

Border Crossing

Tune: *I Fought the Law*, by Sonny Curtis **Set:** 5 dancers, 32" (long) sticks, single steps **Source:** Red Herring / Jeff Bigler, Rickland Powell & Jeff Keller (2007) **Chorus:** motorcycle hey for 5, then center clashes with #1, #2 ("I fought the law"), #1-4 clash with center ("and the law won"), center clashes with #3, #4 ("I fought the law"), #1-4 clash with center ("and the law won") **Figures:** "barrier" (or "barricade") rounds, [out to the left](#) ("choo-choo"), [\(square\) bombast](#), [starburst](#), tosses

Detailed Description

The arrangement of the set is:

Music	
1	2
5	
3	4

During each figure, the dancers in positions 1-4 are dancing, while dancer #5 (the prisoner) is stationary.

Each chorus is a "motorcycle hey" for five, in which the dancers rearrange themselves.

In the following descriptions, each "beat" equals half a bar.

Chorus

The chorus happens with the "A" music, which is 24 beats long.

During beats 1-16 the dancers move in a "motorcycle hey" (figure eight) pattern. (Note that the music is in 12-beat phrases, so the hey ends at an awkward point in the music.) The hey starts with the person in position #5 moving toward position #2, and the dancer in position #1 moving toward position #4.

In beats 17-18, the prisoner (#5) starts by clashing with any one dancer, then the next dancer counter-clockwise (following his stick). In beats 19-20, #5 ducks with his stick held straight up as dancers 1-4 all clash with #5 twice. In beats 21-22, #5 clashes with the other two dancers, continuing counter-clockwise. In beats 23-24, #5 ducks again as 1-4 all clash again twice with him.

From the beginning of the hey to the end, the rearrangement is:

1	2	3	4
5	-->	1	

3	4	2	5
Before		After	

Note that dancers starting from the bottom end up on the same side at the top. Dancer #1 ends up in the middle, the middle (#5) ends up in position #4, and #2 ends up on the opposite side at the bottom. If you find the person who starts in the place where you finish the hey, it will be the same person every time.

Note also that dancer #1 follows #4 through the hey. #4 follows #3, #3 follows #5, #5 follows #2, and #2 follows #1. You will be following the same person every time.

Figures

The figures happen during the “B” music, which is 20 beats long. The dancers move during beats 1-16. (Each half-figure is 8 beats, like most other dances.) On beats 17-20, dancer #5 (the prisoner) clashes counter-clockwise with dancers #1, 3, 4, then 2.

Once to Yourself

Dancers sing (to “A” music) “Breaking rocks in the hot sun; I fought the law and the law won; I fought the law and the law won.” while tapping their sticks into their free hand like billy clubs. Meanwhile, #5 is using the stick as if it were a pickaxe, pretending to break rocks in the hot sun. At the end of Once to Yourself, the dancers go immediately into a chorus.

"Barrier" Rounds

Dancers #1-4 dance clockwise around #5 for 8 beats, then counter-clockwise back to place for 8 beats. During the figure, each dancer holds his stick horizontally as a “barrier” to keep the prisoner from escaping.

Out to the Left

Each dancer turns 90° to the left (starting from facing #5) and dances for beats 1-2, then turns 180° (glaring at #5 on the way around) and backs up (moving in the same direction but facing the opposite way) on beats 3-4. Then the dancers turn slightly so that when they move in, they will pass their corner, with #5 in-between. The dancers come in on beats 5-8, clashing with #5 on the “and” between beats 7 and 8.

Then the dancers continue forward on beats 9-10, turning and continuing in the same direction but backward on beats 11-12, then coming in on beats 13-16, clashing with #5 on the “and” between beats 15 and 16.

Bombast

We sometimes describe this as “hookers and sliders”. On beats 1-4, the dancers in positions 1 and 4 (“sliders”) move straight along the sides of the set, #1 heading for position #3, and #4 heading for position #2. The dancers in positions 2 and 3 (“hookers”) hook around each other (and also around #5), with #2 ending up in position #1 and #3 ending up in position #4.

On beats 5-8, the same thing happens. Note that the dancers who were “sliders” on beats 1-4 are now “hookers”, and the dancers who were “hookers” on beats 1-4 are now “sliders”.

The same happens on beats 9-16.

Starburst

Dancers face #5 and back up on beats 1-4, then come in on beats 5-6, jump up in the air with their sticks held high on beat 7 (turning 90° to land on the “and” after beat 7, and another 90° on beat 8). Repeat, backing up on beats 9-12, and coming back in on beats 13-16. Red Herring shouts “Ho!” as they leap on beat 7.

Tosses

The music is slower for this figure.

Dancers toss across (to their partner) on beat 1, then up-and-down (neighbor) on beat 2, across on beat 3, and up-and-down on beat 4. Then they alternate corners: first corners on beat 5, second corners on beat 6, first corners again on beat 7, and nobody on beat 8. Then repeat.

#5 is standing in the center on beats 1-3. #5 dives for the ground on beat 4 and lies prone on the ground during beats 5-8 while the sticks pass over his head. Then #5 gets up for beats 9-11, dives again on beat 12, and the sticks pass overhead again on beats 13-16. By the end of the tosses, #5 must have the stick held over a shoulder and ready to receive a clash.

Instead of the “clash around” on beats 17-20, the dance ends with the dancers each, in turn (1, 2, 4, then 3) clashing with #5, as if they were beating him with their sticks.



Video

Tune

- [dances:border:1_i_fought_the_law.abc](#)
- [dances:border:1_i_fought_the_law.mid](#)
- [dances:border:1_i_fought_the_law.pdf](#)

I Fought The Law

(Border Crossing)

(AB)4.A

Sonny Curtis

A

Break - in' rocks in the hot sun I fought the law and the
I need - ed money 'cause I had none law won I fought the law and the law won

B

I miss my ba - by and I feel so sad, I guess my race is run.
She's the best girl that I've ev - er had I fought the law and the law won
I fought the law and the law won

Breakin' rocks in the ... hot sun
I fought the law and the ... law won
I fought the law and the ... law won
I needed money, 'cause I ... had none
I fought the law and the ... law won
I fought the law and the ... law won

Chorus:

I miss my baby and I feel so sad
I guess my race is run
She's the best girl that I've ever had
I fought the law and the ... law won
I fought the law and the ... law won

Robbin' people with a ... six gun
I fought the law and the ... law won
I fought the law and the ... law won
I miss my baby and the ... good fun
I fought the law and the ... law won
I fought the law and the ... law won

[Chorus]

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X:1
T:I Fought The Law
T:(Border Crossing)
C:Sonny Curtis
M:4/4
L:1/8
P:(AB)4.A
K:G major
%%partsfont Times-Bold 16.0
%%MIDI channel 1
%%MIDI control 7 100      % volume = 100
%%MIDI program 41         % General MIDI violin
%%MIDI transpose 0
%%MIDI gchordoff
P:A
|: d2 d2 B2 dd | z2 .e2 d4 | B B2 A B2 GG |
w:Break-in' rocks in the | hot sun | I fought the law and the |
w:I~need-ed money 'cause I | had none |
z2 .c2 B4 | B B2 A B2 GG | z2 .A2 G3 :|
w:law won | I fought the law and the | law won |
P:B
g \
w: I
%%setbarnb 7
| g2 f2 eeff | g2 fe-e3 e | d2 c2 B2 c2 | d8 |
w: miss my ba-by and I | feel so sad,_ I | guess my race is | run. |
gg f2 e2 f2 | gg fe-e4 | B B2 A B2 GG |
w:She's the best girl that | I've ev-er had_ | I fought the law and the |
z2 .c2 B4 | B B2 A B2 GG | z2 .A2 G4 ||
w:law won | I fought the law and the | law won |
W:
W:Breakin' rocks in the ... hot sun
W:I fought the law and the ... law won
W:I fought the law and the ... law won
W:I needed money, 'cause I ... had none
W:I fought the law and the ... law won
W:I fought the law and the ... law won
W:
W:Chorus:
W:I miss my baby and I feel so sad
W:I guess my race is run
W:She's the best girl that I've ever had
W:I fought the law and the ... law won
W:I fought the law and the ... law won
W:
W:
W:Robbin' people with a . . . six gun

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W:I fought the law and the ... law won
W:I fought the law and the ... law won
W:I miss my baby and the ... good fun
W:I fought the law and the ... law won
W:I fought the law and the ... law won
W:
W:[Chorus]

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