

PER SPELMANN (PEHR THE FIDDLER)
(Norway)

Per Spelmann (Pehr Spale-mahn), Per (Peter) Fiddler, is a song-dance from Norway. It is now general throughout Norway. Before the advent of couple dances and quadrilles, folk in the Northern countries danced in ring formation while singing heroic ballads--a popular Middle Ages practice throughout Europe. The art of the ballad-dance disappeared completely in Norway at one time, but was brought back in this century by Hulda Garborg, who devoted her life to the study of the Norse ballad-dance heritage as still found in living tradition on the Faeroes, those Norse-populated islands between Iceland and the Shetlands. Here is a typical contemporary Norwegian "songdans" (song-dance), created within the past 40 years, but based on the ancient ballad steps, and sung to a traditional Norwegian folksong. Instrumental accompaniment is never used with these dances, and the singing, generally in unison, is done with feeling and gusto.

Source: Described in "Norske Folkedansar," Oslo, 1956.

Record: None, dance is sung "live."

Formation: For any number of persons, single circle facing ctr. Hands joined with "light hold" thus, M holds arms straight out, elbows bent and hands open, into which W place their hands so they are topmost. Footwork is parallel throughout.

Steps: Norse Ballad Step No. 1, Step-swing.
Norse Ballad Step No. 1: Basically the old "two to the L, one to the R" pattern, but with added rest in place. The footwork is as follows: Step L to the L, place R beside it; repeat, step R to the R, place L beside it then (in place) raise and lower body by going up and down on toes.

An understanding of the 3/4 time Pols (Swedish: Polska) type rhythm so common to the northern Scandinavian lands, will assist in interpretation. The ct is essentially: "(three) - One - ... - three - One - ... - three", etc. Projected on the first line of the verse, the step-music relationship is thus:

'	1	2	3 /	.	2	3 /	1	2	3 /	1	2
Per	Spel-	mann	han	Had-	de ei	Ein-	as-	o	Ku	--	
	L	-	cl R	L	-	cl R	R	-	cl L	(up)	(down)

These ballad steps should be danced with a relaxed "springy" quality, yet not without a certain dignity. The posture is erect, but not stiff, and should be the antithesis of a "military" stance.

continued...

Styling: Graceful but with verve and animation.

PER SPELMANN (PEHR THE FIDDLER) (CONT.)

PER SPELMANN

(Original Text)

Norwegian Folk Song

1. :/: Per spelmann han hadde ei einaste ku. :/:
 :/: Han bytte bort kua, fekk fela igjen. :/:

Refrain: Du gode, gamle fiolin, du fiolin,
 Du fela mi.

2. :/: Per spelmann han spela, og fela ho let, :/:
 :/: Så gutane danse og gjentene gret. :/:

Refrain:

3. :/: Og om eg blir gamal som stein under bru, :/:
 :/: Så alori eg byter bort fela for ku. :/:

Refrain:

PEHR THE FIDDLER

(Translation)

From the Norwegian "Per Spelmann"

- :/: Pehr Fiddler, he had but one cow to his name. :/:
 :/: He bartered his cow, got his fiddle again. :/:

Refrain: You good old, good old vi-o-lin, you vi-o-lin,
 You fiddle mine.

- :/: Pehr Fiddler, he played so the fiddle, it sighed. :/:
 :/: The lads fell to dancin', the lasses, they cried. :/:

Refrain:

- :/: And if I grow old as the stones on the shore, :/:
 :/: I'll ne'er trade my fiddle for a cow anymore! :/:

Refrain:

(Adapted to the English by Gordon E. Tracie)

Measures Pattern
 (3/4)

I. Verse

- 1 - 4 All dance Norse Ballad Step No. 1 four times through,
 1 - 4 (1 full step, 4 meas).
 5 - 8
 5 - 8

II. Refrain (Omkvædet)

- 17 - 22 Beg with wt on L, all dance 6 step-swings in place.
 Repeat entire dance 2 more times through.

Presented by: Gordon E. Tracie