

FYRAMANNADANS (Dance for Four)  
Swedish Folk Dance for Two Couples

This lively polska for four persons might well be called "The Fastest Dance in the North", for in sheer speed of the turn it seems to have no counterpart. The Swedish folk-dancers' manual says of Fyramannadans: "It can without exaggeration be said that this simple, brisk and beautiful dance is one of our very oldest and most widespread dances, and a direct continuation of the slängpolska."

Originating hundreds of years ago, long before the waltz, the slängpolska (literally "flinging-polska") was primarily a couple dance which turned in either direction. Later it grew to encompass two or more couples. Nowadays, this interesting step, which folkdancers in Sweden call "Östgöta" step (after the province of Östergötland, East Gothia), is practically done L-Ward (CW), as in Fyramannadans.

Simple yet phenomenally effective, when performed well, this lively little number is without a doubt one of the most spectacular dances in Scandinavia today. It bears graphic testimony to the vitality and "drive" of genuine Swedish folkdancing.

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FYRAMANNADANS

PRONUNCIATION: FEER-a mahn-a dahns.

LAND: Sweden

CATEGORY: Small Group Dance

TRANSLATION: Four-person Dance

REGION: General throughout Sweden

SKILL LEVEL: Intermediate.

RECORD: Aqua Viking V 201 b, RCA EPS 78 "Fyramannadans"

MUSIC: 3/4

FORMATION: Two couples in a ring. For several sets, see below.

POSITIONS: As described in the text.

FOOTWORK: Same for M and W. L slängpolska (as described below)

CHARACTER: Vigorous, yet light and "airy".

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A. RING

*remember - the steel brace*

- 1 - 8 Hands joined firmly at shldr level with enough tension to maintain "V" in elbows, dancers facing squarely into center so as to move sidewise, 8 slängpolska steps to the L, turning ring CW.

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B. MILL:\*

- 1 Transition: With handclap on 1st beat, ring hold is released and each person turns to own L with one slångpolska step, making a full CCW turn around individually.
- 2 - 8 Facing center of set again, 8 - hand mill is formed by placing both hands on R arm of person to own L, R hand grasping the wrist and L hand grasping just above the elbow of said person, and mill is moved about CW with 7 more slångpolska steps. (or below)

C. BASKET:

- 9 Transition: With handclap on 1st beat, mill hold is released and each person turns to own L with one slångpolska step, making a full CCW turn around individually, as before.
- 10-16 In rapid succession, W grasp each other's hands with finger-grip (described below), M grasp each other's hands in same manner, below the W's hands', then W lift their hands over M's heads and place them behind M's backs, and M lift their hands over W's heads and place them behind W's backs (all hands should be held squarely in center of the back). All during this time, the set should continue to move about CW with 7 more slångpolska steps. (Men need to move in)
- 16-16 Basket thus formed is kept in motion for 8 more measures of slångpolska, during which time set can pick up speed. Without transition, hands are dropped from basket hold, ring is formed again (without ceasing CW movement), and dance is resumed at A.

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SLÅNGPOLSKA STEP, AS DANCED IN FYRAMANNADANS

As is characteristic of Swedish polska steps, the slångpolska is repetitive rather than alternating; that is, each step pattern begins on the same foot. Furthermore, in this step it is the same foot for both N and W, namely the Left.

Using today's dance terms the slångpolska can conveniently be described as a side polka step to the L (Count: "a-one & two") followed by a L-ward leap onto the R ft, crossing over in front of the L (Count: "three"), toes pointed directly twd the center of the circle at all times. As the R ft crosses over, the L ft is simultaneously lifted behind the R ankle.

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Throughout, the action is sideward (no "rumba shift"), dancers facing squarely into center of ring. Due to the great speed potential of the slångpolska step, exceptional lightness of feet is essential. Dancers should be up on their toes at all times, spending as little time as possible on the floor.

STEP PATTERN CHART FOR SLÅNGPOLSKA STEP:

Count:	ah	1	&	2	(&)	3
	/	/	/	/	/	/
Dance:	Hop R	- Step L	- Close R	- Step L	- Pause	- Leap R

FINGER-GRIP as used in basket figure: With fingers held tightly together, the hands are cupped and interlocked with the opp person's hands in the manner of opposing hooks. For convenience, the taller person may have palm down, the shorter one, palm up. (Note to the W: long artistic fingernails will leave a bad "impression" on the opposite person....)

FOR SEVERAL SETS IN PERFORMANCE: Swedish folkdance groups often use this procedure: Form two parallel lines of couples facing each other about 4 steps apart, and number the sets in 2's. Music is played 3 times thru. The 1st time only couples #1 dance, the 2nd time only couples #2 dance, and the 3rd time all couples dance. Besides being less of a strain for the dancers than dancing 3 times straight thru, this arrangement has a dramatic effect on onlookers. The hand hold on the Mill varies with local tradition. An alternate method is as follows:

- 2 - 8 Facing center of set, 8-hand Mill is formed by placing R hand on R wrist of person to the R, and L hand just above R elbow of person to the L, and Mill is moved about CW with 7 more slångpolska steps.

Presented by INGVAR SODAL.

Dance described by Gordon E. Tracie.  
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