

# Pandemic Panaceas

Engaging the body. Engaging the mind.

## IN THE MOMENT

By Karen Axelrod

Early in the pandemic, I gave a solo piano concert of English country dance tunes on Facebook Live. I was very sad, and I was thinking about how much I disliked playing solo. I was in my head during that first concert—not in the music and certainly not in the moment.

One of the things that I love about playing for dancing is playing with my bandmates: the give and take, the listening and responding, the interaction, and the intimacy of the relationship. But it was going to be impossible to play with my bandmates. So I moped for a few days. When I was done moping, I found myself brainstorming creative ways to make it happen. I wondered, “What if my bandmates send me audio of tunes and I play along with them?”

And that is how my weekly hour-long Facebook Livestream, “In the Moment,” was born. It started out with my bandmates and other musician friends sending me English country dance tunes and waltzes. I’d cobble together a set list and play along live without listening to the tunes beforehand, so it would be fresh and spontaneous. More and more musicians started taking part, sending tunes from all over the country... actually, from all over the world (England! Canada! Uganda!) for an audience of more than 150 folks each week.

Now, here we are, more than thirty shows later. There are surprises, humor, and moving moments when a particularly evocative piece brings tears to my eyes. I never quite know what to expect, and I love that. A live brass band outside my window! A rendition of the English country dance tune, “Corelli’s Maggot” with (inexplicably) numerous musicians playing who live in geographically distant places. There



have been pranks. I’ve gotten to play with people I never got to play with pre-COVID. One regular contributor is a phenomenal pianist I’ve never even met.

The show gives an anchor to my week, for which I’m grateful. Most importantly, the community comes together every Tuesday night to listen, visit, and chat in the comments. They fight over the “front row seats” when they first join the stream, say “hi” to people on the other coast, share what they’re cooking, make bad music puns, opine about what tempo they like the dance at, and send love and hearts to me and my fellow musicians. The dance community has given me so much. “In the Moment” feels like a way to give back and keep our community going, despite the distance.

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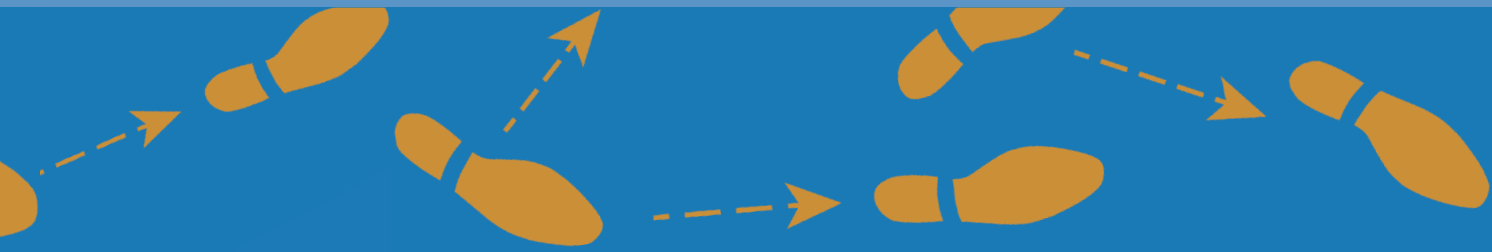
**If you’d like to submit a tune, email me:**

**KarenAxelrod@yahoo.com**, and I will send you information about the guidelines.

**The show streams from my Facebook page every Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. ET.**

*On my July 19 show, I played Debbie Jackson’s gorgeous tune “Peace Walk.” I remember crying “in the moment.” It is an early COVID collaboration between Debbie and David Smukler (David wrote the dance “Bastille Day” to go with the tune). We include it here with Debbie’s permission.*

*Photo by David Millstone.*



# Peace Walk

For *Bastille Day* by David Smukler

Debbie Jackson (2020)

Slow and flowing

Musical score for *Peace Walk* in 2/4 time, key of Bb. The score consists of five staves of music with corresponding chord symbols above the notes.

**Staff 1 (Measures 1-6):** Chords: Bb, Eb/Bb, Bb<sup>sus4</sup>, Bb, Eb, F, Bb, Bb/A, Gm. Marked with a circled 'A'.

**Staff 2 (Measures 7-12):** Chords: Eb, F, Eb, F<sup>7</sup>, Bb. Marked with a circled 'B'. Includes a first ending (1.) and a second ending (2.) with repeat signs.

**Staff 3 (Measures 13-18):** Chords: Eb/Bb, Bb, Eb/Bb, Bb, (Bb/A), Gm, Cm, F.

**Staff 4 (Measures 19-24):** Chords: Bb, Eb/Bb, Bb, Bb/D, Eb, F, Eb, Bb/D.

**Staff 5 (Measures 25-30):** Chords: Eb, F<sup>7</sup>, Bb, Cm, Bb/D, F, Bb, Bb/F, F<sup>7</sup>, Bb. Marked with a circled 'Tag' and '(last time only)'.

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## TUNES 'N STUFF

By Audrey Knuth

When I started my Monday Tunes 'N Stuff class in April, I was sure I was going to only run it for a few months before things returned to normal-ish and I'd be swimming in Long Pond. Bit by bit, email by email, I saw the rest of my planned year dissolve in front of me. Like most of you, for me this has been an extremely difficult year of change and uncertainty. The stress of applying for unemployment, the decision to move to San Diego, and the concept of staying in one place for more than a few days really forced me to slow down and rethink everything.

Back in April, I was feeling *very* sorry for myself and making a permanent indent on the couch. Thanks to the contra dance Zoom workouts in the morning, I started having to get out of bed and attempt to structure my day. After reaching out to Facebook-land for advice, Claire Takemori approached me with the idea of launching a weekly music class. 29 weeks in (and counting), I can say that it's been truly rewarding in every sense.

Each week, I get to pick a tune I really like and dive in a little deeper than I otherwise would normally. The concept for the class is pretty simple: I teach a tune by ear for the first 45 minutes of class (attempting to be consistent with the bowing), then pick something about the tune to discuss afterward (improvisation, chord structure, ornamentation, dance pairing, or history). Every month or so, I invite a guest musician or caller to join in the discussion to get another perspective.

The class wouldn't be what it is without the occasional drop-in from my partner, Ben Jaber (uilleann piper and flute/whistle/horn player extraordinaire), and the regulars: Kendall Rogers' wit and piano playing and expertise, the



ever-stalwart Claire Takemori, and of course my always-present dad, Charlie.

Each class is recorded and uploaded to Google Drive for later review (and for musicians across the world who might not want to stay awake until the wee hours). I also supply the sheet music with bowing, videos, and audio at various speeds. If I have my act together, I'll include a backing track.

In September, the London Barn Dance community asked the class to put together a video for their monthly dance series. We collectively recorded one of our favorites, Red Prairie Dawn. (Listen at [bit.ly/TunesNStuffRPD](https://bit.ly/TunesNStuffRPD).)

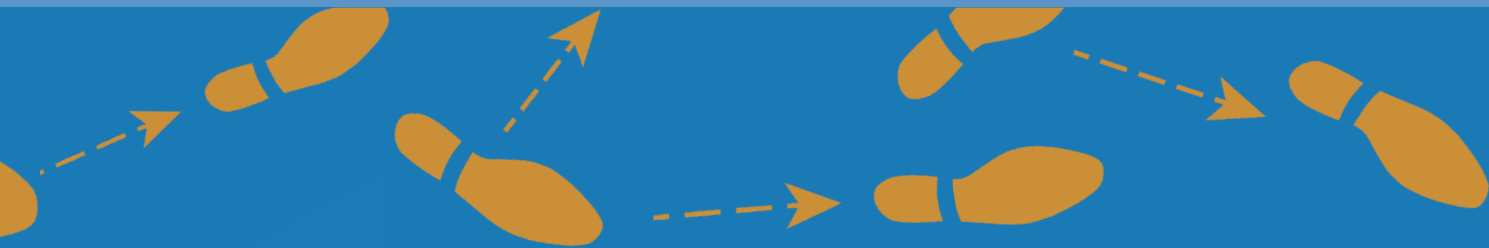
*Before I leave, I thought I'd provide you with one of the first tunes I taught: Noah VanNorstand's classic Winchell's Falls, which can be found in the Andrew and Noah tune book, Long Flight Home.*

(Find the book at [greatbearrecords.bandcamp.com](https://greatbearrecords.bandcamp.com).)

I feel extremely grateful to be part of a community that has made sure I was taken care of and well supported. I can't wait to play for you in person again!

If you're interested in joining the class (it's drop-in friendly), feel free to email me at [audreyLK24@gmail.com](mailto:audreyLK24@gmail.com) or visit my website, [audreyknuth.com](https://audreyknuth.com).

*Photo by Dave Pokorney.*



# Winchell's Falls

Noah VanNorstrand

Musical score for "Winchell's Falls" in treble clef, 4/4 time, key of A major. The score consists of four staves of music. Chord symbols are placed above the notes. The first staff contains measures 1-4 with chords A, D, A, and D. The second staff contains measures 5-8 with chords A, D, A, and E. The third staff contains measures 9-13 with chords A, E, A, D, and A. The fourth staff contains measures 14-17 with chords E, F#m, A, and A. The piece ends with a double bar line and repeat signs.

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