

Presented by Ada Dziewanowska

Polonez staropolski

Pronunciation: poh-LOH-nehz stah-roh-POHL-skee

Record: ZM-46729 "Tańce ludowe z Polski - Volume 2" (Folk Dances From Poland), side A, band 1, available from Ada Dziewanowska.

Polonez, the Polish national "Grand March," is Poland's oldest dance in 3/4 time, dating back to the 15th century, and is derived from the peasant walking dance, the Chodzony. The music for Chodzony was simple, slow and even in rhythm, which made the dance dignified, serious but almost monotonous. It was first written in 2/4 time. Later on, the rhythm was changed to 4/4: one step on each of the first three beats of the measure with a pause on the fourth beat. The peasant Chodzony, sometimes also called Wolny (slow), Okragły (round), or Polski (Polish), was usually done with singing. It was always part of wedding and other family rituals, and various communal ceremonies. It was an honor to be the leader, the Wodzirej [voh-JEE-ray], and usually an older man was chosen. He played an important role, as he led the couples into intricate, moving, winding, serpentine pattern.

From Poland the peasant Chodzony migrated to neighboring countries: to Moravia (Moravia, presently part of Czechoslovakia) and to Łużyce (Lusatia, presently in East Germany), where it became almost its national dance.

In Poland from the village folk the Chodzony was taken up by the nobility. First it was done as a slow, triumphant procession of knights, with all the elements of a medieval marching dance. It is said that in 1574, during the coronation of King Henry Valois, in the royal castle of Kraków, it was danced for the first time with ladies. In this way dignitaries of the state and their wives were introduced to the new French King, who came to rule Poland. This was also the first time that the Polonez was danced in 3/4 time. From that time on, it became a court dance and was used to open all great, stately balls. The music became more elaborate, livelier, and acquired a wider range, the steps became embellished, and numerous new figures choreographed; singing was eliminated, but facial expression and hand gestures became important. The Polonez reached the peak of its development by the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th centuries. The lovely music and the graceful movement of the dancing enchanted foreigners and it spread all over Europe under its French name, Polonaise. Practically all great composers and choreographers tried their hand at it and, of course, Chopin made it famous. It also reached Sweden during the reign of the Swedish dynasty of Waza kings in Poland.

The tradition of Polonez survived all the political and social changes that took place in Poland throughout the centuries, and it has remained the queen of Polish dances to this day. It is still danced in present-day Poland: older people remember it, young people learn it through participation in numerous folk dance groups. Research on the old figures is continued and even contemporary music is composed. The Polonez has its triumphant hour every year, when literally thousands of couples in folk costumes dance it in a stadium during the annual harvest celebrations, the all-Poland Dożynki [doh-ZHIN-kee], held in a different city each year.

This arrangement of the dance, prepared by Ada Dziewanowska to the music of "Polonez staropolski" (Polonaise of Old Poland), ^{is a condensed version, which} aims at teaching many various Polonez figures. However, during a folk dance party, or a similar occasion, using another Polonez tune, a Wodzirej may lead a traditional grand march, interspersing it with some of these figures, by calling them. (For more traditional figures of the Polonez, see Ada Dziewanowska, "Polish National Dances.")

STYLING AND STEPS

The Polonez should be danced smoothly, with pride, dignity and grace. Torso is erect and head held high. With each step, foot should be extended and slightly turned out. Arms, when extended, are straight but not rigid. M's free hand(s) should be in a fist(s) placed on the forward part of his hip(s), elbow(s) forward and shoulder(s) down. With her free hand(s) W holds her skirt out to side(s).

Polonez Step - takes 1 meas: Do a preparatory bending of the knees as you release wt from outside ft (M-L, W-R) and begin to straighten outside leg as you move ft fwd just off the floor (ct & before ct 1); continue motion of outside leg and end by stepping onto it, knee straight, as you rise from inside leg (ct 1); do 2 steps fwd (cts 2,3). Repeat of step is done with opp ftwk.

Polonez Step Moving Bkwd - takes 1 meas: Do a preparatory bending of the knees as you release wt from ft about to step (ct & before ct 1); take 1 step bkw (ct 1); take 2 small steps bkw (cts 2,3).

M's Bow - takes 2 meas: As you lift head slightly, take a small step L ft sdwd to L, leaving R ft extended on floor (ct 1 of 1st meas); hold (ct 2 of 1st meas); close R ft to L ft, wt on both ft (ct 3 of 1st meas); bow head (cts 1-2 of 2nd meas); straighten head (ct 3 of 2nd meas).

W's Bow - takes 2 meas: Step R ft sdwd to R, leaving L ft extended on floor (ct 1 of 1st meas); hold (ct 2 of 1st meas); close L ft to R ft (no wt) (ct 3 of 1st meas); leaving R ft in place and R leg straight, step back with L ft, bending knee (ct 1 of 2nd meas); hold (cts 2-3 of 2nd meas).

First Arm Pos - (Although it appears second in this arrangement, it is commonly called "First Pos of the Arms" in Poland.) Cpl stands side by side, W on M's R, both facing LOD. M: extend R arm fwd, at waist level, palm facing L. W: place L hand, palm down on M's R hand.

Second Arm Pos - Cpl stands side by side, W on M's R, both facing LOD but M's upper body turned twd ptr. M: extend L arm fwd, at waist level, palm up, and extend R arm diag up and diag in back of ptr. W: place L hand, palm down, on M's L hand.

Note on changing Arm Pos - M: when assuming 2nd Arm Pos, always do a large upward sweep of straight R arm; when changing from 2nd to 1st Arm Pos, do a large downward sweep of straight R arm.

FORMATION

Cpls around the room, M facing out, W facing ptr, both have fists on own hips. Unless otherwise noted, move with 1 Polonez Step to each meas, beg all Figs M-L ft, W-R ft. (Note: After the name of each Fig in English, the Polish name, its pronunciation and literal translation will be given in parentheses.)

Measures

PATTERN

INTRODUCTION

- 1 No action.
- 2 M: Standing in place, with a slight bow of head assume 2nd Arm Pos. W: Making a 1/4 CW turn, step R ft and assume 2nd Arm Pos (ct 1); bring L ft to R, wt on both ft (ct 2); hold (ct 3).

I. PROMENADE AROUND THE ROOM (Para za para - PAH-rah zah PAH-rohm - cpl following cpl)

- 1-6 Move in LOD.
7-8 Dance your respective Bow - M: stay in place and at the beg of Bow place R fist on hip, W: with 1st step of Bow make a $3/8$ CCW turn to face ptr.

II. GRAND RIGHT AND LEFT (Łańcuch - WAHNEE-tsooh - chain)

- Both beg R ft, M will move in LOD, W in RLOD:
1-7 Starting with ptr, dance the Grand Right and Left Figure, using one Polonez Step to pass each new dancer. Movements of the arms are large, each grasping of hands is like a hand shake, acknowledged with a slight bow of the head.
8 M: when you meet the 8th W, step L ft sdwd to L, as you turn to face ctr and lead her in the opp dir (ct 1); hold (ct 2); close R ft to L ft, wt on both ft (ct 3). W making a $1/2$ CW turn, start moving in LOD and twd ctr.

III. THE CROWN FIGURE (Korona - koh-ROH-nah)

- 1 M: leaving R ft in place and R leg straight, lunge fwd onto L ft into ctr. L knee deeply bent, upper body erect and facing 45° to R, as you clap hands in a large vertical motion, R hand moving up, L hand moving down, and place L hand in a fist on hip, elbow twd ctr, and sweep straight R arm fwd and up, and end with it diag up, head facing ctr (ct 1); hold (cts 2-3). W: Move in LOD and slightly twd ctr in a circle with other W.
2-4 M: hold. W: continue moving in LOD and end in front of ptr, facing LOD. (Note: Depending on the amount of cpls participating and the size of the dancing area, covering that distance has to be adjusted.)
5 M: as you place R fist on hip and turn upper body to face ctr, close L ft to R ft, wt on both ft (ct 1); hold (cts 2-3). W: make a $1/4$ CW turn, moving twd ptr.
6 M: step bkwd on R ft (ct 1); close L ft to R ft, wt on both ft (ct 2); hold (ct 3). W: continue moving twd ptr.
7 M: leaping fwd onto L ft, go into a kneel on R knee, top of R ft on floor and well back, torso erect and bent fwd from the waist, back almost parallel with floor, R arm in back of you straight (ct 1); begin slowly straightening torso and sweeping R arm fwd (cts 2-3). W: do a full CW turn in place with 3 steps (RLR), extending slightly curved R arm in front at waist level.
8 M: using all 3 cts, continue motion of cts 2-3, meas 7 (Fig III), ending with upper body in pos of cts 2-3, meas 1 (Fig III). W: step L ft sdwd to L (ct 1); curtsy with R ft in back (ct 2); begin to straighten up (ct 3).
9-12 M: remain in kneeling pos and offer your R hand to ptr, leading her while she moves around you. W: holding M's R hand with your L hand, make a $3/4$ CCW circle around him with 24 small steps (6 per meas), done high on the balls of your ft.
13-14 Still holding ptr's hand, dance your respective Bow, except M get up from kneeling pos during the first two cts of meas 13.



IV. CHANGING PLACES FIGURE (Zmiana miejsc - ZMYAH-nah MYEYSTS)

- 1 Turning to face LOD, move fwd in 1st Arm Pos.
- 2 M: close R ft to L ft, wt on both ft, while leading ptr in front of you. W: with 3 steps (LRL) walk fwd in a semi-circle in front and around ptr to his L side and make a 1/2 CCW turn to face LOD.
- 3 Move in LOD.
- 4 M: move slightly fwd, leading ptr in front of you. W: move fwd and across to R in front of ptr to return to his R side.
- 5 Move in LOD.
- 6 Assuming 2nd Arm Pos, move bkwd in RLOD.
- 7-8 Cpl dance a full CCW turn in place.
- 9-16 Assuming 1st Arm Pos, repeat action of meas 1-8 (Fig IV), except end with M slightly fwd of ptr.

V. TRIANGLE FIGURE (Trójkąt - TROOY-kont)

- On ct & before ct 1 assume 1st Arm Pos.
- 1 M: step with an accent L ft across to R in front of ptr, bending knees very deeply (ct 1); with 2 steps (RL) move slightly to R (cts 2,3). W: dance in place.
 - 2 Releasing ptr, move M-bkwd, W-fwd.
 - 3 M: move fwd at a L diag. W: extending slightly curved R arm fwd at waist level, make a full CW turn with 3 steps (RLR).
 - 4 Assuming 2nd Arm Pos, cpl move in LOD. M: on ct 1 clap hands in a large vertical motion, R hand moving up, L hand moving down, head held high.
 - 5-16 Repeat action of meas 1-4 (Fig V) three more times (4 times in all)

VI. FORM CIRCLE AND MOVE IN LOD (Kółeczko w prawo - koo-WEHCH-koh
FPRAH-voh - circle to R)

- 1-2 Move in LOD.
- 3 M: with 1 Polonez Step Bkwd make a 1/4 CW turn and move twd ctr; still holding ptr's L hand, join hands (R to R) at waist level with W on your R. W: continue moving in LOD and turning your upper body twd ctr, give your R hand to the M on your R.
- 4-8 Move in LOD.

VII. COGWHEEL (Koło zębate - KOH-woh zehm-BAH-teh)

- 1 M: releasing hold of the two W, step fwd between them and away from ctr. W: making a 1/2 CCW turn, start moving twd ctr and in RLOD, turning 1/4 CW forming a circle with other W, hands held shldr high.
- 2 M: place R hand on ptr's L wrist and with a sweeping motion extend straight L arm diag up and away from ctr. All move in RLOD.
- 3-7 Move in RLOD.
- 8 With W releasing hold of other W in the circle and making a 1/2 CCW turn, ptrs face each other and form an individual circle by joining R hand with ptr's L hand.

VIII. FINAL BOW (Zakończenie - zah-kohnes-CHEH-nyeh - ending)

- 1-4 Individual circles move CW.
- 5-6 Reverse the dir and individual circles move CCW. End with M's back to ctr of large circle.
- 7-8 Dance respective Bow, holding the final pos a few seconds after the music has stopped.

Dance introduced in July 1977, at the University of the Pacific Stockton Folk Dance Camp by Ada and Jaś Dziewanowski. Do not reproduce these directions without their permission.