

Jules Martin's "New Polka Quadrille"

Also titled "**The New Six Figures Cellarius Polka Quadrilles**" on the sheet music cover ¹

By Jules M. Martin ("dedicated to his friend Cellarius"), Philadelphia, 1848

Danced to music by Philadelphia African American composer A.F.R. Conner

This is an unusually creative quadrille for the time, that often defies conventional expectations. Martin's creativity may have been inspired by the innovative spirit of Henri Cellarius, who published his seminal book *La Danse Des Salons* the year before, in 1847. The first two figures of this quadrille are mildly unconventional, then Martin's departures from tradition become increasingly creative. See my web page on The Creative Role of a 19th Century Dancing Master, linked on the syllabus page, after the link to this page.

Martin didn't number the couples, but for reasons that are explained in footnote 7, I will number them: Head couple = 1, right side couple = 2, opposite head couple = 3, left side couple = 4, going around the set.

Figure 1

8 • All honor partners. All honor corners. For the following Figs. 2-6, there is a musical intro, without honors.

2 • Taking closed dance position, 2 top couples balancé one polka step in place,

6 • Then do a turning polka "on their place," turning CW 1/4 at the end of each polka step, returning to starting places on the 5th polka step and releasing closed dance position on the last bar. Ladies may stop, or take 2 jetés in place on the last bar, to gain their L foot free for the next figure. ²

8 • 2 top couples polka in a square (Balance en Carre): Facing partner, and folding arms in front, as shown in this 1847 illustration from Philadelphia,

1) Heel-Toe-Polka L turning 1/4 CCW on the final step of the polka; 2) Heel-Toe-Polka R, traveling back-to-back, turning 1/4 CCW to face partner; 3) Heel-Toe-Polka L facing partner, ending facing corner; 4) Heel-Toe-Polka R, looking at corner dancer and traveling forward to that corner.



8 • All dancers face their corner and turn by the R hand, 2 bars, passing by. Move on to the next person and 3/4 turn by the L hand, 4 bars, return to that previous corner and turn by the R hand, 2 bars, to original places.

8 • Two top couples do a turning polka around the inside of the set to places. ³

32 • Side couples do the same. Heads and sides do not do two more repetitions.

Figure 2 (See footnote ⁴ about the 19th century tradition of skipping a figure.)

8 • Head couples Ladies Chain, over and back. When turning original partner by the L hand at the end of the Chain, briefly offer R hands crossed over L, to transition more smoothly into the next figure.

8 • Both head couples with their right side couples Right Hand Moulinet, and back by Left Hand Moulinet.

4 • Side couples take hands with partner and advance to the center to briefly take hands-4, then turn toward partners on the 4th bar, to offer the other hand. At the same time, head couples do a turning polka around the outside of the set to the opposite side.

4 • Sides advance forward to places, as head couples polka across the inside of the set to places.

24 • 24 • 24 • In this figure, Martin does not specify the progression of which couple dances next, but every time that he does specify, side couple 2 always starts next, for reasons that are explained in footnote 7. Therefore I assume that the side couples begin on the second time through, then heads again, then sides.

Figure 3

- 4 • Head couple #1 and their right side couple do turning polkas around each other, with the head couple circumnavigating only 3/4 around, to end crossing over to the other side couple on the 4th polka step. 5
- 4 • Head couple and their left side couple polka around each other, ending with the head couple entering the center, with gent facing opposite's place (lady facing to home place), as the opposite gent #3 preliminarily brings his partner's back to the center in closed position, gent standing in the gent's place (on the left side).
- 4 • In the center of the set, those 2 couples Pursuit, backing their lady into each other's place, 2 bars, then gents back up solo to their exchanged partners, taking closed dance position with that new partner, 2 bars.
- 4 • Those 2 couples polka halfway around each other (2 bars), then both couples promenade forward to approach their left side couples (1 bar). Release handhold, continuing toward side couples (1 bar).
- 6 • Everyone Half Right and Left (English Chain), both heads dancing with their side couples, R hand to vis-a-vis, then turn partner a full turn in that place by the L hand, taking crossed hands, R over L, at the end. 6
- 2 • Head couples crossed-hand promenade to the center, as sides return to their places.
- 4 • Both head couples Moulinet R hands (just placing their held R hands into the star, switching hands to hold opposite person's R hand) with 3 polka steps. Release hands and ladies cast over their right shoulder on the 4th polka step, ending by taking original partner in closed position.
- 4 • Head couples polka to places.
- 32 • 32 • 32 • Side couple 2 leads this. Then opposite couple 3, then side couple 4. 7

Figure 4

- 4 • Head couple polka around the center of the set, ending with gent leaving his partner in the center and heading toward the R side lady.
- 2 • He turns the side lady by the R hand. Note that the side ladies must enter into the center a moment early, to meet the center gent halfway, instead of the center gent traveling all of the way to the side lady.
When the head lady is released, she continues to turn in place CCW, in the center of the set, just as a solo gent continues to turn in place CCW in a Ladies Chain.
- 2 • He turns his partner by the L hand, in the center of the set (i.e., she doesn't return to her home place).
- 2 • He turns the opposite lady by the R hand (as his partner turn in place CCW in the center).
- 2 • He turns his partner by the L hand.
- 2 • He turns the other side lady by the R hand.
- 2 • He turns his partner by the L hand.
- 8 • Head couple polkas around the center of the set as the other three couples polka around the outside of the set, ending with all returning to their places.
- 32 • 32 • 32 • Side couple 2 begins this figure. Then opposite head couple 3, then side couple 4.

Figure 5

8 • All 4 couples polka around the set.

8 • Head couple 1 8 Pursuit 2 bars to center, turn CW halfway, 2 bars, Pursuit back to place, turning CCW. 9

"Basket by Six" During this next figure, side couple #2 polkas around the outside of the set, around the other three couples who are in the center. 8 bars.

2 • Both head couples and side couple #4 take inside hands and advance to form a hexagon shape in the center. (Lady #1 and gent #3 advance a little further.)

2 • Releasing hands and still advancing to a smaller ring, the 3 gents raise their arms and take each other's hands, high, as the 3 ladies take each others' hands low, behind the gents' backs. Then the gents drop their hands behind ladies' backs, to form a basket (corbeille).

2 • Do one balancé step in place, then release hands as #3 lady advances to the #1 gent, as #2 gent takes #1 lady as his partner, and couple #4 remains together.

2 • All three gents retire to their places with walking steps, head couples keeping their exchanged partners. 10

8 • "The Star." With all beginning L foot, facing partners, polka L diagonally to the left to pass partner by the R shoulder, with the 4 gents briefly taking L hands (Moulinet) at the end of the side-close-side polka step. Then all polka R diagonally to the right, to pass the next person by the L shoulder, as all 4 ladies briefly take R hands. Continue this passing in front of oncoming dancers, like a circular hey, alternately taking R or L hands in the center. Note that at the end of the 8 bars, the ladies are still in the center of the set, facing their partner, who have just reached their home place. 11

In order to then polka around the set with one's partner, the ladies must do a foot-fudge. They advance with two left-foot polka steps (left-close-left-change, left-close-left—essentially a four-slide galop), as gents Polka forward L and R, taking partners, then continue to polka around the set for the remaining 6 bars. 11

32 • 32 • 32 • The progression isn't specified, but since Martin specified a circular rotation around the set for Figures 3 and 4, it's likely that he continued that progression of side couple 2 dancing next, for this Figure 5.

8 • After the last repeat, all 4 couples polka around the set.

Figure 6

8 • All 4 couples polka around the set.

4 • All couples turn each other a full turn-and-a quarter by the L hands, ending with the ladies in the center.

4 • All 4 ladies Moulinet R hands halfway around, as gents polka solo CCW halfway around the outside of the set. 12

2 • At the opposite side of the set, gents wheel CCW to give their R hand to their partner's L hand, then turn partners around themselves CCW halfway, until gents take each other's L hands in the center, in a Moulinet.

2 • All balance away from partners and toward, with small polka steps, in these crossed lines of four.

4 • Gents raise their L hands, and polka step in place, as their partner goes under their raised arm, then at the end, gents release L hands and turn to their right to face out, as their partners polka into position, ending facing partner and taking closed position for the final polka. Note that dancers are on the opposite side of the set. 13 Also note in Martin's description that this figure is not repeated.

16 • All polka around the quadrille set (8 bars), then a typical "polka and disperse" anywhere (8 bars). 14

The original description is on page 7.

A recording of the original music is on YouTube here: <https://youtu.be/fYINdrLZWAc>

Notes about the reconstruction

- 1** Sometimes a dance choreography and its music had different names. This seems to be the case here, with Martin's quadrille choreography called "New Polka Quadrille," and Conner's musical composition titled "Cellarius Polka Quadrille". On the cover, it's, "The New Six Figures Cellarius Polka Quadrilles." Of those options, I chose "New Polka Quadrille" because the other titles can mistakenly imply that this dance was created by Cellarius.
- 2** Note that the description calls for a balance *and* a pas de valse, one after the other. The term "pas de valse" suggests that a turning polka is a possibility. I've not seen a description of "double waltz" in any dance manual, so this remains unknown. My reconstruction allows ladies to gain their L foot free, at the end of the balancé, for the next part, which specifies beginning on the L foot.
- 3** In dance descriptions from this time period, the term "waltz" often meant to do a turning couple dance, not necessarily a waltz in 3/4 time. It was very common in polka quadrille descriptions to use "waltz" to mean a turning polka.
- 4** Figure 2 is only mildly unconventional (with the head couples engaging the side couples), while the other five figures are unusually creative. Therefore, since the distinctive feature of this quadrille is Martin's creativity, if a figure is skipped, as was sometimes done in the 19th century, Figure 2 would be the figure to skip. Quoting from a 19th century dance manual, "The majority of Quadrilles consist of five numbers. As a rule, it is well to omit one. Otherwise, many Quadrilles would take up too much time." Since this quadrille has six figures, that might be an additional reason to skip a figure.
- 5** The description says: Head couple do a turning polka around their right side couple, cross over inside the set, polka around the outside of their left side couple, stopping in front of their vis-a-vis couple. This is only possible in 8 bars if side couples also polka around them. We saw another example of side couples accommodating the travel of head couples in the previous Figure 2.
- 6** The description of "and back" must be a typo, which will be apparent if one tries to do a complete Right and Left, over "and back" to places, in only 4 bars. Also, the term "waltz" is unclear. We tried the interpretation of taking closed dance position and doing a turning polka, and the transition was unrealistically awkward. Offering the other hand and turning in place with crossed hands (another definition of "waltz") works smoothly.
- 7** This progression of couples CCW around the set is very unusual for a quadrille at that time. Usually opposite couple 2 dances next, then the two side couples. But the logic of changing to this progression is impressive. When we danced this figure, we found that the side couple who orbits around the leading couple was often caught off guard if danced in the traditional progression. Martin apparently found that with this circular progression around the set, each couple sees the action that is coming to them more clearly.
- 8** The description says this is done by "Each gentleman," which might sound like all of the gents. I don't believe that is the case, because 1) this use of "each" immediately follows his use of "all," so if he intended all gents do this figure, he would have said so. And 2) we tried doing it with all four couples, and there is no space in the center of the set for that. Therefore, I believe "Each gentleman" means each gentleman in turn.

9 The description doesn't say whether to turn CW or CCW after 2 bars of Pursuit, but turning CW the first time would be the traditional direction of turning, and turning CCW the second time allows the couple to see inward slightly sooner, for the Basket by Six. Since Martin didn't specify the direction, any way that you want to turn is allowed.

This solo Pursuit is wisely placed here, to give the other three couples a moment to calculate whether they will be forming the Basket by Six, or doing a polka around the basket set.

10 If I were to modify Martin's choreography, I would eliminate the changing of the ladies in the Basket by Six. It seems unfair to ladies 3 and 4, who never get to dance the solo. Instead, ladies 1 and 2 dance the solo twice. Also, our dancers always found it confusing, and the prevailing opinion with our dancers was that it didn't add any interest to the figure. But here I am presenting the unmodified original choreography.

11 This Star is a very unusual figure, and it is quite possible to do it. If one is thinking, "ladies wearing crinolines wouldn't be able to do that figure," that might be correct, but hooped crinolines didn't exist in 1848. Women wore a few layers of soft petticoats under their ballgown. We performed this figure in historically accurate 1840s petticoats, at it worked quite well. If an historical dance exhibition group with hooped crinolines wishes to perform this quadrille (earlier 1840s dances sometimes continued into the 1860s), you can perhaps edit the music to double the length of time for the Star, and change each polka step to a "slide-slide-polka-step," taking two bars for each of these passes instead of one.

12 The description doesn't specify which hands the ladies take in the center, but taking open hands-four, facing outward, would be too awkward for ladies, to have their arms pulled back. Taking each others' R hands would be the graceful and comfortable interpretation, and it leaves ladies' L hand available for the next part.

13 It is extremely unusual to not return to original places at the end of a quadrille. But Jules Martin seems to have been intent on being as original and creative as possible throughout this quadrille, intentionally thwarting expectations. All of the previous figures gave clear instructions about the pattern of how a figure is repeated. So, note the lack of any mention of repeating the final figure. He simply wrote, "Final waltz by all," which doesn't need to return to original places, since the figure isn't repeated.

14 The written description says to polka for 8 bars, but in the *only* mismatch between the description and the repeat pattern of the music, Conner's music, published with the description, continues for another 8 bars. So, since dancers are at the opposite side of the set at the end of 8 bars (which I've never seen before), concluding with a traditional "polka and disperse" is a logical solution to the additional 8 bars of music.

You can barely see in the topmost illustration that some dancers have their arms folded in front.

**THE NEW SIX FIGURES
CELLARIUS POLKA QUADRILLES**

COMPOSED AND DEDICATED TO HIS FRIEND
CELLARIUS
BY
JULES MARTIN
the Music by
A.F.R. CONNER. *Pr. 50 Cents*

A. Fiat, Philadelphia. W. Dubois, New York.

TAUGHT IN LONDON
BY
MADAME LECOMTE

TAUGHT IN PARIS
BY
CELLARIUS.

TAUGHT IN PHILADELPHIA
BY
THE AUTHOR

Entered according to act of Congress in the Year 1848 by A. Fiat in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

NEW POLKA QUADRILLE,

COMPOSED BY

JULES M. MARTIN, OF PHILADELPHIA.

FIGURE 1.

- No. 1.—Top couple and vis-à-vis balance and pas de valse (double waltz) on their places, 8
- No. 2.—Same two couples, each lady and gentleman (facing his or her partner, and passing before each other,) separately to their left, form SQUARES, from and back to places, all starting left foot first, 8
- No. 3.—All by their right hands, forming a CHAIN, each gentleman turning lady on his left with his right hand; next the partner of his vis-à-vis with his left hand, and then back to places, turning the same ladies again, 8
- No. 4.—Same two couples waltz around to places, 8

Bars.

8

8

8

8

32

Repeated by the two other couples, 32 bars.

FIGURE 2.

- No. 1.—Ladies chain, and turned by gentlemen, 8
- No. 2.—All right hand across, and back, left hand across, (the two leading couples always crossing hands with the couples on their respective right,) 8
- No. 3.—Two leading couples waltz outside of the two other couples respectively, while the latter at the same time advance to the centre and take hands, forming a square, 4 bars; then turn back, each dancer separately, so as to allow the waltzers to pass inside to their places, 4 bars, 8

8

8

8

24

Done four times by opposite couples alternately.

FIGURE 3.

- No. 1.—Top couple waltz around their right hand couple, then inside; outside (again) of their left hand couple, and again inside, stopping before their vis-à-vis, 8
- No. 2.—Change partners, each gentleman receding lady, 2 bars; then receding himself, 2 bars, when both couples (so changed) waltz around each other, 4 bars; viz. 2 bars to turn, and 2 bars to stop before their respective left hand couples, 8
- No. 3.—Right and left and back, by all at the sides, 4
- No. 4.—Same two gentlemen waltz with same two ladies, stopping in the centre, while the two side couples waltz on their places, 4
- No. 5.—Moulinet by the leading couples in the centre, 4
- No. 6.—Resume respective partners, and all waltz back to places, 4

8

8

4

4

4

4

32

Done four times, the right hand couple of the top couple next leading, and so around, by each couple on the right.

FIGURE 4.

- No. 1.—Top couple waltz in the centre, 4 bars; but at the 4th bar separate, the lady turning in the centre, (waltz step,) the gentleman with his right hand turning the lady of the couple on his right, 2 bars, and then his own partner in the centre with his left, 2 bars, and thus turns every lady and his own partner alternately. Each gentleman turns his

partner with his left hand, 2 bars, after she has been thus turned by the leading gentleman, in all, 16

No. 2.—Top gentleman waltzes with his partner inside, while the other three couples waltz around them to places, 8

Bars.

16

8

24

Repeated, each couple on the right leading successively.

FIGURE 5.

- No. 1.—Waltz by all around, 8
- No. 2.—Each gentleman, with his partner in front, into centre, 2 bars; turns at 3d, and with his back to the centre at 4th bar, recedes her to place, 2 bars, turning her thereon, 2 bars, 8

8

8

No. 3.—BASKET by six, (three on a side,) with waltz by fourth couple, as follows: the gentleman of the leading couple receives the lady of his left hand couple, with his left hand over to his side, while her gentleman goes over to lady of vis-à-vis on his left, giving her his left hand. The two lines advance, 2 bars, and the two gentlemen of one line raise their arms while the two opposite ladies pass under, 2 bars. All join hands behind, when the six balance, 2 bars; the leading gentleman then waltzes away with the partner of his vis-à-vis, whom he finds in the centre of the basket, leaving his own lady to his vis-à-vis, who waltzes with her to his place, 2 bars. (She continues his partner till she is resumed by her own in another basket.) The third couple waltz to place, (the same 2 bars,) and during the whole time of this basket, the couple not engaged in it is waltzing around it, 8 bars, and returns in time to share in 8

No. 4.—THE STAR: Gentlemen facing and going to the right, one step in, crossing left hands, and then by one side step out; while ladies, facing and going to the left, one step in, crossing right hands, and then by same single side step out, passing in and out, alternately, in front of the gentlemen to places, 8

8

32

No. 5.—After every star, waltz by all as in No. 1, without pausing; then repeat No. 2; next the basket, (on the other side,) and waltz as in No. 3; next the star, as in No. 4; and so on four times. At the end of 4th, general waltz begins, (but only *once* executed,) in 32 bars.

FIGURE 6.

- No. 1.—Waltz by all around, 8
- No. 2.—Each lady turned quite around by her left hand, with gentleman's left, and thrown back to back in the centre, where they join hands, each gentleman in front of his lady, 4 bars; ladies around and gentlemen in the opposite direction also around singly, stopping each before his partner, 4 bars, in all, 8

8

8

No. 3.—Each gentleman with his right hand takes left hand of his partner, ladies quit hands, and are turned round into line, when gentlemen cross left hands, 2 bars, and all balance in two transverse lines, 2 bars; ladies then pass around and under left arms of gentlemen to their front, when gentlemen drop hands and resume partners for the final waltz, 4 bars, 8

No. 4.—Final waltz by all, 8

8

32