

MONEY MUSK

NEW ENGLAND 24-BAR VERSION

learned from Lissa Schneckenberger

Money Musk is believed to have been composed by Daniel Dow in 1776 as a pipe tune (a tune using only the pipe's 9 note range) or a pipe-inspired Strathspey fiddle tune.^{1 2} 'Money Musk' was taken from the baronial estate, Monymusk House in Aberdeenshire, Scotland.³ The reel Money Musk is played all over the US, Canada (both French and Anglo Canadians), and the British Isles, but is particularly popular in Missouri fiddling circles and at New England contradances.⁴ Money Musk varies greatly between regions and players using different keys, tune variations, and overall forms. In New England, Money Musk has its own contradance steps to complement the 24-bar tune variation (ABC), notably different to the usual 32-bar tune length (ABAB). I learned the 24-bar New England version in 2011 from Vermont fiddler, Lissa Schneckenberger, who stated that it was important to have Money Musk in your back pocket because there was a high probability that it would be requested.

Taken from the Contradancers of Hawai'i website:⁵

This version manages the compression by reducing the forward-and-backs to four-beats—essentially to balances. Note that the two balances are at different places in the musical phrase. The three-quarter turns in A2 are at different speeds. The first is quite leisurely, but the second is fast and must lead directly into the right-and-left. The balances are sometimes done as forward-and-back balances; sometimes as step-kick balances. Often these balances are quite percussive. Many experienced dancers find this a very enjoyable version of the dance: the differing positions of the balances in the phrase and the differing speeds of the allemandes add interest. (This was once the most common version in southwest New Hampshire.⁶)

A1 Actives allemande right once and a half (8)

Go outside, below one couple (4)

Balance six (4)

A2 Actives allemande right three quarters around, to lines of six across the hall (8)

Balance six (4)

Actives allemande right three quarters to place (4)

B Top two couples (1s and 2s) right and left through (across and back) (16)

—Kitty Steetle

¹[https://tunearch.org/wiki/Annotation:Money_Musk_\(1\)](https://tunearch.org/wiki/Annotation:Money_Musk_(1)); Goertzen, Chris. George P. Knauff's Virginia Reels and the History of American Fiddling, p 48.

²Strathspey are a type of reel that employees the Scots snap rhythm (sixteenth-dotted-eighth-note or dotted-eighth-sixteenth-note rhythm) throughout the tune. For an audio example of the differences between Strathspey and reel rhythms see the YouTube recording of William Coulter, Deby Benton Grosjean, Barry Phillips linked below.

³tunearch

⁴tunearch

⁵<http://www.sls.hawaii.edu/bley-vroman/contra/dances/musk.html>

⁶I am not from southwest New Hampshire, but my early childhood was spent in the Monadnock Region, which overlaps it. Perhaps this is why the 24-bar version sounds 'correct' to me.