

VASSDRAGSPOLKA
(Norway)

I learned this dance in Oslo from an older man from Sjøk in Gubrandsdal. He came to the Sunday night gammeldans and we eventually struck up a conversation. He complained that none of the women could follow him, and when I danced with him I understood why. His variations were not at all usual for the Oslo area. I gleefully danced the rest of the evening with him and ran home to write down what I had learned. His polka is particularly interesting for the "masurka" turn danced to 2/4 music.

Pronunciation:

Music: Heilo HO 7012 (LP) or HK 7012 (cassette), Side A/4
"Hamborgar." 2/4 meter
May be danced to any polka, galopp, or hamborgar.

Formation: Cpls in ballroom pos. Shldr-waist; shldr-upper arm, and Norwegian polka pos are also acceptable.

Steps: Polka step: Step fwd on L lowering wt (ct 1); step on ball of R beside or slightly in front of L (ct &); step on L lowering wt (ct 2). On & ct of 2 there may be a slight lift, but there is no hop. Repeats with alternating ft. Has down-up-down feeling.

Characteristics: When dancing this polka step, it is not important where cts 1 and 2 are. You may dance, 2,&,1 or 1,&,2 although it is usual to begin with 1,&,2. In a number of areas of eastern Norway and western Sweden bar lines are often disregarded in this way. There is reason to believe that some of the old music did not have distinct measures, but only counts. The recommended music for this dance also has an odd number of beats in one of the phrases.

Meas

Pattern

I. M FORWARD; W BACKWARD
Many M dances fwd in LOD, W bkwd with polka steps. M may start with either ft, and W must follow with opp ft. Most usual is for M to start with L. M dances straight fwd, but he swings W slightly in and out of circle so that she dances R polka step somewhat to R and L polka step somewhat to L.

INTERLUDE

1 When the M wishes he may exaggerate swinging the W out of the circle, so that he has his back to ctr and W is facing ctr. This is the signal for the variation. The M then takes 2 steps bkwd twd ctr (L,R cts 1,2), while W takes 2 steps fwd beg on R ft. At beg of next meas M brings W around in front of him to resume dancing M fwd W bkwd in LOD. This interlude should be done perhaps once in 8-16 meas, and usually not more than 2-3 times before changing to next part.

VASSDRAGSPOLKA (Continued)II. TURN

Many

Whenever the M has his L free, including immediately after the Interlude, he may begin the turn. The cpl completes 1 CW turn in 3 cts, or 2 turns in 3 meas. They used the masurka turn from this area, but to polka music. M steps around W with L (ct 1); close R to L and lower both heels (ct 2); step fwd on R between ptrs ft (ct 3). W steps fwd twd M on R (ct 1); step on L toe bkwd (ct &); step fwd twd M on R (ct 2); step around M with L (ct 3). Repeat as long as desired.

Transition out of turn

It is possible to simply start the dance over after turning, but here is the transition that the man from Sjak used:

1

Opening out so that both face slightly LOD, M stamp fwd on L (ct 1). W step fwd on R. Lean fwd. Straighten up and M stamp bkwd on R (ct 2). W step back on L. This usually occurs at the beg of a musical phrase, but does not have to. It could also beg on ct 2 of a meas instead of ct 1.

Presented by Alix Cordray