

WECHSELPOLKA
(Austria)

This is a free-form dance, done all over the Alpine area. Wechsel means change. In some versions, this refers to a partner-change. In others, such as this one, it refers to a step change, as the dance changes back and forth between a polka and a waltz. Danced by Marian and Ned Gault in Austria in summers of 1977-1986.

Pronunciation: VEX-el-POHL-kah

Music: "Volksmusik/Volkstänze"(tape) EIO-102 Side B/2 2/4;3/4 meter

Formation: Cpls usually in a circle, but not necessary. Dance pos is like shldr-waist, but M hands are at W shldr blades, arms up and rounded. Ptrs are close together.

Basic Steps: Austrian Polka is a simple balance step (leap-step-step; leap-step-step) in the rhythm 1,&,2; 1,&,2, etc. Done turning CW, it beg with ML, WR, but resembles a waltz step (turn, side, close; turn, side, close in q,q,S;q,q,S rhythm). The steps are SMALL and kept under the body, to accent the turn, rather than covering a lot of ground. This easy basic step is done as a "polka" by dancers all over the Alpine area (Austria, Bavaria, Switzerland, South Tirol).
Waltz.

The dance simply alternates 16 meas of waltz with 16 meas of polka, 16 waltz, etc. The orchestra will occasionally play two "16s" of the same type, to keep the dancers thinking and listening. The step does not stop at the end of meas 16, but flows smoothly into the next part. Since the waltz step (turn,side,close) and the polka (turn,side,close) are the same except for rhythm (1,2,3 versus 1,&,2), the transitions are very natural.

<u>Meas</u>	<u>Pattern</u>
1-4	<u>INTRODUCTION</u> No action.
3/4	I. <u>WALTZ</u>
1-16	16 waltz steps, turning CW and moving in LOD as usual.
2/4	II. <u>POLKA</u>
1-16	16 Austrian Polka steps, turning CW and moving LOD
3/4	III. <u>WALTZ</u>
2/4	IV. <u>POLKA</u>
3/4	V. <u>WALTZ</u>
2/4	VI. <u>POLKA</u>
2/4	VII. <u>POLKA</u>

NOTE: It is not necessary to turn continuously. Fwd movement or sometimes a reverse turn can be used, just as in regular ballroom dancing. Done smoothly, with small steps, this is a dance which can be comfortably done for as long as the orchestra chooses to play

Notes by Ned Gault

Presented by Marian and Ned Gault