

# The Old Measures: The Dances of the Inns of Court

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## Introduction

Deep in the heart of old London can still be found the Inns of Court, ancient English law firms. During our period, lawyers lived, practiced law, held court, and taught their students there. Dance was considered to be an integral part of those studies.

From the reign of Elizabeth I to the reign of Charles I, the students of the Inns of Court were required to attend revels held every Saturday from All Hallows Eve (Oct. 31) until Candlemas (Feb. 2). These revels included dancing which always began with the eight Old Measures: Quadran Pavane, Turkelone, Earl of Essex Measure, Tinternell, Old Alman, Queen's Alman, Madame Sosilia Alman, and Black Alman.

Our sources for these dances are not dance manuals but rather the notes of individual students taken to help them remember the dances. These notes do not include how to actually do the steps, so we have turned to a period dance manual, Arbeau's Orchesography, for help.

## Steps

Single: Step, together. (2 beats)

Alman Single: Step, lift. (2 beats)

Double: Step, step, step, together. (4 beats) Alman Double: Step, step, step, lift. (4 beats)

The lift: Simply bend your knee and lift your foot. The sole should be kept parallel to the floor.

## Brief Choreographies of Each Dance

All dances are for as many couples as will, in a line, facing up (towards the musicians) with the lady on the gentleman's right, inner hands joined, unless otherwise noted.

### Quadran Pavane

Left single sideways, Right single sideways, Left double forward

Left single sideways, Right single sideways, Left double backward

### Turkelone

I Left alman single sideways, Right alman single sideways

Left alman double forward, Right alman double backward.

*Do the above set of steps twice.*

II Left alman double forward, Right alman double backward

*Do the above pair of steps four times.*

### Earl of Essex Measure

I. Left alman double forward, Right alman single backward

*Do the above pair of steps four times.*

II. Left alman single sideways, Right alman single sideways

Left alman double forward, Right alman double backward

III. Repeat Part I.

### Tinternell

I. Left alman double forward, Right alman double backward

II. **Partners face each other, join right hand to right hand, and circle to the right, using the steps below.**

Left alman single forward, Right alman single forward,  
Left alman double forward.

III. **Partners face each other,  
join left hand to left hand,  
and circle to the left, using the steps below.**

Right alman single forward, Left alman single forward,  
Right alman double forward.

**Partners join inner hands and face up.**

IV. Repeat entire dance, but do part I three times.

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### Old Alman

During the first repetition  
of the music, do not dance  
Part I. Wait until the music

for Part II is played and then  
start dancing with Part II.  
During subsequent  
repetitions of the music,,  
perform Part I in the  
usual place.

### Queen's Alman

During the first repetition  
of the music do not dance  
Part I. Wait until the music

for Part II is played and then  
start dancing with Part II.  
During subsequent

repetitions of the music,  
perform Part I in the

usual place.  
forward

I. 4 alman doubles forward, starting  
with the left.

II. **Partners face, join hands, and circle to the right,  
using the steps below.**

Left alman single forward, Right alman single  
forward

Left alman double forward

III. **Still facing with hands joined, circle to the left,  
using the steps below.**

Right alman single forward, Left alman single forward  
Right alman double forward

**Partners join inner hands and face up.**

I. 4 alman doubles forward, starting with the  
left

II. Left alman double forward, Right alman double  
backward

**Face your partner.**

Left alman single sideways, Right alman single  
sideways

Each person circles alone, using left alman double  
forward

III. **Partners join inner hands and face up.**

Right alman double forward, Left alman  
double backward

**Face your partner.**

Right alman single sideways, Left alman single  
sideways

Each person circles alone, using right alman double

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### Partners join inner hands and face up.

### Madame Sosilia's Alman

I. Left alman single forward, Right alman single  
forward,

Left alman double forward, Right alman single backward  
*Do the above set of steps twice.*

II. **Face your partner.**

Left alman single sideways, Right alman single sideways  
Reverence (bow) left (4 beats)

III. **Still facing, trade places**

**with your partner.**

Left forward alman single, Right forward alman single

**Turn and face your partner, using the step below.**

Left alman double forward

IV. **Reverence (bow) right (4**

beats)

Left alman single forward (**towards your partner**)

Embrace your partner (2 beats)

V. **Repeat parts II, III, and IV to return to original places**

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**The Black Alman**

I. **Four alman doubles forward, starting with the left.**

II. **Face your partner.**

Left alman double backward, Right alman double forward

**Face your own left:** Left alman double forward

**Face your own right:** Left alman double forward

III. **Face your partner.**

**Men only:** Left and right alman singles sideways.

Circle alone, using L. alman double forward.

**Women only:** Left and right alman singles sideways

Circle alone, using L. alman double

forward.

IV. **Face partner, join both**

**hands.**

Change places, using a left forward alman double

Four slides up the hall (towards the music)

Change places, using a left forward alman double

Four slides down the hall (away from the music).

**Still facing partner, drop hands.**

Left alman double backward, Right alman double forward

V. **Repeat the whole dance,**

**with women going first in**

**Part III.**

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Bibliography

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This booklet provides a complete and useful introduction to the Old Measures. An excellent CD by Jouissance is also available