

First String

Dance by Loretta Holz & Tom Amesse © 2010 - 2 couple longways set -
Music – *Gates of Heck* by Dave Weisler, 6/8 – Key D Minor

A1	1-4	All up a double, fall back (end facing partner)
	5-8	Set, 2 hand turn left half way
A2	1-4	Down a double, fall back
	5-8	Set, 2 hand turn right half way
B1	1-2	1st corners turn LH $\frac{3}{4}$ (hold left hands) give partner RH
	3-4	Balance in wavy line (Men face up, Women down)
	5-8	(1st corners drop hands) All turn P RH about $\frac{1}{2}$, 1st corners lead partners around to proper (2 nd couple above, 1 st couple below)
B2	1-8	Repeat B1 with other dancers in 1st corner positions (All home)
A3	1-8	Side right shoulder, 2 hand turn left half way
A4	1-8	Side left shoulder, set, 2 hand turn right half way
		Repeat B1, B2
A5	1-8	Arm R, set, 2 hand turn left half way
A6	1-8	Arm left, set, 2 hand turn right half way
		Repeat B1, B2

(3) The Gates of Heck

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This two couple dances has Playford (or USA) introductions with a chorus that has a wavy line or string on the first diagonal.

Dedication – I presented this dance to Ian and Val McFarlane at The STring Ball on September 4, 2010. They shepherded the Tring Ball from 2000 to 2008 while it was held in Tring, in Hertfordshire, England; In 2010 the event moved to Colston Hall in Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire and was called the STring (Successor to the Tring) Ball. It's a unique ball in that it focuses on modern English country dances, the dancers are in modern attire and the caller is typically the choreographer of many of the ball dances.

Like many of the two couple dances, First String has the three Playford introductions (up a double, siding, arming) These were often used in the early Playford set dances with a chorus figure after each introduction. When I called *First String* England calling it “a USA dance”, the dancers looked at me puzzled because they were unfamiliar with this term used in teaching an English Country Dance. I thought it was used universally having often heard callers in the states suggest it as a mnemonic to remember what the three Playford Introductions are U (for up a double), S (for siding) and A (for arming).

Naming the Dance

Sometimes the name of a dance is immediate and obvious. Other dances like this one have a number of temporary names before the final one is chosen. Suggestions included String Fancy (Tom), String Figures (Loretta), First String (George) and even String me Along (Larry)! Since the choreographers had strong preferences for their suggestions, the decision was made to let the honorees pick one of the suggested name or come up with another. In the US the term. "first string", is used for the group of players who get into the game first. The term does not seem to carry this meaning in England, but the name appealed to Ian and Val since it designated their first STring ball.