

JÄMTLÄNSK POLSKA MED BAKMES
(Sweden)

Jämtlandsk polska med bakmes comes from the district of Kall, province of Jämtland, Sweden. It was learned in Sweden in 1970 by Gordon Tracie and taught by him at Skandia Folkdance Society in Seattle, Washington.

Pronunciation: YEMT-lendsk POHL-skah meh BAWK-mehs

Record: Viking SMF 201, side B, bands 1 and 3. 3/4 meter.

Formation: Cpls in random circle, progressing in LOD.

Steps: Jämtlandsk Bakmes Step in Triple Meter - 3/4 Polska
Rhythm: (2 meas = 1 revolution)

Upbeat quickly glide R ft up to L ft;
ct 1 step diag CCW on L ft;
2 pivot CCW on L sole while R ft swings arnd CCW in an arc;
3 step R ft in front of L ft to form a "T";
4 step L ft behind R ft so that L toe and R heel are somewhat adjacent to form a R angle, and with wt on both ft, dip slightly by gently bending both knees;
5 retaining wt on both ft, begin to raise from dip by lifting both seles so as to turn CCW simultaneously on both heels;
6 continue to turn on both heels so as to complete one revolution in the six cts.

Note: The following parts are not figures in the regular sense, but an introduction plus turn and rest-step, with no fixed number of measures for each.

INTRODUCTION: OPEN POLSKA FORWARD ("försteg")

In open shldr-waist pos, free hands loose at sides, beginning on outside ft, cpl moves fwd in LOD with open polska steps.

CLOSED POLSKA TURN ("rundpolska")

Whenever desired, cpl assumes closed basic polska hold, and rotates CW with full turn polska steps, as follows:

M: ct 1 step diag CW on L ft to begin pivot on L sole;
2 step R sole about a foot-length behind L ft, somewhat adjacent to form a R angle, while retaining wt on L ft (= "both");
3 pivot simultaneously on R heel and L sole so as to complete one full revolution CW.
W: ct 1 step fwd on R ft;
2 step on L ft to begin CW pivot;
3 arc R ft around CW close to L ft, "skimming" but not actually touching floor.

Transition to reverse-turn:

M: wait in place one meas with wt on both ft, while bringing W over to L side into reverse sidecar hold.

JÄMTLÄNSK POLSKA MED BAKMES (continued)

W: wait in place one meas, stepping on R ft, followed by L ft placed one half foot-length somewhat behind R ft while assuming reverse sidecar hold.

REVERSE TURN ("bakmes")

In reverse sidecar hold, cpl turns CCW as described for triple-meter Jämtländsk bakmes step, above, as many series of six cts as desired.

REST STEP ("viltur")

Taking regular sidecar hold, cpl progresses fwd in LOD, M dancing fwd and W bkwd, with basic polska steps (as in open polska).

Cpl may revert to either closed polska turn or reverse turn, at will.

Following introduction, the closed polska turn, reverse turn, and rest steps may be danced at the cpl's discretion, any one, two, or all three of the figures, as music and mood dictate.

Presented by Gordon E. Tracie

AN ADVANCE WORD ON THE "JÄMTLÄNSK BAKMES" STEP FROM KALL, JÄMTLAND.

The "bakmes" step from Kall in Jämtland is a cognate of the "bakmes" step from western Dalarna (Västerdalsk bakmes) as well as the "vrangsnu" turn of Röröspols, but incorporates a heel-turn on the final count, with an accompanying catch-step preceding it in order to facilitate proper transfer of weight. Like the western Dalarna form, the L ft is always the leading ft, and should be pointed in LOD at the beginning of each pattern.

Of the three rhythmic forms given here, the polska is undoubtedly the oldest, stemming from the ancient triple-meter polska music. However, since this rhythm demands a sort of syncopation in the step's execution, it seems the most difficult. But if the simpler "Västerdalsk bakmes" is mastered first, the principle becomes abundantly clear, and the Jämtland version should not be a problem.

As other rhythms crept into the folk scene in Sweden, the "bakmes" step was adapted to them as well. First the "stigvals" (stride-waltz, not introduced at this time), then the schottis, and finally the polka. In these latter two dances the rhythm is of course changed from triple- to duple-meter, and as a result, the subtleties of the polska form are no longer present. The step movements are in a steady 1-2-3-4 cadence.

The turning principle in a typical "bakmes" step involves each ptr in an alternating status of "activeness" and "passiveness" from one meas to the next. Specifically, the active person dances around his/her ptr so as to initiate a half-revolution, while the passive person allows herself/himself to be turned. Then the roles are reversed, thereby accomplishing one full revolution as each ptr completes the total pattern.

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