

# HOIJAKKA / TRINDPOLSKA

*FINNISH*  
(Finnish: HOI-jahk-ka Swedish: TRIND-pohl-ska)

*Skandia CD, track 18*

## NOMENCLATURE

**Credible English Titles** Finnish: Ring polska Swedish: Step-polska.

## ETHNO-CULTURAL ATTRIBUTES

**Heritage** Finland, district of Österbotten / Pohjanmaa (East Bothnia).  
**U.S. Source** As learned in Finland in 1963 by Gordon E. Tracie, with the assistance of Mrs. Orvokki Komalainen, national director of Soumalainen Konsantassin Ystävät (the National Finnish Folkdance Society), Helsinki, and taught at Skandia Folkdance Society, Seattle.  
**Category** Traditional couple or group dance.  
**Motivation and application** Both recreational and performance-oriented.

## MUSICAL ATTRIBUTES

**Type** 12 beats per phrase. Described as **either**: Triple-meter (3/4), semiquaver (16th-note) polska, 4-plus-4 phrasing **or** Duple-meter (2/4). See Background Information, below.

## CHOREOLOGICAL ATTRIBUTES

**Function** Group dance or individual couple dance.  
**Character and form** Solid, but not heavy.  
**Footwork** Parallel.  
**Specific steps** Walking and buzz step.  
**Couple dance holds** Sidecar shoulder-to-shoulder hold (description under Formation, below).  
**Couple formation** Sidecar shoulder-to-shoulder hold (an equilateral hold): moving CW, partners are slightly to own L of each other with R shoulders adjacent, R arm around partner's waist, L hand on partner's shoulder. For moving CCW, reverse hold so L shoulders adjacent, L arm around partner's waist, R hand on partner's shoulder.  
**Group dance holds** Front basket hold (description under Formation, below).  
**Group formation** Three or more couples in a front basket hold: W's hands are joined with next W's hands on either side, M's hand are joined with next M's hands on either side, all in front, all held at about W's stomach level. The ring of

couples is thus interlocked. Two varieties are noted (See Background Information, below):

**Changing:** Moving CW: R arm over L, L arm under R. Moving CCW, reverse front basket hold to L arm over, R arm under.

**Men over:** The men's arms are all above the woman's, also described as farthest from the body.

## THE DANCE ROUTINE

COUNTS	ACTION
1 - 12	<p><b>A. Walking steps CW:</b></p> <p>Everyone facing obliquely to the L in basket hold (described above), beginning on R (inside) foot, 10 walking steps CW. On counts 11 and 12 all face inward, W walking 2 more steps CW (R, L) while M stamp R, L.</p>
13 - 24	<p><b>B. Buzz steps CW plus Step-hop:</b></p> <p>Facing center of circle and bringing R foot in front of L, all dance 10 R- foot side buzz-steps CW, pulling out at the waist and shoulders for greater effect. On count 11 all take a single step on the R foot, and on count 12 all hop on that (R) foot, while shouting "Hoi!" and turning to the R to face obliquely R. Couples, and some baskets, change hold. (The rotation direction is thus reversed).</p>
1 - 12	<p><b>C. Walking steps CCW:</b></p> <p>Everyone facing obliquely to the R in basket hold, beginning on L (the new inside) foot, 10 walking steps CCW. On counts 11 and 12 all face inward, W walking 2 more steps (L, R) while M stamp L, R.</p>
13 - 24	<p><b>D. Buzz steps CCW plus Step-hop:</b></p> <p>Facing center of circle and bringing L foot in front of R, all dance 10 L- foot side buzz steps CCW, pulling out at waist and shoulders. On count 11 all take a single step on the L foot, and on count 12 all hop on that (L) foot, while shouting "Hoi!" and turning obliquely to the L. Couples, and some baskets, change handhold.</p>
	<p>Dance continues at A., in original CW direction and repeats until music ends.</p> <p><b>Important:</b> Note that throughout the entire dance there is <b>one step</b> (walk, buzz step, or hop) on <b>each count</b> of the music. The music recommended has 12 beats in each phrase and two phrases, or 24 steps, in each direction.</p>

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This dance is danced in place. Quite ancient, this pre-dates by some centuries the *rundpolska* which progresses in LOD around the room (as in a waltz). In both the Swedish and Finnish districts of Finland it



is traditionally danced as an *efterdans* (after-dance) to minuets and quadrilles, rather than a dance unto itself.

Finnish folk dance authorities contend that indigenous Finnish music was always in duple-meter, and that triple-meter rhythms derived from the Swedes, who have since prehistoric times shared parts of the land known as Finland (*Suomi* in Finnish). Perhaps this explains why the music is usually phrased as triple (3/4) meter semiquaver polska in Swedish texts. In Finland, it is, instead, more often written in duple (2/4) meter. Either way; the melody and the dance are the same.

The Finnish name *Hoijakka* quite likely comes from the exuberant cry "Hoi!" (equivalent to the Swedish "Hej" and English "Hey!") which marks the change of rotational direction.

Gordon noted that, traditionally, it was up to the leader (or foremost dancer in a group) to determine the timing of changes in the sequences. Therefore, if there is ample music, the steps may be danced twice as long in each part, that is 24 counts instead of 12 counts where described above. Inasmuch as each set is an independent dancing unit and moves in place, all sets need not follow the same timing. It is esthetically desirable that changes occur on an even phrase.

Also important is safety. This dance can move very quickly. Unless a whole circle agrees on who the foremost dancer is, and what the signal for a step change is, caution suggests that it follow only the step counts above.

When danced as an *efterdans* to a quadrille, people quite naturally joined circles with their partner. When the dance forms standing on its own; Americans, and natives here from Sweden and Finland, often join circles without. The circle may then not alternate men and women. We do not know if this is traditional, but it is a pleasant way for unevenly matched groups to dance. As a matter of courtesy; if you join a circle by yourself, please do not split partners.

This is a form of dance which, in Sweden, would be designated a *fläckpolska* (a polska danced "on the spot"), also commonly called *slängpolska* (swing-polska) in southern Sweden.

## Basket Hold

The easiest way to form a front basket hold is to stand in a circle facing the center, then put each of your hands in front of each neighbor's stomach, without crossing your own arms. Grab the other hand that is there, that of the person's on the far side of each neighbor. Many written directions are more specific.

For this 1997 updated Hoijakka description, we have accepted both the M arms over W basket hold and the basket that varies between; CW movement R over L under, and CCW movement L over R under.

Some of Gordon Tracie's hand-written notes for Hoijakka refer to "Dbl Ring" as the handhold, which his notes then describe: M join hands front of W, W join hands, under M's, in front of M. A supporting source for this *dubbelringfattning* (double-ring handhold) is shown in photo 5, page 83 of Finlands Svenska Folkdikting VI, Folkdans. B. Dansbeskrivningar, Helsingfors, 1938 (Yngvar Heikel's book). Gordon's later notes describe a second version: M join hands in front of W, W join hands over M's, in front of M. (This hold is also supported, by photo 4, page 82 of Heikel's book).

Others of Gordon's hand-written notes, titled "'Trinddans (polska)' ('Hoijakka' same as Trindpolska),"

describe the front basket for CW movement as R over, L under. For CCW movement; hold is L over, R under. This hold is also described in Heikel's book for Trinddans/Trinkpolska, page 51 (with photo) and page 67. The front basket hold for Trinddans; *Trinddansfattning (Polska fattning i ring)* (Trinddans hold, Polska hold in a ring), is also described as R over L for CW, L over R for CCW, on page 11 of Folkdansterninologi by *Finlands Svenska Folkdansring*, Helsingfors, 1981.

If you dance the circle holding R over L when moving CW, and L over R when moving CCW, then at the change of direction; **dancers must let go of hands and reverse the grasp**. At least once, Gordon taught a version where dancers clapped their own hands at the cry "Hoi!", then turned and regripped as they went the other way, all in a single beat. This looks great in performance. Inexperienced dancers have difficulty safely making such a grasp. Once the circle is moving, centrifugal force makes it even more difficult to rejoin hands. Teachers may want to teach handhold changes only to experienced dancers.

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**Hojjakka**

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