

## EDUCATIONAL FEATURE - BIG TOP

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**BIG TOP:** The Big Top has been with us as a round dance figure for quite some time, but many of us have had much difficulty in executing the figure comfortably. When done properly, the Big Top can give a feeling of accomplishment and self satisfaction, as well as add to the beauty and grace of a dance routine. We hope that we can add a few words to make your Big Top easier, and smoother, and more fun.

### Roundalab Definition:

Big Top	Waltz	Phase VI
1,2,3;	THRU, TRN XIB, TRN BK;	Cue: Big Top

**MAN:** Thru right commencing left face spin, continue left face turn cross left in back of right, continuing spin slip right a small step back past left;

**WOMAN:** Thru left commencing left face spin, forward right around toward man's left side continuing spin, continuing spin brush left to right left forward;

**NOTE:** Starts semi-closed position approximately 3/4 turn to left, and closed position. Second step for man is on last half of second beat. Second step for woman is on the first half of second beat. Woman must turn in line with man in closed position during second step but head may remain to right until turn is completed and she is ready to take last step.

To begin with, we would define the Big Top as a big Top Spin, at least for the man. Therefore, this is probably where the figure got the name Big Top.

When teaching the Big Top we have the men and women walk their parts separately since they are doing different steps at different times, but together as a couple. Then when each partner has mastered his/her part, to some extent, we walk thru the figure as couples. We think that the starting position can make or break a figure, so we like to begin our Big Top in semi-closed position facing diagonal-line-and-center. We will end our figure in closed-position man facing line-and-wall.

**MAN:** 1.) Forward right with strong cross body action. The weight is fully over the ball of the right foot before any left spinning action begins. Lock the thighs in place. 2.) Spin 1/2 turn on the right foot and step back on left toward line-and-center in line with first step with thighs still locked. 3.) Now step back small step on right slipping to closed position man facing wall.

**WOMAN:** 1.) Forward left beginning left face turn around man. 2.) Forward right around man. This second step will be slightly toward reverse-line-and-center around the man. 3.) Continue to spin left as slip pivot to closed position and step forward on left to closed position.

**NOTE:** We think of the timing of the figure as 1/&,2,3; The woman takes two quick steps around the man to closed position on 1/&, then she holds the second beat and waits for the man to lead her into step 3. Her second step around the man helps him to spin left on his right foot. The woman keeps her lead to the left throughout the figure. An optional move for the woman is to sway left as she begins her second step. This gives the man an additional spinning action and helps him to make a full 1/2 turn on his right foot. The man takes the 1/&, timing for his first step and spin. We would describe the man's part as Forward Right/Spin Left on Right, Step Back on Left, Slip to Closed with Small Step Back on Right; (To closed position man facing wall). The man keeps his head left throughout the figure.

### POINTS TO REMEMBER:

1. Begin in semi-closed position diagonal-line-and-center. End in closed position man facing wall.

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- 2, The timing would be 1/8, 2, 3; with the woman's first two steps on 1/8, then hold 2, step on 3; while the man steps 1/spin, 2, 3;.
  3. Both man and woman keep head to left throughout the figure.
  4. The woman should stay very close to the man as she takes her first two steps around him.
  5. The woman may add a left sway during the second step. This gives additional spin to the man and makes it easier for the couple to complete the full spin of the Big Top.
  6. Keep fun in your dancing under the Big Top.
- (Editor's Note: Thank you, Richard & Jo Anne, for a great article. If anyone has questions, you can contact them at 237 Mamie Lane, Birmingham, AL 35215, (205) 853-4616.)

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