



*The*

Dancing Manual  
*of*

The Canton of  
Appleholm



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## ***Period Sources***

*Orchesography* (1589, France), by Thoinot Arbeau (aka Jehan Tabourot).

## ***Credits***

Assembled in the winter of 2022–2023 by Alienor Salton.

Digital publishing support by Mathghamhain Ua Ruadháin.

Cover image of dancers from Fonta's 1888 edition of Arbeau's *Orchesography*.

## ***Branle Double (Common Bransle)***

**Context:** Arbeau describes this as the first of four dances that open the dancing at a festival, danced sedately by the elderly.

**Setting:** A line or circle of dancers, holding hands or linking arms.

**Steps:** Double left, double right.  
Repeat until the music runs out.

**Technique:** To double left, put your weight on your right foot and step out sideways with your left foot, transferring your weight to it as you step on it. Bring your right foot near your left foot, and transfer your weight to your right foot. Continue resting on your right foot, and step out sideways again with your left foot, transferring your weight to it. Bring your right foot next to your left foot and set your toe down, but do *\*not\** transfer your weight. You are now resting on your left foot with your right heel elevated, ready to double right.

Double right is a mirror image of double left, again transferring your weight from left to right until the last step together, when you do not transfer your weight to your left foot, continuing to rest on your right foot. Your left foot is poised for action.

The weight transfer then is left, right, left, tap, right, left, right, tap.

**Variations:** Music may accelerate as dance progresses. Dancers may take larger steps to the left than to the right to progress. Flourishes may include kick right, kick left, kick right, hold on last 4 beats (2nd step & close) of double right. “Young men of exceptional agility make divisions at their pleasure but I advise you to dance them soberly.”

**Music:** <https://music.youtube.com/watch?v=xP0dqGpbLIw>  
[New York Renaissance Band, Arbeau Orchésographie, 0:38 no intro]

## *Branle Single (Simple Bransle)*

**Context:** Arbeau describes this as the second of four dances that open the dancing at a festival, danced sedately by the elderly.

**Setting:** A line or circle of dancers, holding hands or linking arms.

**Steps:** Double left, single right.  
Repeat until the music runs out.

**Technique:** To single right, step out sideways with your right foot, and transfer your weight to it. Bring your left foot next to your right foot, but do *\*not\** transfer your weight. You are now resting on your right foot, ready to double left.

The weight transfer is left, right, left, tap, right, tap.

**Variations:** Flourishes may include “foot-in-air left, foot-in-air right, foot-in-air left & HOLD” on single right. (See Gay Bransle, below, for how to foot-in-air.)

**Music:** <https://music.youtube.com/watch?v=XwtMiSQ56Ns>  
[New York Renaissance Band, Arbeau Orchésographie, 0:59 no intro]

## *Branle Gay*

**Context:** Arbeau describes this as the third of four dances that open the dancing at a festival. More vigorous than the earlier bransles, this one is for the young married folk.

Dancers proceed to the left only, with four steps and a pause. The repeated steps are foot-in-air, and the raised foot is held in the air throughout the pause, so dancers are holding up one foot or the other for the entire dance.

**Setting:** A line or circle of dancers, holding hands or linking arms.

**Steps:** Foot-in-air right, foot-in-air left, foot-in-air right, foot-in-air left & HOLD.  
Repeat until the music runs out.

**Technique:** To foot-in-air right, hop onto your left foot, raising your right leg in the air, knee bent, toes forward, “barely off the ground and gently as a damsel might do it”. He later adds “he who dances it boisterously causes needless discomfort and jolting”. You are now resting on your left foot with your right foot raised, ready to foot-in-air left. Step out sideways onto your right foot (hop!), raising your left foot into the air.

This is commonly referred to in SCA dance teaching circles as a kick right or kick left. It’s not a kick, however, and calling it that makes it harder to learn, in my opinion. The French phrase is “pied en l’air”, literally meaning “foot in the air”. When you kick, your momentum travels through the foot that is kicking. When you foot-in-air, your weight travels to the foot you are moving onto to support the foot you are raising. If you try to kick, you fall behind the beat. Prance like a horse, instead.

The weight transfer here is left, right, left, right [hold].

**Music:** <https://music.youtube.com/watch?v=ri1iM81ZcO4>  
[New York Renaissance Band, Arbeau Orchésographie, 1:05 no intro]

## *Branle Burgundian*

**Context:** Arbeau describes this as the fourth of four dances that open the dancing at a festival. Danced vigorously by “the youngest of all, who nimbly trip the branles of Burgundy.”

The Burgundy bransle is the same pattern as the double bransle, moving in double time first to the left and then to the right, to a lighter, livelier beat.

**Setting:** A line or circle of dancers, holding hands or linking arms.

**Steps:** Double left (kick), double right (kick).  
Repeat until the music runs out.

**Technique:** To double left (kick), put your weight on your right foot and step out sideways onto your left foot. Bring your right foot near your left foot, and transfer your weight to your right foot. Again, resting on your right foot, step out sideways onto your left foot, transferring your weight. Gently kick your right foot, hopping slightly with your momentum.

Double right (kick) is a mirror image of double left (kick), transferring your weight right to left until the last step right, when you gently kick your left foot, bouncing on your right foot. Your left foot is poised for action.

Unlike foot-in-air, which is one beat, you get two beats to step on your leading foot, then kick with your trailing foot, hopping or bouncing a little on the leading leg that’s holding your weight as your momentum carries your body in that direction.

The weight transfer then is left, right, left, kick, right, left, right, kick.

**Music:** <https://music.youtube.com/watch?v=YDf64v00TcA>  
[New York Renaissance Band, Arbeau Orchésographie, 0:54 no intro]

## ***Bransle Cassandra (Branle Cassandre)***

**Context:** Found in Arbeau. The first of the 5 mixed bransles of Champagne he lists first in cataloging the many variations. Our dance manual includes these 5.

**Setting:** A line or circle of dancers, holding hands or linking arms.

**Steps:** Repeat AABB until music runs out:

A: Double left, double right.

B: Double left, double right,  
Single left, double right.

**Music:** <https://youtu.be/CpwexK0sTW0>  
[New York Renaissance Band, Arbeau Orchésographie, 0:52 no intro]

## ***Bransle Pinagay (Branle Pinagay)***

**Context:** Found in Arbeau, LoD v3. The 2nd of the five mixed bransles of Champagne in our dance manual.

This bransle is related to Gay Bransle, with foot-in-air steps in part A, and the variation of a resting B chorus of doubles left and right. A little less energetic, yet still vivacious and bouncy.

**Setting:** A line or circle of dancers, holding hands or linking arms.

**Steps:** Repeat ABB until music runs out:

A: Double left, foot-in-air left.

Double left, foot-in-air left, right, left.

B: Double left, double right.



## *Bransle Charlotte*

**Context:** Found in Arbeau, LoD v3. The 3rd of the five mixed bransles of Champagne in our dance manual.

This bransle is similar to Pinagay, above, with plenty of foot-in-air action. It is easiest to dance if you keep your action light and delicate. This is not a time for vigorous kicking. The first stanza establishes the A line, which we repeat. The B line occupies a whole stanza, and is the A line open and close with two inner flourishes.

**Setting:** A line or circle of dancers, holding hands or linking arms.

**Steps:** Repeat AAB until music runs out:

A: Double left, foot-in-air left, right.  
Double right.

B: Double left, foot-in-air left, right.  
Single right, foot-in-air left, right, left.  
Single left, foot-in-air right, left, right.  
Double right.

**Technique:** Building on the bransles already covered, there are no new steps in this one. The combination of steps and their rhythmic patterning, however, is new and interesting.