

Grand March

The Grand March is a parade of the couples in attendance at the ball. The march starts with all couples lining up behind one another. The lead couple will take the line through a series of patterns assisted by the "Major Domo" who usually holds a large staff and directs the dancers. After the last figure the dancers will be led into a polka around the floor which concludes the Grand March. If the group is large proceed immediately from one figure into another without much walking in between the figures. There is no set pattern to the Grand March, however there are traditional figures (the names are my convention):

Two by Two

Couples walk arm in arm behind one another.

Split and Meet

From the center of the hall the line of couples approaches a wall and is met by the Major Domo who splits the line casting the 1st couple off to the left, the 2nd to the right, the 3rd to the left, the 4th to the right, etc. The couples walk the perimeter of the hall until they meet each other to form lines of four (ie. two couples) and then again march across the center of the hall. This may repeat several times to form lines of eight, sixteen, etc. This leads naturally into the...

The Snake

Couples are standing in long lines holding hands. The lead man weaves the couples inbetween the lines until all the dancers are holding hands in one long line; man, woman, man, woman, etc. After the first line passes inbetween the second line and the third line, the last woman grasps the hand of the first man in the second line which causes the second line to join the first in the snake; similarly, the last woman of the second line grasps the hand of the first man in the third line, and so it continues until all the lines are joined. (Hint: if all couples are proper the people grasping hands to link the lines will be of the opposite sex, not the same sex). This leads naturally into the...

The Circle

The dancers are in a single file line holding hands. The lead man starts a clockwise spiral into the center of the room. When he reaches the middle the leader turns back on himself and walks in a counter-clockwise direction, thus unraveling the circle.

The Arch

Marching either in a single line or as couples, the men and women approach a wall and are met by the Major Domo who splits the line casting the lead man off to the left, the lead woman to the right, the 2nd man to the left, the 2nd woman to the right, etc. The men and women walk the perimeter of the hall in single file until they meet each other. The lead couple forms an arch which the 2nd couple walks under; they then join the lead couple in the arch. The 3rd couple walks under the lead and 2nd couple and then joins them in the arch, etc. for all couples. As the last couple passes under the arch the lead couple breaks the arch and follows them; the 2nd couple follows the lead couple, etc. until the arch is dismantled and the lead couple emerges from the arch into another figure.