

Gammal Polska

(Sweden)

Gammal polska (GAHM-mahl POHL-skah) means "Old Polska" and has been known in Scandinavia since the middle ages. It reigned supreme in Sweden as their national dance for over 2 centuries up to the middle 1800's. The Polska was finally supplanted by the waltz in the mid 19th century. After World War II the Hambo alone survived as a form of the polska dance in Sweden. In the 1970's, interest in polska dances revived and is now mainly preserved in the central and northern district of the country. The Old Polska contains the most fundamental of polska steps used in a partner turn. Gordon Tracie began researching this dance in 1950 and first introduced it at the 1962 University of the Pacific Folk Dance Camp and again in 1980.

RECORD: Viking V-821a; RCA INTS-1242 Side A/2 or 4; Odeon E-34262 Side A/1 or B/4;
Telstar TRS-11190 Side A/4 (Note-Band mislabeled as band 5). 3/4 meter.

FORMATION: Cpls in open pos at random about the floor, facing LOD, free hand at side.

STEPS: Open Polska (Försteg): Step fwd on L, heel contacting floor first (ct 1); keeping ball of R in contact with floor, roll fwd onto full L (ct 2); step fwd on R, ball of L remaining in place (ct 3).

This timing produces a smooth but syncopated or uneven walk. The movement is smooth and flowing and should not in any way be jerky or 'military' in character. Steps described for M, W on opp ft.

Closed Polska Turn (Rundpolska): Rotate once CW per meas as follows:

M: Step on L far out around ptr (bkwd in LOD) (ct 1); bring R heel beside L heel, toes 90°, and place some wt on R heel. Pivot 1/2 CW with wt on ball of L and R heel (ct 2); step on R slightly fwd on LOD (ct 3). Cue- L, both, R.

W: Ft together, wt on both (ct 1); step on R between M ft (fwd in LOD) (ct 2); step on L far out around ptr (bkwd in LOD) (ct 3). Cue- Both, R, L.

Basic Polska Closed Pos: Face ptr, ML hand on W upper R arm just below her shldr, MR around W waist. WL arm on M upper R arm, WR hand just below M shldr.

STYLING: All steps are danced with a very slight bend of knees so that both steps and turns are smooth with little or no bounce or emphasis on any ct. On the turns keep ft fairly close to floor, together, and do not fling ft outward. All movements are relaxed with flowing motion, yet firm and powerful.

As in the case of all cpl polskas, the M is the master of the dance and he must lead it firmly. The W in effect gets a 'free ride'. Lean away from ptr slightly in order to get a good firm swing on the turn.

MUSIC 3/4

PATTERN

Measures

INTRODUCTION Beg whenever desired

I. OPEN POLSKA LOD (Promenade)

any number In open pos, beg ML, WR, dance fwd in LOD with any number of Open Polska steps. A musical phrase is appropriate.

II. CLOSED POLSKA TURN

1 Transition: M step fwd on L across in front of ptr, turning 1/2 CW to face ptr and assume Basic Polska Closed Pos, W pause or hold. Wt on both ft (ct 1); continue turning CW with Closed Polska Turn (cts 2, 3).

any number Dance Closed Polska Turn CW progressing LOD any number of meas, one turn per meas. In order to keep progressing in LOD, both M and W must step alternately in LOD bkwd on L, and fwd in LOD on R.

1 Transition to Open Polska: Beg ML, WR, step LOD, releasing ML, WR hands to assume open pos (ct 1); proceed with Fig I (cts 2, 3).

Repeat dance alternating Open Polska and Polska Turn.