

FYRMANNADANS
(Sweden)

Fyrmannadans (also spelled Fyramannadans), a dance for four persons, may well be called "the fastest dance in the North," for in sheer speed of the turn it has no counterpart. The Swedish folk dance manual says of this lively polska, "It can without exaggeration be said that this simple, brisk, and beautiful dance is one of our very oldest and most widespread dances, and a direct continuation of the slengpolska."

The slengpolska (Swedish: slängpolska; literally "flinging polska") seems to have begun as a couple dance, perhaps as much as three or four centuries ago, which later grew to encompass two or more couples. Swedish folkdancers often refer to the slengpolska step as Östgöta-step after the province of Östergötland (East Gothia) from which it is thought to have originated. Though nowadays it is danced only as a leftward-moving step in Sweden, the slengpolska survives in the Swedish districts of Finland moving in both directions.

Simple yet phenomenally effective when well performed, Fyrmannadans is without a doubt one of the most spectacular dances in Scandinavia today, bearing graphic testimony to the vitality and "drive" of genuine Swedish folk dancing.

Pronunciation: FEER-mahn-a-dahns. Translation: Four-person dance.

Record: Viking V 201 b. 3/4 meter.

Formation: Two cpls in a ring. For several sets, see below.

Steps and Styling: Parallel throughout: L slengpolska (E. Gothian type) (described below). The steps are vigorous yet light and "airy."

Meas

Pattern

A. RING
1-8 Hands joined firmly at shldr level with enough tension to maintain "V" in elbows, dancers facing squarely into ctr so as to move sidewise, eight slengpolska steps to the L, turning ring CW.

B. MILL
1 Transition: Ring hold is released and each person turns to his own L with one slengpolska step, making a full CCW turn around individually. On first beat of this measure, each person claps own hands once (at which time he/she will be facing outward).

FYRMANNADANS (continued)

- 2-8 Facing ctr of set again, 8-hand mill is formed by placing both hands on R arm of person to own L, R hand grasping the wrist and L hand grasping just above the elbow of said person, and mill is moved about CW with seven more slengpolska steps.

C. BASKET

- 9 Transition: Mill hold is released and each person turns to his own L with one slengpolska step, making a full CCW turn around individually. On first beat of this measure, each person claps own hands once (at which time he/she will be facing outward).
- 10-16 In rapid succession, W grasp each other's hands with finger-grip (described below), M grasp each other's hands in the same manner, below the W's hands; then W lift their hands over M's heads and place them behind M's backs, and M lift their hands over W's heads and place them behind W's backs. Hands are held squarely in ctr of neighbor's back. During this time set moves CW with seven more slengpolska steps.
- 9-16 Basket thus formed is kept in motion for eight more measures of slengpolska, during which time set can pick up speed.

Without transition, hands are dropped from basket hold, ring is formed again (without ceasing CW movement), and dance is resumed at A.

SLENGPOLSKA STEP, as danced in Fyrmannadans and Kulldansen.

As is characteristic of Swedish polska steps, traditional "slängpolska" steps are repetitive rather than alternating; that is, each step pattern begins on the same foot. Furthermore, in this step it is the same foot for both M and W (i.e., parallel ftwk).

Using today's dance terms, the slengpolska (E. Gothian type) can conveniently be described as a side polka step to the L (ct "a-one and two") followed by a L-ward leap onto the R ft, crossing over in front of the L (ct "three"), toes pointed directly twd the ctr of the circle at all times. As the R ft crosses over, the L ft is simultaneously lifted behind the R ankle.

Throughout, the action is sdwd (no "rhumba shift"!), dancers facing squarely into ctr of ring. Due to the great speed potential of the slengpolska step, exceptional lightness of feet is essential. Dancers should be up on their toes at all times, spending as little time as possible on the floor.

Step-pattern chart for Slengpolska (E. Gothian type) step:

Count:	:	a	:	1	:	&	:	2	:	-	:	3	:
Dance:	:	hop R	:	-	:	step L	:	cl R	:	-	:	st L	:
	:		:		:		:		:	(pause)	:	leap R	:
	:		:		:		:		:		:		:

FYRMANNADANS (continued)

FINGER-GRIP, as used in basket figure:

With fingers held tightly together, the hands are cupped and interlocked with the opp person's hands in the manner of opposing hooks. For convenience, the taller person may have palm down, the shorter one palm up. (Note to the W: long artistic fingernails will leave a bad "impression" on the opp person.)

FOR SEVERAL SETS IN PERFORMANCE:

Swedish folk dance groups often use this procedure: Form two parallel lines of cpls facing each other about four steps apart, and number the sets in 2's. Music is played three times through. The first time only Cpls 1 dance, the 2nd time only Cpls 2 dance, and the 3rd time all cpls dance. Besides being less of a strain for the dancers than dancing three times straight through, this arrangement has a dramatic effect upon the onlookers.

ALTERNATE MILL HOLD:

The hand hold on the Mill varies with local tradition. An alternate method is as follows:

- 2-8 Facing ctr of set, 8-hand mill is formed by placing R hand on R wrist of person to the R, and the L hand just above R elbow of person to the L, and mill is moved about CW with seven more slengpolska steps.

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