

Oige ja Vasemba

(Estonia)

Oige ja Vasemba (OH-ii-geh yah VAH-sehm-bah) means “right and left.” This dance was presented by Liina Teose at the 2024 Stockton Folk Dance Camp held at the University of the Pacific. Ullo Toomi, the father of Estonian folk dance, took the folkloric Oige ja Vasemba dance, in which dancers are moving in one direction only, and added steps to each section so that the dancers would return to their partners.

The dance was introduced by Walter Grothe at the 1957 Stockton Folk Dance Camp. It was also taught by Heidi Vorst at the 1992 Stockton Folk Dance Camp at an afternoon workshop.

Music: 2/4 meter Many versions of this popular Estonian song are available for download on the internet, including the recording made by Michael Herman’s Folk Orchestra in 1956.

Video: An internet search for ‘Oige ja Vasemba’ will yield multiple videos, including one of a mass dance at a stadium.

Formation: Circle of couples, W on M’s L, hands joined in V-pos.

Steps & A simple walking step, one step per count, two steps per measure.

Styling: Grand Right and Left: M face CCW, W face CW, each extending and joining R hands. Beg L, walk fwd two steps (cts 1, 2), passing R shldrs while pulling gently with R hand. Extend L hand to next person. Repeat cts 1 and 2 with same ftwk in same direction, pulling gently with L hand. Can be repeated until next movement is required.

| Meas | 2/4 meter | PATTERN |
|---|---|---------|
| INTRODUCTION. No action. Length of introduction will depend on the recording, but it is typically 2 measures. | | |
| I. CIRCLE LEFT AND RIGHT. | | |
| 1-8 | Beg L, walk 16 steps CW, one step per ct. Optional: Swing joined hands in on ct 1 and out on ct 2. | |
| 9-16 | Repeat meas 1-8 with the same ftwk in the opp. direction. | |
| II. INSIDE CIRCLE OF WOMEN, OUTSIDE CIRCLE OF MEN. | | |
| 1-8 | Beg L, W walk 2 steps twd ctr, forming an inner circle, hands in W-pos, palms to palm, continue walking 14 more steps CW, one step per ct. Simultaneously, M walk 16 steps CCW, beg L, while gradually joining hands with other M to form one circle outside the circle of W. | |
| 9-14 | Both circles reverse direction (M walking CW, W walking CCW) ending with M on ptr’s L. Maintain handhold. | |
| 15-16 | M step L, R slightly fwd while lifting joined hands over W and lower arms in front of W while W bend fwd slightly and step L, R bkwd under M’s arms. This forms a front basket hold, W’s arms under the M’s arms. | |

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III. WALKING IN BASKET HOLD.

1-16 Repeat footwork of Fig I, in front basket hold formation. During the last meas, release the basket hold formation and use the two remaining steps for M to face CCW and W to face CW joining R hands.

IV. GRAND RIGHT AND LEFT.

1-8 Beg L, Grand Right and Left 14 steps. With R hands joined with the 7th person, walk two steps to rotate CW half way as a couple. M are now facing CW, W facing CCW, R hands still joined.

9-16 Beg L, Grand Right and Left 14 steps. Use the last two steps to face ctr and join hands in V-pos.

Sequence: Dance as described above, repeating until the music ends. Bow to partner.

Note: This dance can be done as a mixer by eliminating the half-turn at the end of Fig IV, meas 1-8, and instead continuing the Grand Right and Left in the same direction through ct 16.