

Polonez

(Poland)

The Polonez is the oldest of Poland's five national dances, finding its musical roots in old church hymns and Christmas carols, if not earlier. The name is derived from the French who named it “La danse polonaise” which translates to “The Polish dance.” The dance, as well as the name became popular in royal courts across Europe including its native Poland where they too adopted the name, and called it “Polonez.” Prior to being elevated to this regal status, the Polonez had many different forms and names and was danced by peasants in every part of the country. Variations of the dance such as the “chodzony” can be found in the regional dances. Several polonaises were written by famous composers of Poland such as Chopin, Ogiński, Stefani, Moniuszko, and many others.

Pronunciation: poh-LOH-nez

Music: *Folk Dances from Poland, Vol. 1, Band 1* 3/4 meter
Music from the film “Pan Tadeusz”—composer Wojciech Kilar.

Formation: Circle of cpls, M standing to L of ptr in 1st position (see Hand formations below). All dancers facing ctr of circle.

Styling: The Polonez should be danced with elegance and grace. Dancers stand tall and proud.

Steps: Walking step: Wt on L, in preparation for the 1st ct, the dancer very gently bends L knee while extending R ft fwd, knee slightly bent until it becomes straight. The ft is moved fwd with toes just above floor level.

Place R ft firmly on the floor and shift wt onto it, while straightening the L knee (ct 1). This step is the longest one in relation to the next two steps.

Take a step fwd with the L and shift body wt onto it (ct 2).

Take a step fwd with the R ft and shift body wt onto it (ct 3).

The walking step is continued using opp ftwk. Step can also be done beg with the L.

Short Bow: Step on R to R, leaving L ft in place (ct 1); bring L ft beside R ft (ct 2); M bow to ptr by gently nodding head, W bow to ptr by slightly bending knees (ct 3). Bow can also be done beg with the L ft to L.

Long Bow: A long bow is similar to the short bow except that it takes 2 meas. The first meas is used to perform the sideways motion (cts 1,2); hold (ct 3). The whole of the 2nd measure is used by M to bow his head while W bends her knees in a curtsy.

Hand formations: 1st position: Cpl stand beside each other with M on W's L. M's R arm is extended fwd bent slightly at the elbow with the palm facing in. W extends her L hand fwd, bent slightly at the elbow and rests it upon M's R hand. The joined hands are held slightly below shldr level during the dance and should not move, however they should also not be stiff. M's other arm extends out to side parallel to the floor and W holds her skirt out with her other arm.

2nd position: W's hand hold is similar to 1st position. From 1st position M does one walking step across in front of ptr without letting go of her L hand with his R hand and stands on her R with his L arm extended to the L behind her in a protective fashion. To return to 1st position he crosses back in front of his ptr to the L by stamping on his L leg on ct 1 and gesturing widely with his L arm.

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3rd position: Standing facing each other, cpl extend both arms out in front of them parallel to floor and join M's R hand to W's L hand and M's L hand to W's R hand with elbows slightly bent to form a circle.

MeasPatternINTRODUCTION

- 1-2 Ptrs wait in place facing the ctr of the circle in 1st pos.
 3-4 Turning to face each other without letting go of joined hands, they do a Long Bow.
 5-6 Return to starting pos facing the ctr of the circle.

FIGURE 1

- 1-2 Beg with outside ft (M L, W R) in 1st pos, do 2 walking steps to the ctr of the circle.
 3-4 Do a 1/2 turn twd ptr switching hands (join M's L with W's R) and take 2 walking steps back to starting pos.
 5-6 Do a 1/2 turn twd ptr switching hands back to orig pos; take 1 walking step twd ctr of circle and take 1 step bkwd to starting pos.
 7-8 In 3rd pos, cpl turn CW.
 9-10 M repeat meas 1 and 2 by themselves, while W go bkwd 2 meas out of the circle.
 11 M repeat meas, 3 while W take 1 walking step back twd ptr.
 12 Short bow (M to R, W to L).
 13 Each dancer does 1 walking step to R.
 14 Each dancer does 1 walking step to L.
 15-16 In 3rd pos, cpl turns CW.

FIGURE 2

- 1-3 M stand for 3 meas facing ctr of circle while W does 3 walking steps around him CCW to end on outside of circle behind ptr.
 4 M make a 1/4 turn CW (R shldr back) to end facing LOD, while W do 1 complete revolution in place to the L (CCW) to also end facing LOD.

FIGURE 3

- 1-2 In 1st pos facing LOD and beg with outside ft (M's L, W's R), cpl take 2 walking steps.
 3-6 While continuing walking step, cpl transition to 2nd pos on meas 3 and remain in this pos.
 7 While continuing walking step, cpl transition back to 1st pos with M stamping on ct 1.
 8 Short bow in RLOD (M's R, W's L).
 9 Switch places with ptr by crossing with the R shldr.
 10 Make a Short Bow (M L, W R).
 11 Switch places with ptr by crossing with the L shldr.
 12 Open the circle back up with all dancers facing the ctr in 1st pos.

FIGURE 4

- Cpls begin this figure in a circle facing each other with M's back to the ctr of the circle and W facing in.
 1-3 Each dancer does 3 walking steps to L.

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- 4 Turn in place 1 complete revolution CCW.
- 5-7 Each dancer does 3 walking steps to R.
- 8 Turn in place 1 complete revolution CW to end back in front of ptr.
- 9- 12 In 3rd pos, cpl take 4 walking steps (2 revolutions) CCW in place.
- 13-16 W lead ptr out of individual circles to form one large circle in which all dancers join hands parallel to the floor facing the ctr. This is accomplished in 4 walking steps in LOD.
- 17-20 Releasing hands, W make a 1/2 turn to the R (right shoulder back) on meas 17 to face outside the circle and rejoin hands with both M in front and in back of her in the circle. The walking step in LOD continues throughout.
- 21-22 M take 2 walking individually to the ctr of the circle, while W take 2 meas fwd out of the circle.
- 23 Both M and W make a 1/2 turn to R to face each other and take 1 walking step back twd each other.
- 24 Short Bow (M to R, W to L).

FIGURE 5

- 1-2 Dancers do the Long Bow except that instead of simply moving to their side, they complete 1 revolution CCW to their L and then make a long deep bow to their partner.

Sequence:

The Polonaise is done once from the beg to end using the pattern described below to link it all together. It is necessary to change the ending pos of Fig 1 on occasion in order to successfully ensure smooth transition from one fig to the next. I have noted the ending pos for each below:	This pattern can be confusing when learning the dance for the first time, so i have broken it down in the following manner so that it is easier to remember. The main body of the dance consists of Fig 3 followed immediately by Fig 1 to give the following pattern:
1. Introduction 2. Fig 1 (cpls end facing ctr of circle)	Opening of the Polonaise (Intro + Fig 1)
3. Fig 2	Small Transition using Fig 2 (only 4 meas)
4. Fig 3	Main body of the dance done twice (Fig 3, Fig 1, Fig 3, Fig 1)
5. Fig 1 (cpls end facing LOD)	
6. Fig 3	
7. Fig 1 (cpls end facing each other with M's back to ctr of circle)	
8. Fig 4	Large Transition using Fig 4 (24 meas)
9. Fig 3	Main body of the dance once (Fig 3, Fig 1)
10. Fig 1 (cpls end facing each other with M's back to ctr of circle)	
11. Fig 5	The ending using Fig 5 (Long Fancy bow)

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