round dance police will not get you.

· **What makes Round Dancing unique?**

Round dancing has the same origin as ballroom dancing. While round dancing is choreographed, ballroom is freestyle. Round dancing uses a cuer, so that dancers don't have to memorize a vast list of dance sequences. There is a strong western dance influence in the 2-step and easy level waltzes. And thanks to hundreds of choreographers over the last 30-35 years there are many superb sequences of dance steps in the rounds "classic dances".

· **How does the round dancer get started?**

Join one of the many clubs dedicated to Round Dancing! There are hundreds in Canada. The aspiring round dancer joins a club which teaches beginners. Beginner clubs offer instruction, workshop, review of a previous dance, and lots of dancing fun in a smoke and alcohol free environment. A club dance varies from 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 hours long. Some clubs dance in the afternoon and others in the evening. The dance season usually runs from September through to the end of May with a graduation dance at the end of the season. If really interested, dancers can buy videos to supplement class instruction.

· **How difficult is it and how complicated?**

Round Dancing is no more complicated than many other activities. New dancers include those who have never danced before in their lives, dancers who have done other dancing and people of all ages. You choose how far you want to go and how fast you want to get there.

Music and Levels There are levels from beginner through easy, intermediate, to advanced. The dance music used is mostly popular instrumentals and vocals from the easy listening category, dating back to the 1950's and earlier. They include show tunes, swing, rock, and western.

Rhythms The easy level emphasizes the 2-step and waltz. As one makes the transition to the intermediate level, new rhythms are added, including the foxtrot, quickstep, tango, rumba, cha cha and jive are introduced. Advanced levels add more rhythms and sophistication.

· **What Countries have Round Dance Clubs?**

Round dancing is a world-wide activity, although most clubs are in North America, and the world-wide language is English. An international association of round dance teachers, called Roundalab, maintains the syllabus, instruction standards, and the introduction of new steps and rhythms.

· **Conventions**

National square and round dance conventions are held not only in Canada and the USA, but also in Australia and Europe. In the southern USA, popular round dance destinations include Florida, the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, Arizona, and Southern California. Most provinces and states have major dance conventions annually.