

# How to Produce a Singing Call from a Song You Like



Special thanks to

Paul Bristow & Joe Kromer

**Ralf Bender**

*Staff Caller on Snow Records  
Special Guest Caller on Gramophone Productions*

**STING PRODUCTIONS**

# Outline

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- Features of a Singing Call
- Possibilities and Requirements
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The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down
- Information on SNOW
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# Features of a Singing Call

- Tempo: 126 bpm (122 to 130)
- “*Global*” 4/4 rhythm (“*internal*” rhythm may be different)
- 7 sequences of 16 bars of 4 beats
- Structure:
  - (Intro) 1) Opener
  - 2) Figure 1
  - 3) Figure 2
  - 4) Middle Break
  - 5) Figure 3
  - 6) Figure 4
  - 7) Closer (Tag)

# Possibilities and Requirements

## Produce the music yourself

- Requirements:
  - Ability to play all instruments
  - Possibility to record and mix down the music
  - Design of the Singing Call
  - License to use the song
- Additional “For Sale” Requirements:
  - Possibility to record the vocals
  - Possibility to mix down music and vocals
  - Decision on music formats: vinyl, CD, mp3
  - Distribution of Singing Call, e.g. via Hanhurst or yourself
- Examples:
  - New Beat (Bronc Wise, Sweden)
  - Toddy Tunes (Thorsten Dudziak, Germany)
  - BVR Records (Bodo van Reth, Germany)

# Possibilities and Requirements

## Use Karaoke versions

- Requirements:
  - Access to a Karaoke or instrumental version
  - Computer and appropriate software
  - Ability to use a wave editor
  - Design of the Singing Call
  - Ability to create the Singing Call by “cut and paste”
- Example:
  - Leif Ekblad (LeMa Music Production, Sweden)
- Limitations:
  - License status unclear
  - Impossible to change the rhythm
  - In general impossible to create “high quality” music

# Possibilities and Requirements

## Make an agreement with a SD label

- Requirements:
  - Choose a song you like
  - Criteria:
    - “Appropriate” for square dancing (rhythm & tempo can be changed!)
    - Not published as singing call in a version you like
    - (Well-known song)
  - Design the Singing Call
  - Produce a “prototype” & find the correct key for YOUR voice
  - Pay costs for music production
  - (Record the vocal)
- Examples:
  - SNOW Records (Paul Bristow, UK)
  - Gramophone Productions (Joe Kromer, Germany)

# Example:

## The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down

### Choice of the song

- Original versions:
  - **The Band (1969)**
  - **Tanya Tucker (1993)**
  - **Juliane Werding (1975, Germany #1)**
  - **Joan Baez (1971, US #3, UK #6)**
  - Other cover versions: Bob Dylan, Johnny Cash etc.
- Criteria:
  - “Appropriate” for square dancing ✓
  - Not yet published as singing call ✓
  - Well-known song ✓  
(No. 245 of the RS 500 Greatest Songs of All Time)

# Example:

## The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down

### Design of the Singing Call

Count the bars & chose appropriate parts for 16 bar frame

	<u>Opener / Figure:</u>
┌┌┌┌	
┌ Virgil ┌ Caine is my name and I ┌ served on the Danville ┌ train	1 – 4
┌ 'Til Stoneman's ┌ cavalry came and ┌ tore up the tracks a ┌ gain	5 – 8
┌ In the winter of ┌ '65, we were ┌ hungry, just ┌ barely alive	9 – 12
┌ By May the tenth, ┌ Richmond had fell → 2 bars only!	
It was a ┌ time I re ┌ member oh so ┌ well ┌	13 – 16
	<u>Break / Closer:</u>
The ┌ Night They ┌ Drove Old Dixie ┌ Down	
& all the ┌ bells were ringing [used twice in Singing Call!]	1 – 4, 5 – 8
The ┌ Night They ┌ Drove Old Dixie ┌ Down	
& the ┌ people were singin', they went	9 – 12
┌ La La-la ┌ La La-la ┌ La-la La-la ┌ La La-la La-ala	13 – 16

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# Example:

## The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down

### Design of the Singing Call

#### OPENER [ [ [ [ CL

[ Virgil [ Caine is my name and I [ served on the Danville [ train

**AL, RAT, AL & Weave**

[ In the winter of [ '65, we were [ hungry just [ barely alive

It was a [ time I re [ member, oh, so [ well [

#### FIGURES . . . **Swing Corner & Prom**

But they should [ never have [ taken the very [ best [

#### BREAK / CLOSER S [ FGS

The [ Night They [ Drove Old Dixie [ Down & all the [ bells were ringin'

The [ Night They [ Drove Old Dixie [ Down **AL & Weave**

The [ Night They [ Drove Old Dixie [ Down

And the [ people were singin', they went

[ La Lala [ La Lala [ Lala La-(la [ La Lala La-ala)

#### TAG S [ FGS [ [ [ [

[ Na Nana [ Na Nana [ Nana Na Na [ Na-a

# Example:

## The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down

### Produce a “prototype”

- Possibilities (no high quality required!)
  - Record the Singing Call with a guitar or any other instrument
  - Use a Karaoke version
  - Create a MIDI file
  - Record an a-capella version
- Example:
  - **Prototype version with guitar and blues harp**
  - Key E
- **Recording of the final Singing Call**
  - Sting & Snow Session in Nashville 11/2006
  - Producer: Paul Bristow & Kevin McManus

# Example:

## The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down

### Record the vocal

- Possibilities
  - Use a professional studio
  - Record the vocal yourself  
(PC and studio microphone required)
- Example:
  - Vocal recorded in Cologne 02/2007 (Tonstudio BE)
  - Instrumental, vocal, harmony version
- **The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down**
  - Released on SNOW 07/2007 (SNW-2006)
  - Reached position No. 4 on Hanhurst Bestseller Index

# Information on SNOW



- What You Need or Have to Do:
  - Good idea
  - Design of the Singing Call
  - Prototype and appropriate key
  - Pay costs for music production (1000 £)
  - Record the vocal
- What You Will Get:
  - Special Guest Caller on SNOW
  - Distribution of your record via Hanhurst
  - (25 vinyl copies of your own record)
  - 125 older records of STING & SNOW
- **Caveat: STING & SNOW arrangements are changing NOW!**
- **HOT NEWS: The SP AMBASSADOR CLUB**
- Contact Paul Bristow (Paul@stingproductions.com)



# Information on GP

- Time Tested Way:
  - Similar to SNOW
  - Pay costs for music production (  $\approx$  700 €)
  - No studio band
  - Music produced with keyboard & “samples”
- New Way:
  - No vocal version
  - Only CD and mp3
  - Limited numbers or exclusive for one caller only
  - Distribution via GP-shop only
- Contact Joe Kromer ([Joe@gramophoneproductions.de](mailto:Joe@gramophoneproductions.de))

# Summary

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To produce a Singing Call from a song you like you have to do:

- Choice of an “appropriate” song you like
- Design of the Singing Call
- Production of a “prototype”
- Own production, Karaoke or agreement with SD label

Higher music quality (studio band) is more expensive than music from keyboard & samples

**If you like to support high quality square dance music,  
please consider to be a Sting Productions AMBASSADOR**

# Internet Sites

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- <http://www.rbsd.de/music.html>
- <http://www.stingproductions.com/snow-inf.php>
- <http://www.gramophoneproductions.de/>
- <http://www.lemamusik.se/>
- <http://www.new-beat.net/>
- <http://www.toddys-tunes.de/>
- [http://www.bodovr.de/bvr\\_records.htm](http://www.bodovr.de/bvr_records.htm)
- <http://www.harryfox.com/>