

# The Culver City Collection

## Sweet Sixteen

A 32-bar Strathspey for 2 couples

Devised by Oberdan Otto  
for my darling daughter, Jennifer  
on the occasion of her sixteenth birthday

The movements in the "sweetheart" formation, which are common in couple dances are adapted here for the Scottish country dance genre.

### 1-8:

The Greeting: First couple advance toward partner joining right hands (1 step) and retire (1 step), then turn two hands. Both couples repeat, second couple ending facing out ready for...

### 9-16:

Double Figure of Eight.

### 17-24:

First couple dance the Sweetheart.

### 25-32:

The Double Sweetheart.

Repeat, having passed a couple.

**The Sweetheart:** Windup (bars 1-4) followed by Unwind (bars 5-8) [Note: the man continually dances clockwise around his partner; after the first bar, mans left hand (lady's right) remains at shoulder level or above, while his right hand (lady's left) remains at waist level].

**Windup:** The couple begins a two handed turn not quite 3/4 the way around (bar 1); continuing to turn and retaining partner's hands, the man raises his left hand and lowers his right so the lady may pivot clockwise quickly under his left arm until her left hand is pressed against the small of her back and they are facing their own sides of the set with partner to their right (bar 2); retaining this position turn clockwise once (bars 3-4).

**Unwind:** From the position at the end of the Windup, facing own side of set, as the man continues to dance clockwise, the lady pivots anti-clockwise under the man's left arm until they face each other, both hands joined as in a two hand turn facing own side of set (bar 5); without releasing hands, the man continues to dance clockwise as the lady continues her anti-clockwise pivot, turning under the man's left arm a second time until his lowered right arm is against the small of her back, hands of the inside arms joined at the lady's right hip, hands of the outside arms joined in front, both facing down the set (bar 6). The couple casts to their right into own sidelines, immediately releasing the front hand but retaining the other hand as long as comfortable (bars 7-8).

**The Double Sweetheart (2 couple progression):** Both couples Windup (bars 1-4), but end bar 4 with the men passing under their own left arms so all are facing away from partners toward own sides, hands still

joined. Releasing hands, all four dance around each other two positions to the right to end progressed on partners side of the set (bars 5-6), then cross to own side giving right hand to partner (bars 7-8).

Suggested music: Greigs Pipes, Bobby Crowe, RSCDS Book 2, RSCDS 11.

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### Teaching Hints for the Sweetheart

At first glance the Sweetheart formations appear more intimate than other SCD formations which are typically arms-length. If you compare it to the Allemande, however, you will note many similarities, including the closeness of the partners, the turning of the lady under the man's arm, and the importance of a sure lead by the man. The Windup and Unwind may seem complex because of their relative unfamiliarity. It pays to spend a little time working out the arming because Scottish Country Dancers are generally unfamiliar with effective use of arms above shoulder level.

Before teaching the entire movement, work on the transition between bars 1 and 2 both forward and backward. The position at the end of bar 2 is also called a "pretzel" for obvious reasons. Have the couple practice winding up and unwinding between bars 1 and 2, slowly at first, reminding the man to keep his left hand high and the right hand low. The man should not grasp the lady's hands at any time--only a pressure between open hands is required. He should start by offering his hands with palms up; the lady accepts by placing her hands on his palms down. The lady's pivot into and out of the pretzel is aided by the man drawing his right hand (her left) toward his left side while rotating his hand counter-clockwise so his palm ends facing down. As she turns clockwise under his left arm, the man will rotate his left hand about 3/4 clockwise so that his palm faces away from him.

Note that all the lady's pivots (Bars 1-2 and 5-6) have the lady turning under the man's left arm while his right arm remains at waist level. Dancers will definitely get into trouble if the man's right arm is raised and his left is dropped.

Here are some rhythmic cueing mnemonics I have used for the Sweetheart formations:

#### **Rhythmic Cueing Mnemonic for the Sweetheart:**

Turn 2, 3, and Pivot Lady right, dance around 2, 3, dance around 2, 3, unwind 2, 3 and pivot to face down, peel out 2, 3 and dance to place.

#### **Rhythmic Cueing Mnemonic for the Double (progressive) Sweetheart:**

Turn 2, 3, and Pivot Lady right, dance around 2, 3, dance around pass under, travel right 2, 3, and out to partners side, and cross 2, 3 and cross 2, 3.