1965 SANTA BARBARA FOLK DANCE CONFERENCE

Presented by Gordon E. Tracie

SVENSK MAZURKA

(Swedish Mazurka) - Swedish Oldtime Couple Dance

Pronunciation: svensk ma-SOOR-ka

SOURCE:

This is one of the several "folk-type" couple dances still found in living tradition in Sweden which go under the designation of "gammaldans" (oldtime dance). The Mazurka is by far the least common of the five rhythms in this category however, the other more popular dances being (in order of frequency): Vals (waltz), Hambo, Schottische, and Polka. In fact it is almost solely in Stockholm that this dance is seen.

At Swedish oldtime dance gatherings the orchestra usually plays two selections for each tip of dances, e.g., a pair of waltzes, a pair of hambos, etc. In the case of the Masurka, it is common to see two versions done: a simple one during the first selection and a more complex one during the second. Both forms are given here, designated Mazurka I and Mazurka II. They may be used interchangeably to the same music.

American dancers will soon discover that simplicity in figure pattern (as in Mazurka I) in no way implies simplicity in step execution, for the "simple" version seems to demand more skill and agility than the more spectacular "fancy" version (Mazurka II). It is heartily recommended that dancers learn "the first one first" so as to really get the feel of the Swedish Mazurka rhythm and step "in their bones".

TRANSLATION:

Swedish Mazurka,

CATEGORY: Oldtime couple dance

REGION:

Mainly around Stockholm.

SKILL LEVEL:

Advanced.

MUSIC:

3/4

RECORD:

Aqua VIKING 813 a.

TUNE TITLE:

Polka-mazurka potpurri.

INTRO:

Pickup note only.

FORMATION:

Any nr of cpls in circle, LOD CCW.

POSITIONS:

In Mazurka I: closed Baltic posn (described below). In Mazurka II: simple hand hold, open shldr-wst posn. Free hand on hip at all times, fingers fwd, thumb back.

FOOTWORK:

Opp thruout: Swedish polka-mazurka step (described below), step-swing, kick-mazurka (described below).

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CHARACTER:

Very light and "bouncy".

MAZURKA I

This little dance is in character closely akin to the Polkett, a Swedish form of polka virtually identical to Suomalainen polkka, the Finnish Polka. The dance posn is the same, and even the step is essentially the same except for the fact that it is in 3/4 rather than 2/4 time. And it is freestyle, turning in either direction at will.

In Stockholm this dance is simply called Mazurka, but it is known by other names as well, such as Polketta and even (though rare) Hambopolkett!

There is no "pattern" to this dance; it consists solely of dancing Swedish polka-masurka steps (as described below) in Baltic dance posn (also described below). The turn is both CW and CCW. M always begins on L ft, W on R ft.

As a transition from one turning direction to the other, it is customary for the M to stamp on both feet on the 1st beat of the 1st meas of a new phrase. This stamp is in lieu of his otherwise L-lead step, and is followed by cl R, st L, as usual.

MAZURKA II

This "pattern" version of the Swedish Mazurka is known variously in Sweden as Sprättmazurka (fancy" or "showoff" mazurka), or Skänsk mazurka (Scanian Mazurka, erroneously ascribed to the southern province of Skane, Scania). It is today danced mostly in the Stockholm area, and then only by the most "eager" of the folk and oldtime dancers. Properly performed, with all the movements sprightly and graceful and with the pattern flowing from part to part, it can be a very impressive little dance.

	A. Step-swings:
1-2	Inside hands joined at shldr level, free hand on hip, bgng on
	outside ft, 2 step-swings away from and toward ptnr.

B. Indiv turns:

With both hands on hips, again bgng on outside ft, 2 complete individual turns away from ptnr, M CCW dancing L,R,R, and W CW dancing R,L,L on ea turn.

C. Kick-mazurka fwd:

In open shldr-wst posn, free hand firmly on hip, bgng on outside ft, 2 kick-masurka steps (as described below) fwd in LOD.

D. Cpl turn in place:

Still in open shldr-wst posn, and bgng with stamp on both feet on 1st beat of 1st meas, 2 polka-masurka steps (as described below) to make one turn arnd in place, either CW or CCW.*

Entire pattern repeated as many times as desired.

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SWEDISH POLKA-MAZURKA STEP:

This bouncy 3/4-time step goes by a number of names. In Sweden it is most often called "mazurka" step, though properly this is in reference to the music rather than the step itself. Some folkdance groups refer to it as "Vastgota" step, so named after the big dance Västgötapolska (Polska from Västergötland, West Gothia) in which the step is prominent. The Norwegians have a similar foot pattern in one of their native dances, and call it simply a "two-step with hop".

This step is best termed a polka-mazurka, for it is just that: a polka step in mazurka time. Maintaining a constant, even "bounce" on each beat of the music (just as in the Polkett or Suomalainen polkka, Finnish Polka), one takes the "hop-step, close, step (hold)" of the 2/4-time polka and dances it as a straight "hop-step, close, step" without the hold, in 3/4-time mazurka rhythm. In essence, the "hop-step" of the first beat becomes "both", so the pattern may be called "both, close, step".

As in the polka and the two-step, the feet lead alternatingly. Steps must be kept small, heels off the floor, and with lots of "spring" in the toes. Extreme lightness of feet, with goodly "bounce" (on each beat) is essential to the proper character of this step.

SWEDISH KICK MAZURKA STEP:

A variation of the classic mazurka step, the kick-mazurka is danced in all the Northern countries. It retains its original name in Denmark, Norway (where it is spelled Masurka), and Finland (where it is spelled Masurkka), but in Sweden it is called "Fryksdals"-step, so named after the dance Fryksdalspolska from Värmland, in which the step is prevalent. In general the Swedish step is danced faster than its Continental counterpart.

The kick-mazurka is essentially a fwd-moving mazurka step, but without the usual crossover. It is danced either of two ways in Sweden:

- I. Cnt l = st fwd L;
 Cnt 2 = st fwd R, simultaneously lifting L and kicking it fwd;
 Cnt 3 = hop on R, bringing L ft back, even with R.
- II. Cnt l = st fwd L;
 Cnt 2 = st fwd R, and lift L;
 Cnt 3 = skip fwd on R, simultaneously kicking L ft fwd & back
 very fast.

Above describes a L kick-mazurka step; R step danced just the opposite. When two or more kick-mazurka steps are danced consecutively, each begins on the same foot.

In all cases the kick should be kept short, toe pointed down, foot not extending too far fwd or bkwd and not coming higher than the calf of the opp leg. Despite the kicking motion, the step should not be jerky, but flow smoothly.

* Both directions of the cpl turn are used in Sweden, depending on group and locality.

Description by Gordon E. Tracie

5th line from bottom of page -

delete "... and bgng with stamp...", and substitute: "...bgng on
 outside ft, M stamping..."

add at end:

CLOSED BALTIC POSN AS IN SVENSK MAZURKA: As in Common Closed (Waltz) posn except that M holds W's R hand in his L hand, which is placed on his own L hip, back of her hand against his him