

PAS DE BOURRÉE, PAS DE PROBLÈME!

Approximately 25 participants gathered at the Nordic Heritage Museum in Seattle to participate in the "Traditional Music and Dances of France" AATF workshop. Members of the Over-the-Water Hurdy-Gurdy Association (OTW) performed the dance music, while Dr. Christina Wright gave the dance instruction in French and English. Dr. Wright teaches "French Dance" at monthly sessions in Seattle and has taught at schools and dance events throughout North America. Her ebullient teaching style, enthusiasm, and extensive knowledge provided an inspiring learning experience for newcomers and experienced dancers alike.

The dance instruction focused on the *Auvergnat* and *Berrichon* styles of French social dance and also included a dance from Brittany. All of these dances were easily accessible to people of all ages regardless of experience.

Dances were introduced starting from easiest to more difficult. The *An Dro* from Brittany found everyone in a large circle with hooked pinkies. *La Brande* was the second dance. It is a two-time *bourrée* from central France. Next came the *Rondeau*, a particular *rondeau en chaîne* from Gascony danced in a circle, moving clockwise, with dancers linked at the elbows. Finally, the *Bourrée droite* found everyone with a dance partner forming two long lines the length of the dance hall.

In addition to dance instruction, participants watched some video excerpts on traditional dance filmed in France at one of the many summer dance festivals found in the Berry and Auvergne regions. Dr. Wright made sure that everyone understood the difference between *la danse folk* and *la danse folklorique*. The former is danced by practically anyone in their everyday clothes and is very much a participatory festival or party event. The latter is performed on stage, with traditional costumes, and is often part of a dance competition. It is very much an aesthetic viewing event.

Several participants made inquiries into hiring the OTW to come to their schools for a student workshop. If you are interested in such a dance opportunity, go to [<http://www.overthewater.org>] for more information. Special thanks to Susan Redd who staffed the registration and clock-hour table. Susan invited the OTW to Mount Vernon High School for National French Week in November and would be willing to share her experience with you!

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