

Rühler Springer

(Germany)

Rühler Springer (ROO-ler SHPREENG-er) is a couple dance from the Province of Thüringen, and reportedly is the best known dance in this region. It was taught by Götz Zinser at the 2015 Stockton Folk Dance Camp. The name means the jumping dance from the town of Rühla (pop. 6355) which is near the larger town of Eisenach. The citizens of Rühla insist that the dance is theirs, but there is hardly a dance group in Thüringen that does not have this dance in their repertoire. Historical research has revealed that this dance has a long history, and Zinser provides descriptions from 1801, 1930, 1951, and 1953 in the Stockton syllabus. The earliest one refers to “how our forefathers did this dance.” It is therefore clear that the dance has changed repeatedly over its history. The version described here does not, for example, have any jumping figures in spite of the name, but in other versions jumps would be substituted typically in what here is Fig. II, measures 1 to 4. In addition to variations over time, there are many existing variations as well (see YouTube for some examples). In the spirit of this variation we describe, at the end of this description, is an alternative version of Fig. II that is somewhat more complex than the one described below. It is based on Zinser’s original dance description, and our notes and recollections of the dance as taught.

Music: 2/4 meter. CD: *German Folk Dances, Stockton 2015*, Track 19.

DVD: 2015 Stockton Folk Dance Camp video. Camp videos can be viewed in the library at University of the Pacific, or by contacting a camp participant who purchased them.

Formation: Couples in circle standing face-to-face with M’s back to center. M’s R and W’s L hands joined; free hands on hips.

Steps: **Polka:** Lift on M’s R and W’s L (on upbeat ct: ct 2,& of previous meas), step on M’s L to L and W’s R fwd twd ptr (ct 1), step on M’s R next to L, W’s L next to R (ct 1&), step on M’s L, W’s R in place, fwd, or around ptr (ct 2) depending on direction of dance and whether ptrs are turning as a cpl. Repeat with opp ft work (meas 2). Can be done in any direction.

Varsouvienne position: M and W face in same direction, W is to M’s R and slightly in front; M’s R hand holds W’s R at about W’s head height, and M’s L hand holds W’s L in front and at W’s shoulder to head height.

Styling: Exuberant.

Measures	2/4 meter	Pattern
1-4	Introduction. No action, except by end of Introduction joined hands are lifted and arms are extended backward.	
I.	<u>POLKA FACE-TO-FACE AND BACK-TO-BACK</u>	
1-7	Dance 7 Polka steps in LOD (CCW), starting with face-to-face followed by back-to-back; joined hands move fwd on transition from odd measures (face-to-face) to even measures (back-to-back), and backward on the transition from even to odd.	
8	Drop hand hold and take 2 steps (M R,L, W L,R) to turn away from ptr to end facing with M’s L and W’s R hands joined and extended backwards.	
9-15	Repeat meas 1-7 in CW (RLOD) direction, starting with polka face-to-face.	
16	Take 2 steps (M L,R, W R,L but W take no wt on L) making a tight turn away from ptr; end facing ptr with hands on hips.	

II. SIDE-TO-SIDE , SCUFF, STAMP, AND CPL TURNS

- 1 Starting with L, each dances one step-close-step to own L; end opposite next person in the other circle of dancers.
- 2 Tap or scuff trailing ft (R) fwd across in front of standing ft (ct 1); stamp same ft next to L. (ct 2).
- 3-4 Repeat meas 1-2 in opp direction with opp ftwk, returning to face ptr (W take wt on final stamp).
- 5-8 Ptrs join R hands (palm to palm) with forearms vertical and touching; in this position rotate CW once around with 4 Polka steps (M starting with L, W with R).
- 9-12 Repeat meas 1-4.
- 13-16 Repeat meas 5-8 but cpl turns once and a quarter around. On meas 16, M raises joined R hands and W turns to her R under his arm so that both face LOD, and join L hands to assume **Varsouvienne** position with M slightly behind ptr and somewhat to her L.

III. SIDEWAYS AND PEEK IN VARSOUVIENNE POS.

- 1 Ptrs dance step-close-step to L, with M taking smaller steps so that he ends up somewhat to the R of ptr.
- 2 Both extend and place R ft to R while leaning slightly away from each other, and W peek at ptr over R shoulder.
- 3-4 Repeat meas 1-2 in opp direction and with opp ftwk.
- 5-8 Release L hands and moving in LOD (CCW), dance 4 Polka steps with M turning ptr with R hands joined in 2 outside under arm turns (CW); M dances fwd without turns. At end, resume **Varsouvienne** pos as at end of Fig. II, meas 16.
- 9-16 Repeat meas 1-8, except that on meas 16 complete the second outside turn for the W, and then assume Closed Ballroom hold, with M on inside of circle.

IV. TURNING POLKA

- 1-12 Cpls dance 12 turning Polka steps moving in LOD (CCW). An option is to substitute pivots for some of the Polka steps. It is not necessary for cpls to maintain a fixed position in the circle of dancers, but only need to return to circle formation at end of first time through the dance.

Dance repeats one time. An optional gesture on the last measure of the dance is for the M to turn his ptr out (to her R) with his L arm and both pose.

An alternate version of Figure II:

II. SIDE-TO-SIDE , SCUFF, STAMP, AND CPL TURNS

- 1-4 Same as above description for these 4 measures.
- 5-8 Ptrs join R hands (palm to palm) with forearms vertical and touching; in this position rotate CW once and a half around with 4 Polka steps (M starting with either ft, W with R), ending in opp position with M facing toward ctr (free R ft).
- 9-12 Repeat meas 1-4 but both start with R and move first to R.
- 13-16 Repeat meas 5-8 with L hands joined as in meas 5-8 (M start with L, W with either ft), making a once and a quarter turn CCW; at end of meas 16, M turns to his L to face LOD (CCW) and ptrs keeping L hands joined, join R hands to assume **Varsouvienne** position facing LOD; M is slightly behind ptr and somewhat to her L (free L ft).