

MAZURKA--POLKETTA

(Mazurka; Polketta)

Oldtime couple dance from Sweden

Source: As learned and danced in Stockholm (1947-48, 1950-51) by Gordon E. Tracie, and taught at Scandia Folkdance Club, Seattle.

Recording: Sonora 3720, "Steirblod mazurka" (import);

Alternate:

Formation: For any number of couples. LOD CCW.

Dance Posn: Closed Swedish polka-mazurka position, to wit: M's R arm around W's waist and W's L hand on his R shoulder as in regular waltz position, but with M holding W's R hand with his L hand securely (firmly, not loosely!) on his own L hip. (This dance position is found also in the Baltic states, e.g., Latvia.)

Step: Swedish polka-mazurka step (described below).

Polka-mazurka closed partner turn:

This little dance consists solely of doing the Swedish polka-mazurka step turn in above-described position. Like the Viennese Waltz, the turn is danced in both directions, that is, turning either CW or CCW.

Added character is given to the dance by the customary practice for the M to stamp on both feet ("appell") on the 1st beat of the 1st measure, just as a change in turning direction is effected.

THE SWEDISH POLKA-MAZURKA STEP may be most easily described as "a polka danced to mazurka rhythm" (devoid, of course, of the usual polka syncopation). A L polka-mazurka step is done as follows:

1st beat: skip fwd to land on both feet, L in front of R about half a foot's length;

2nd beat: close R, shifting weight to this foot;

3rd beat: step L.

A R polka-mazurka step is just the opposite of the above.

{ IMPORTANT: A constant, even "bounce" on each beat of the music must be maintained thruout. The steps are kept small, heels off the floor, with ample spring in the toes. This "bounce", along with extreme lightness of the feet, is essential to the step's character.

Step-pattern chart:

SWEDISH

POLKA-MAZURKA STEP

Music:	Beats	1	2	3	1	2	3
Step:	Man	Bth	cl R	L	Bth	cl L	R
	Woman	Bth	cl L	R	Bth	cl R	L

BACKGROUND NOTES: The Swedish polka-mazurka step is known by various names in Sweden, such as Västgota step (West Gothian step, from the "big" folkdance Västgötapolska, which employs this step thruout), Hambo-polkett, Polka-mazurka, or simply Mazurka step -- the latter designation being that used by the Swedish national folkdance organization and folkdance groups in the Swedish districts of Finland (in which case it is spelled Masurka). In

Norway is to be found a similar step in the dance Sørlands springar.

The Mazurka-Polketta as a dance is done mostly in the Stockholm area of Sweden, where it is called in some quarters simply Mazurka, in others Polketta. The oldtime dance orchestras over there usually play two selections for each dance tip, and when the Mazurka comes up, the above-described dance is done on the first piece, and the "fancy" Sprattmazurka (the Swedish Mazurka, in following description) is danced on the second selection.

The Mazurka (either version) is the least common of the five most popular oldtime dances in Stockholm. The others, in order of frequency (as of 1947-51, at least) are: Vals (Viennese-type waltz), Hambo (usually Stot-hambo, Stockholm Hambo, previously described), Schottis (simple Swedish schottische in one figure), and Polka (Polkett, and Snor or Slunga). Selection and order of popularity of dances varies, of course, with time.

---Description prepared by G.E.T.