

The Mimic Concept: Centers and Ends

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1 Introduction

The *Mimic* concept is a way of getting everyone to do a designated part of the call. For example, *Mimic Ends* means that everyone does the ends' part of the call. *Mimic Centers* is generally the same as Central in cases where Central is legal, but *Mimic Centers* applies to more calls. This paper will discuss *Mimic Centers* and *Mimic Ends*; other examples, such as *Mimic Leads*, are discussed elsewhere.¹

There are two ways to do *Mimic* calls. One way is to think about what you would do if you were in the indicated position (e.g. centers) and do that part. The other way to do *Mimic* calls involves making an adjustment, doing the call, then undoing the adjustment. I expect that dancers will eventually learn to do many of the *Mimic* calls in a single smooth flowing motion, without making any adjustments, as they now do Central. However, when dancers are first learning *Mimic*, or when they later encounter new or unusual examples, they may wish to physically make the adjustment. Thus, in this paper, I will describe the calls in terms of making an adjustment. You can think of this as similar to the parallelogram adjustment: we explain the call in terms of an adjustment, but we only physically make the adjustment on harder calls.

This paper gives a definition of *Mimic* tailored to examples using Centers and Ends. The next section provides the definition and examples. The last two sections briefly discuss some issues on splitting the setup and determining the final adjustment. These issues can be complex in the full *Mimic* concept, but tend to be much simpler with *Mimic Centers* or *Mimic Ends*.

¹Sue Curtis, *The Mimic Concept*, December 2007.

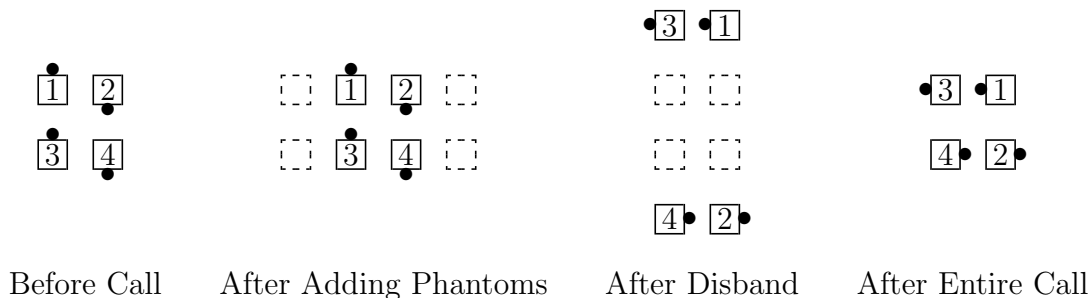
2 Definition and Examples

As in the Central concept, Mimic calls always involve working in a group of four. It will usually be each box but could be each line or diamond. The first step in doing Mimic calls is to add phantoms in such a way that you become the position named. For *Mimic Centers*, you will add phantoms outside your group of four to make an 8-person setup with the real people as centers. For *Mimic Ends*, you will add phantoms inside your group of four to make an 8-person setup with the real people as ends. The second step in doing Mimic calls is to do the call in the newly formed phantom setup. The final step is to eliminate the phantoms you added and collapse the setup back to its original size. This is often done by eliminating phantoms who came into the center or finished on the outside, but could also be done by merging real people with adjacent phantoms.

When starting *Mimic Centers* or *Mimic Ends* calls, there are often multiple ways the phantoms can be added. Generally, one of these ways produces lines and another produces columns. To avoid ambiguity or to help the dancers, the caller may specify the setup, i.e. *Mimic Centers of Lines* or *Mimic Centers of Columns*.

The easiest examples for people to learn are those that are similar to Central. You may have already been at a dance where someone called “Central Sets in Motion” or “Central Disband”. The problem with these calls is that dancers who start in the center normally finish on the outside. When doing the call with the Central concept, we are not sure how far apart the real people are after doing the call: should the real dancers still end far apart, or should we have a rule that Central never creates phantoms? With Mimic, we have a more formal definition that specifies phantoms are added at the beginning and then removed at the end. Below is how we would do *Mimic Centers, Disband*. (The diagram illustrates *Mimic Centers of Lines, Disband*, but *Mimic Centers of Columns, Disband* produces the same results.)

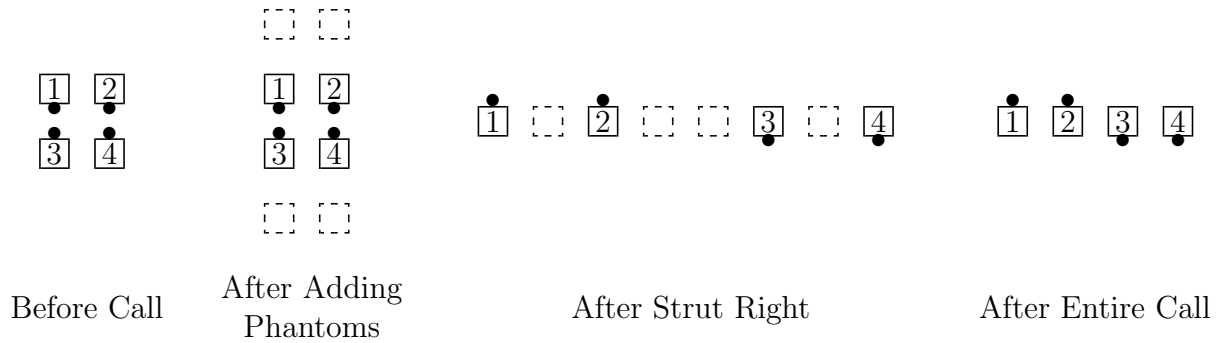
Example 1. Mimic Centers, Disband



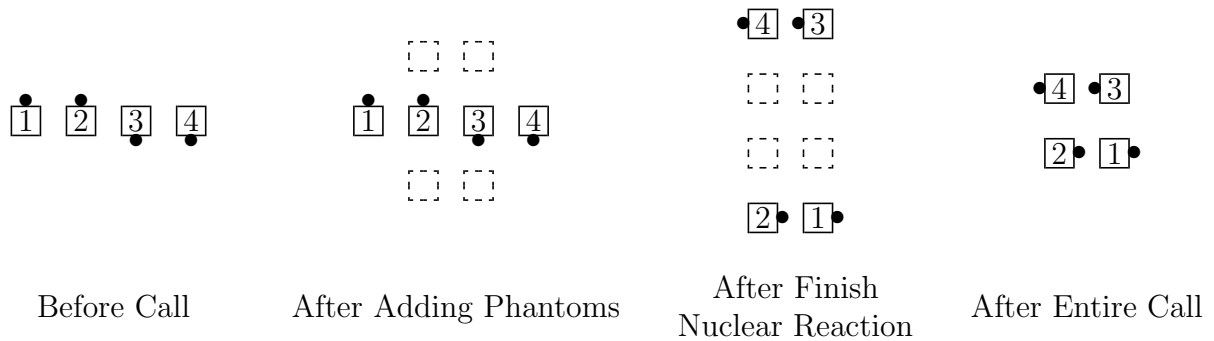
When danced in a single smooth flowing motion (i.e., without adjustments), *Mimic Centers, Disband* is Box Counter Rotate and U-Turn Back away from your partner.

Below are some other examples that we don't traditionally use with Central.

Example 2. Mimic Centers of Columns, Strut Right

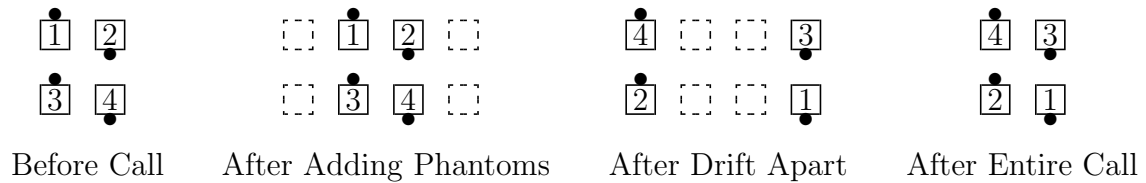


Example 3. Mimic Centers of a 1/4 Line, Finish Nuclear Reaction

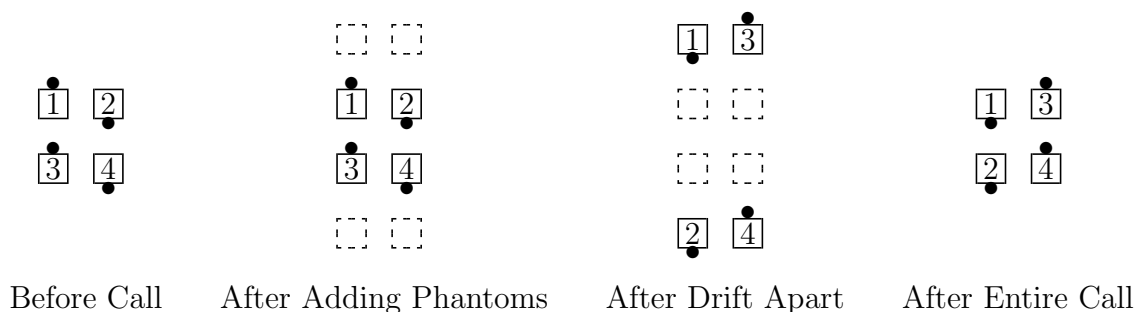


Another way that *Mimic Centers* extends the Central concept is to allow cases where the centers' part is different based on whether the overall setup is lines or columns.

Example 4. Mimic Centers of Lines, Drift Apart

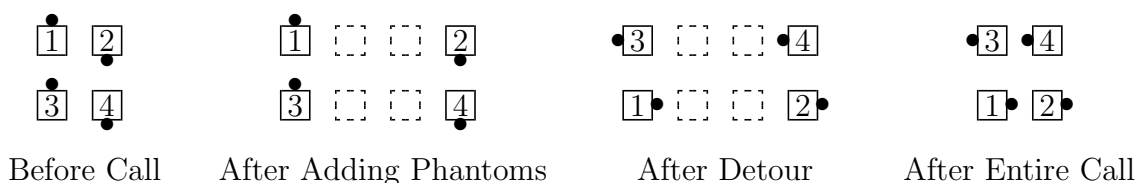


Example 5. Mimic Centers of Columns, Drift Apart



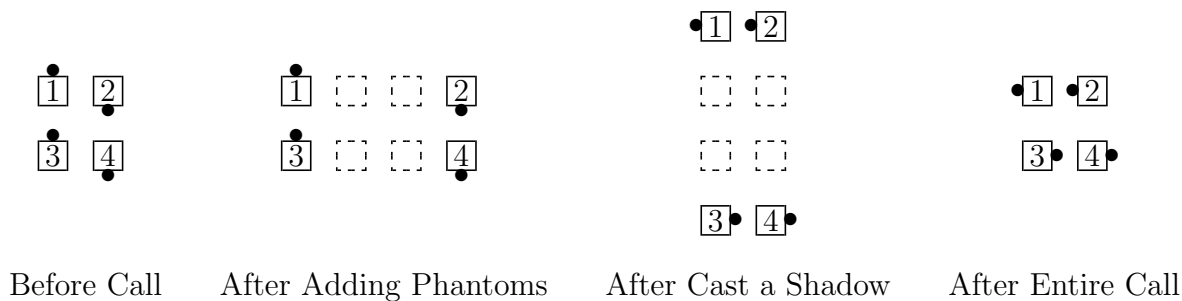
Mimic Ends is potentially even more useful than Mimic Centers since we do not already have a concept analogous to Central that specifies the ends' part. Below are some examples.

Example 6. Mimic Ends of Lines, Detour



This is the same as Reset 1/2, and many dancers could probably do it by thinking of the ends' part of Detour, and not explicitly adding phantoms. Below is another example you could probably do without explicitly adding phantoms, but this one we don't have another name for.

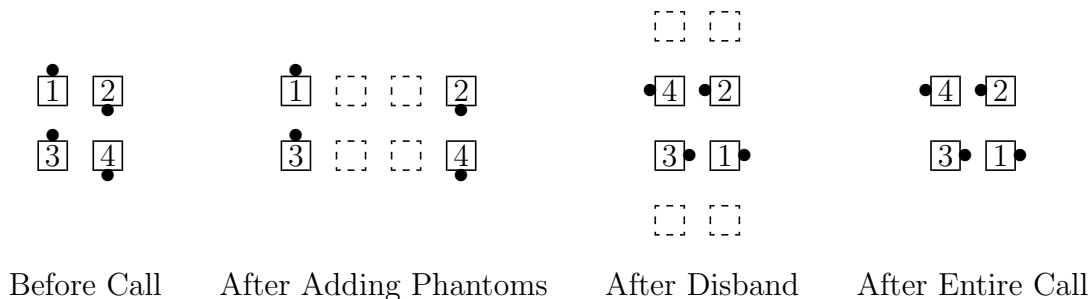
Example 7. Mimic Ends of Lines, Cast a Shadow



When done in a single smooth flowing motion, this call is Reset 1/4 and Cast Off 3/4.

Below are some other examples I like.

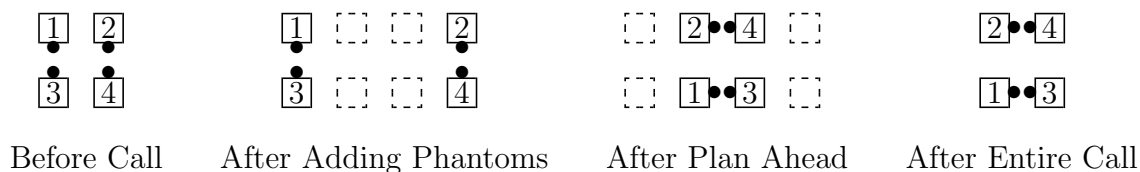
Example 8. Mimic Ends of Lines, Disband



When done in a single smooth flowing motion, this call is Reset 1/4 and 2/3 Recycle. The adjustment shown in this example illustrates Mimic Ends of Lines, but you would get the same result for Mimic Ends of Columns.

Mimic Ends can also be used with various lines-facing calls such as Load the Boat, Square the Bases, and Chisel Thru. Below is Plan Ahead.

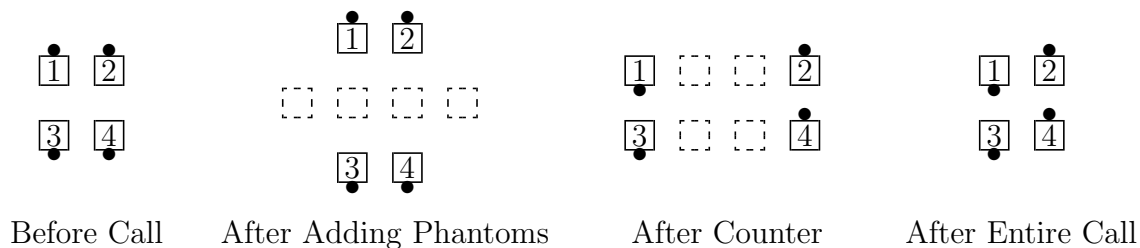
Example 9. Mimic Ends of Lines, Plan Ahead



When done in a single smooth flowing motion, this call is Box Circulate 1 1/2 and Recycle.

Another set of examples involves 3/4 Tags. Think of the outsides' part of Little, Stampede, Rally, or even Plenty. Below is Counter.

Example 10. Mimic Outsides of a 3/4 Tag, Counter



When done smoothly this call is U-Turn Back away from your partner, Touch 1/2, Step and Fold.

3 Splitting Setups

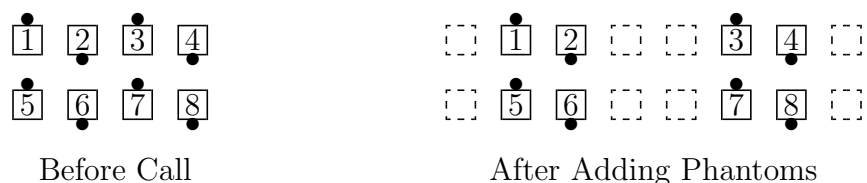
As with the Central concept, Mimic always requires working in a group of 4. All of the examples illustrated so far were shown with only 4 dancers and thus avoided the potential issue of deciding which group of 4 to work in. From some setups, such as a 1x8 or diamonds, this is straight-forward, since the setup can only be split one way. From a 2x4, there are potentially two ways: each box and each 1x4.

The same issue comes up with the Central concept. Usually, Central refers to each box. However, some examples, such as Central Stampede, refer to each line. Dancers have learned over time to recognize the calls that require a line and to otherwise work in each box. The same default applies to Mimic, and I expect that over time, dancers will recognize which calls require a line. In the meantime, callers can specify, e.g. “Each Line” if necessary.

In practice, it turns out that Mimic Ends will almost always require each box, since any normal call done from 2x4 lines, 2x4 columns, 1/4 tag, or diamonds, has the ends in a box with respect to each other. Mimic Ends will only require a 1x4 if the base call requires the ends to be in tidal wave. *Mimic Ends, Choice* would be Each Wave, Trade and Step and Fold. I would probably say “Each Wave” on this call explicitly (at least for now).

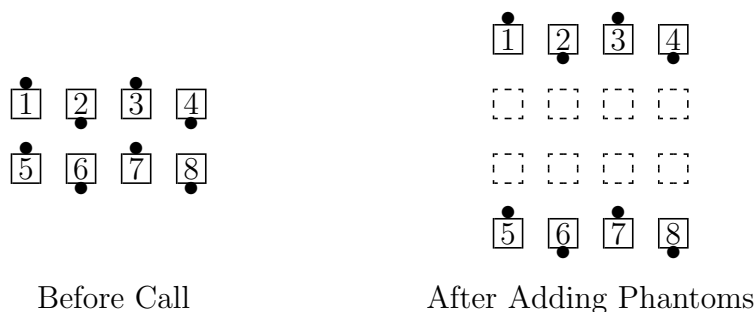
There is one more thing worth pointing out about the process of adding phantoms. Often, adding the phantoms will cause the real people to work in Split Phantom Lines, Columns, or Boxes. This is illustrated below.

Example 11. Mimic Centers of Lines



In this example, the dancers in each box add phantoms outside of their box to form lines. This essentially forces them into the outside Triple Boxes. They then effectively do the call in Split Phantom Boxes.

Example 12. Mimic Ends of Columns



In this example, the dancers in each box add phantoms inside their box so as to turn their box into a column. They then effectively do the call in Split Phantom Columns.

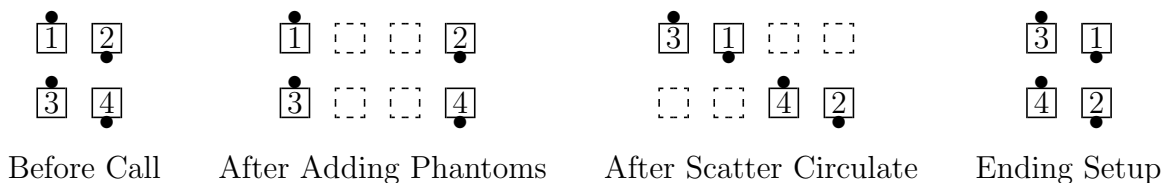
In either Mimic example, unlike the Split Phantom concepts, the phantoms are removed at the end.

4 Collapsing the Setup

In the examples shown so far, there was only one way to eliminate phantoms (after finishing the call) and collapse the setup back to its original size. This is true of most *Mimic Centers* and *Mimic Ends* calls: the phantoms will usually end up either in the center or on the end, and are easy to eliminate. One minor exception was shown earlier with Strut Right, but even in this case there was no ambiguity in eliminating phantoms.

Potentially ambiguous examples may arise if Mimic is used with calls where some of the real people finish in the center of a 2x4 and others finish on the end. In these situations, there may be multiple ways to eliminate phantoms and collapse the setup. In the event of ambiguity, choose the ending that makes the call a non-shape-changer (i.e. if the call starts in a box, it ends in a box.)

Example 13. Mimic Ends of Lines, Scatter Circulate



After adding phantoms and doing the Scatter Circulate, you could imagine eliminating phantoms by adjusting the real people to a box (moving sideways) or to a line (moving forward or

back). The rule is that the box ending is preferred. This example turns out to be equivalent to Box Circulate.

5 Conclusions

The purpose of the *Mimic* concept is to provide a way of doing other dancers' parts of the call, such as having everyone do the leads' part or everyone doing the ends' part. This paper illustrates *Mimic Centers* and *Mimic Ends*. *Mimic Centers* extends the Central concept by allowing calls where the centers do not stay in the center (e.g. Disband, Strut Right) or calls where the centers have different parts based on whether the setup is lines or columns (e.g. Drift Apart). *Mimic Ends* essentially creates a new concept that is analogous to Central but involves doing the ends' part instead of the centers' part.

In my experience, *Mimic Centers* and *Mimic Ends* are much easier to learn than the more generalized *Mimic* concept. This happens for several reasons. First, dancers at c3 and above are already familiar with the Central concept and are already accustomed to doing the centers' part of calls in their own box. Second, these examples tend to have fewer issues of potential ambiguity in eliminating phantoms at the end, compared to *Mimic Leads* and other examples that I originally focused on. Thus, it is easier to write an interesting dance that focuses on the idea of the concept and not be distracted by counter-intuitive ending setups.

The impact of Mimic is to create many more four-person calls than we currently have. The only other concepts I can think of that create four-person calls from eight-person calls are Central and Single. However, these concepts are much more restrictive and only apply to certain types of calls. Mimic is more general and presumably generates many more new calls. Mimic Centers and Mimic Ends provide many of the more intuitive examples of Mimic.

6 Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Andy Latto, Eric Brosius, and Will and Mary Leland for helpful suggestions and comments on the original *Mimic* concept. I would also like to thank the many dancers at C-Gulls, Lake Shore, and Berkshires who tolerated my experiments with this concept and provided useful feedback.

Practice Sequences

Sequence 1. Mostly Centers

HEADS: touch $1/4$
quick step
walk out to a wave
counter rotate
MIMIC CENTERS, disband
circulate
MIMIC ENDS, disband
tally ho
MIMIC CENTERS, sets in motion
plan ahead
double pass thru
MIMIC CENTERS, expand the column
touch by $1/4$ and $1/4$
scatter circulate
MIMIC CENTERS, the gamut
counter rotate
left allemande ($3/4$ promenade)

Sequence 2. Mostly Ends

HEADS: turn thru
wave the beaus
 $2/3$ recycle
MIMIC POINTS OF DIAMONDS, strip the diamonds
along
MIMIC ENDS OF LINES, acey deucey
step and fold
MIMIC CENTERS OF LINES, drift apart
circulate
invert the column $1/2$
MIMIC ENDS, detour
peel and trail
flip the line; boomerang
right and left grand ($7/8$ promenade)