

STOCKHOLM HAMBO

(Stöthambo; Stockholmshambo)

Couple dance from Sweden)

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

Recording: Musica A-8747, "Jan Ersas brölloppshambo" (import).

Alternate:

Formation: For any number of couples; LOD CCW.

Dance Posns: Open: couple facing fwd, W on M's R, inside hands joined at shoulder height, elbows bent; Closed: "Swedish folkdance hold" (as described for Old Hambo-Polska).

Steps: "Step-swing balance" (described below); "Bounce-hambo", as described in "The Basic Hambo Step", but with modifications noted below.

A. Foregoing pattern steps:

(i) "Step-swing balance":

1-3 In open position, beginning on outside foot, 3 "step-swing balances" (as described below) in place.

(ii) Transition step:

4 M and W each execute own transition step (as described for Old Hambo-Polska), having taken closed position by the end of the measure.

B. "Bounce-hambo" closed partner turn:

5-8 Couple dances "bounce-hambo" turn -- a hambo-polska step modified as indicated in note below. Open position is taken at the end of the last measure so as to again face fwd in LOD.

Repeat entire sequence as many times as desired.

THE "STEP-SWING BALANCE" is a latter-day adaptation of the traditional Swedish Dai step, undoubtedly arising from the influence of modern ballroom dancing on the so-called "oldtime dances" (gammaldans). Although done in a variety of ways, it is usually essentially as follows (given for 2 measures):

1. 1st beats: joined hands brought slightly fwd so couple is somewhat back-to-back, while inside foot is swung fwd, toe pointed down, without lifting it from the floor; weight on outside foot;
2nd beat: inside foot completes swing, toe touching out in front of outside foot;
3rd beat: hold.
2. 1st beat: joined hands brought back so couple is partially face-to-face, and weight is shifted to inside foot; outside foot begins swing similar to above;
2nd beat: outside foot completes swing, toe touching out in front of inside foot;
3rd beat: hold.

It is not uncommon among the younger generation in Stockholm and other big cities for this step to be done with considerably more hip and shoulder movement than would be considered acceptable folkdance style. An extreme "modern" version consists of merely bending the knees with a body twist as hands are brought fwd and back. These untraditional offshoots have been discouraged by the Swedish folkdance organizations, and so are common only among the non-organized dancers.

THE "BOUNCE-HAMBO" STEP (Sw: stöthambo) is a modern modification of the traditional "dip-hambo" (nighambo) step. The Swedish word "stöt" means among other things, "shake" or "bounce", and the distinguishing factor about this step is its "bouncy" nature—thus the use of the term "bounce-hambo". It is important to observe that the usual "dip" on the first beat of each measure as danced in the ordinary hambo turn has been completely eliminated, and instead there is an even "bouncing" of each beat of the measure. This "bounce" is very smooth, however, and never allowed to get out of control. It must not be overdone. As in all true Swedish Hambos, the dance is relaxed and graceful.

BACKGROUND NOTE: It is always somewhat of a shock for American visitors to Stockholm — that is, those who have danced the Hambo back in "the States" — to discover that their favorite dance is done "over there in the Old Country" without the distinctive "dip" which characterizes the Hambo in the US. The fact is that the Stockholm Hambo, with its bouncy stöthambo step, is in reality a ballroom dance (albeit in many cases an "oldtime" ballroom dance). It is the old Hambo brought "up to date" to fit the space limitations of today's crowded dance floors

and conform to the more "sophisticated" style of modern "social dancing". In order to see the "nighambo" (dip-hambo) danced as a matter of course, one must visit some of the more remote rural districts in Sweden, or watch the organized folkdancers, who are encouraged by the folkdance societies to retain the traditional dip.

We at Scandia Folkdance Club, Seattle, use the Stockholm Hambo not as a substitute to the ordinary Hambo, but as an occasional supplement to it. Since in one evening's dancing at any of our regular "Scandia Mixers" we have at least four Hambos, one of them is usually a Stockholm Hambo, another an Old Hambo-Polska, and the remaining two just plain Hambos. It is of course important that the differences in style be pointed out, and that — naturally — the proper type of music be used for each.

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