



Coquette, or Love Chase.

A Collection of FAVORITE POLKAS



Allemande attitude

Tempo: $\text{♩} = 104$

The Polka spread from its Bohemian birthplace to Paris and then through the western world in 1843-44. American dance master Charles Durang predicted that, "The Polka...will doubtless eclipse the old Cotillion and reign as the ruling star of La belle Assemblée." Nine years later, he confirmed that, "The sedate and the joyous, the learned and the unlearned, the professor and the mechanic, all were taken with its vivid and inspiring music and simple step, and...became lost in the Polka mazes of the ballroom."

The great popularity of the Polka was partly due to its combination of the intimacy of the Waltz with the vivacity of the Scotch Reel. Another attribute of the Polka was its wide range of variations, at a time when variety in dancing was highly valued. The following variations are collected from the early years of the Polka (1844-1860).

PROMENADE Polka forward in a side-by-side position, with the gent's R arm around the lady's waist and her L hand on his R shoulder, outside arms akimbo (i.e. hands on hips). Glide the outside foot (gent's L, lady's R) boldly forward; close the rear foot to the fore (to 3rd position); glide the outside foot forward again; hop, closing the inside foot to "6th position" (free heel touching the supporting ankle, with the toe pointed down to the floor, almost touching the floor). Repeat on the opposite feet.

POLKA VALSE (the basic Polka) Face partners and take ballroom position. Do the above steps turning clockwise halfway around on counts 3 & 4 (but not before), still closing the feet to 6th position on count 4. Some dancers favored an inclination of the body into each step of the Polka, as opposed to the erect body carriage of the Waltz. The Polka was often preferred to be danced in a dotted (rant) rhythm: $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$, beginning with a preliminary hop.

REVERSE The "Valse à l'Envers" is simply a Polka that turns counterclockwise. The Reverse Polka presents no great difficulties when danced in a straight line, but compounds the counterclockwise turning when the path of travel hooks to the left.

DEUX TEMPS The Valse à Deux Temps can be a confusing term. "Waltz" could refer to any turning dance, including the Polka Valse, and "deux temps" meant "two dance motions," the first of which (a glide) had one step, and the second (a chassé) had two. The Deux Temps soon became mistranslated as the "Two-Step" (even though it had 3 steps). The Deux Temps could be danced to either waltz or polka time. Despite the name confusion, the step is the essence of simplicity: a smoothly turning polka without a hop, starting with a side step, keeping the feet close to the floor at all times. By the end of the century, the Two-Step had surpassed the hopping Polka in popularity.

PURSUIT One of the dancers Polkas (or Two-Steps) directly backward, as the other advances. Ladies' dresses did not have long trains in the mid-century, so they could dance backwards. They were advised to step back "boldly" on the first step of each bar. Gentlemen should not interpret this term by their own long steps, but should withhold their advances to the strides of their partner. The Pursuit can also be done in an open two-hand hold, sometimes shading (twisting) the body a little.

POLKA TREMBLANTE This is an early, bouncy Polka where **each** step has a down-up motion. Since this variation quickly became unfashionable in genteel society, it seems appropriate to combine it with the following partnering position which also became obsolete in the early polking days: The gent takes the lady's L hand with his R. Partners face ("vis à vis") during the first bar, then turn away ("dos à dos") for the second bar, still holding hands. Continue the alternaton.

COQUETTE Also known as the "Love Chase." The lady escapes from her partner (possibly by turning to her R under their raised arms) and the gentleman pursues her, with arms akimbo, "attempting to look at his lady." (See the illustration above, from Charles Durang.) Flirtation, not speed, is preferred.

PAS D'ALLEMANDE From the Coquette, the lady may choose to raise her right arm, letting her partner take it with his right hand. She then polks, turning under their raised arms, as the gent follows without turning. The man makes sure that his right elbow is also raised (in a graceful curve of the arm) to provide clearance for the lady.

CROSSED-HAND If continuing from the Pas d'Allemande, face partners, keeping (lowered) right hands, and offer left hands under the rights. Do a turning Polka in this crossed-hand position, with hands held somewhat close to the heart.

BOHEMIAN (Double, or Heel and Toe Polka) Place the straightened free leg to the side (2nd pos.), heel down, toe raised; close the same leg to the supporting foot, toe down (6th pos.); polka 3 steps to the side (possibly turning). Repeat to the other side. Follow with four turning Polkas.

ZULMA L'ORIENTALE Start with two turning Polkas. Then place the straightened free foot forward, pointing the toe to the ground (4th pos.); close the same leg to the supporting foot (3rd pos.); and conclude with one more turning Polka, commencing with a preliminary hop. Repeat to the other side.

4-SLIDE GALOP Also called a 3-Slide Galop. Taking ballroom positon, do four straight slides of a chassé. Then turn halfway around on the 4th step, with a hop, as in the Polka. Repeat to the other side after turning, still traveling line of direction (looking over your elbows).

ESMERALDA This is a variation of the 4-Slide Galop, wherein you execute the four slides and turn, but instead of repeating to the other side, follow with two turning Polkas. Repeat the 4-slide and two polkas to the other side (continuing line of direction).

Other polka variations referred to but not described in detail were the Polka Bremen Step, Butler Trot, Polka Sissone, Inconstante and many others. *"The Polka should be varied as much as possible."* -Ferrero

MID-CENTURY SOURCES WITH POLKA DESCRIPTIONS

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|---|---|
| 1844 Eugene Coralli LA POLKA ENSEIGNEE SANS MAITRE. Paris | 1858 Hillgrove HILLGROVE'S COMPANION & BALL-ROOM GUIDE. |
| 1844 POLKAN, SADAN DEN DANSAS I SALONGERNA. Stockholm | 1858 Elias Howe HOWE'S COMPLETE BALL-ROOM HAND-BOOK. |
| 1847 Cellarius LA DANSE DES SALONS. Paris | 1859 Edward Ferrero THE ART OF DANCING. NY |
| 1848 Charles Durang THE BALL-ROOM BIJOU. Philadelphia | 1860 "Polkarius" ALMANACH MANUEL DE LA DANSE. Paris |
| c1850 "A Dancing Master" THE ART OF DANCING. London | c1861 Eugene Coulon COULON'S HAND-BOOK. London |
| 1854 D.L. Carpenter THE AMATUER'S PRECEPTOR. Phila. | 1862 Gawlikowski GUIDE COMPLET DE LA DANSE. Paris |
| 1856 C. Durang THE FASHIONABLE DANCER'S CASKET. Phila. | 1862 Elias Howe THE AMERICAN DANCING MASTER. Boston |
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