

ADA'S MAZUR

Arranged and taught by Ada Dziewanowska.

Record: Muza XL-0003 "Pożegnanie Ojczyzny" (Farewell to My Country), side B, band 1, "Nie masz tańca nad mazura" (There is no Dance Like Mazur), 3/4 time.

Mazur [mah-zoor] is a Polish national group dance. It has many figures which require a set amount of couples. It began in the villages of the Mazury region, the northern part of the Mazowsze plain, in central Poland. The peasants of Mazowsze were hardworking, thrifty, cautious, stubborn and conservative, but with an underlying fire, a typically Polish trait. This underlying fire, combined with pride, dignity and gallantry, is also the main characteristic of the mazur. The dance's origin is a song, followed by running steps which quickly cover a lot of ground (the plains are spacious!). The mazur, right to the present day, retains this characteristic of rushing forward and covering a lot of ground. One has to have a lot of room to be able to perform and to really enjoy the dance. That is why, in olden times, it was also called the goniony (chasing), or szumny (noisy, boisterous), or gniewus (angry) dance. The third trait, still preserved, is that the man's part is more difficult than the woman's. All his dancing should be done in a straight posture, in a both swift and floating way, and a graceful but manly manner. While he does all his intricate steps he must never forget about being attentive and considerably courteous to his partner.



The peasant mazur was quickly adopted by the gentry and the military all over Poland who polished up its style. Various regions contributed different figures. But some old figures linked, for instance, with the wedding ritual were also preserved. When, in the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th century, because of its central geographical location, Warsaw was chosen to succeed Kraków as Poland's capital, the mazur moved even to the palace of the king and became a court dance, still more stylized and further embellished with more figures. All this changed the dance's character and it actually ceased to be a folk dance in the true meaning of the word, but became a demonstrative ballroom dance. Even the words of the Polish national anthem were written (in 1797) to an old folk mazur tune.

By the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century mazur spread all over the world: in England, under Queen Victoria's reign, and in the United States, in the White House, introduced by Dolly Madison. It became also an inspiration for the composers of orchestral and ballet music. Frederick Chopin's mazurkas are the most striking example.

Before World War II, mazur was still done at Polish balls, more in a military style. The writer still has exhilarating memories of participation in this elegant dance in those times. The most popular tune used then was the "Biały Mazur" (White Mazur) by W. Osmański, named so, as, traditionally the mazur would end the ball, when the "white" light of the dawn appeared.

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In present day Poland, old mazur melodies are also used and new ones are being composed. The dance is mainly seen in performance by various folk dance groups who present it in three different styles: either in the kontusz -- the ceremonial dress of the Polish nobility during the 16th to 18th centuries, or in lancers' uniforms, or in any folk costume from central Poland. In the last version, both men and women perform the same steps. Mazur's steps are difficult, however, and it often takes several years to master them all well.

The tune used for this arrangement is a contemporary one, and only a few figures of the many existing ones have been chosen.

Mazur steps used:

- Basic step, bieg mazurowy [byeg mah-zoo-roh-vy]: smooth running steps (3 steps/meas.) starting with a small leap-jump on the outside ft; the phrase is always ended with 2 stamps and a hold.
- Hołubiec w prawo [hoh-woo-byets fprah-voh] - ct 1: one heel click with Rft; ct 2: slide Rft to R and step on it; ct 3: step on Lft near the Rft.
- Hołubiec w lewo [hoh-woo-byets vleh-voh] - same pattern starting with Lft and moving to L.
- Zesuwny [zeh-soov-ny] - ct 1: slide parallel feet away from each other; ct 2: click them together parallel; ct 3: hold.

Starting position: Couples around the room in LOD, inside hands joined pointing backward, outside fist on own hip, partners facing each other; sets of 2 couples working together.

Measures

PART I (Three 16-measure phrases)

Four measures of Intro Music:

- 1 Hold.
 - 2 Ct 1: stamp with outside ft; ct 2: hold; ct 3: stamp with inside ft.
 - 3 Same pattern starting with inside ft.
 - 4 While turning to face LOD and thrusting joined arms forward ct 1: stamp with outside ft; ct 2: stamp with inside ft; ct 3: hold.
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- 1-8 7 bieg steps and 2 stamps & hold.
 - 9-16 Repeat meas. 1-8 but at end each set of 2 couples gets into karoca [kah-roh-tsah] (coach) formation: Men join outside hands, Women do likewise, all face LOD.
 - 17-20 4 bieg steps first couple leading.
 - 21-23 With 3 bieg steps first couple casting back.
 - 24 2 stamps & hold.
 - 25-32 Repeat meas. 17-24 with second couple leading and casting back; at end of meas. 32 join hands in a circle of all the couples.
 - 33-36 4 hołubiec step to R.
 - 37-39 Błyskawica łomżyńska [bwis-kah-vee-tsah wohm-zhin-skah] ("lightning" turn from Łomża): Man faces out, with L hand clasps Woman's R hand in back of her, his R elbow high, and with 3 bieg steps couple does one CCW turn.
 - 40 2 stamps & hold getting back into circle formation with joined hands.
 - 41-48 Repeat meas. 33-40.



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Measures

PART II (Two 12-measure phrases)

- 1-4 Intro music: get into the Krakowska figura [krah-kohf-skah fee-goo-rah] (figure from Kraków) formation: 1st Man of each set of 2 couples stands between 2 Women holding nearest hand, 2nd Man stands alone, fists on hips.
- 1-3 1st Man and 2 Women move into center with 3 bieg steps, all starting with Rft.
- 4 2 stamps & hold while nodding head to the others in circle.
- 5-7 3 bieg steps backing out.
- 8 2 stamps & hold: trio forms a small circle.
- 9-11 With 3 bieg steps circle moves CCW.
- 12 Circle opens and each Woman joins nearest hand with nearest 2nd Man. WITH THE SAME MUSIC 2nd Man is doing the following:
- 1-3 3 zesuwny steps.
- 4 2 stamps & hold facing LOD.
- 5-7 3 holubiec steps to L, toward center, R (trailing) arm extended diagonally.
- 8 2 stamps & hold, R fist returns on hip.
- 9-11 Repeat meas. 5-7, opposite direction, footwork and arm.
- 12 2 stamps & hold: face center, join hands with nearest 2 Women.
- 13-24 Repeat pattern of meas. 1-12 (2nd Man now dances with 2 Women, 1st Man is alone).

PART III - Repeat Part I.

PART IV (Same music as Part II - 24 measures)

- 1-4 Intro music: repeat stamps as in Intro to Part I, while partners join L hands, Woman faces LOD, Man faces Woman's shoulder, his R arm extended in back of her.
- 1-3 Man: 3 holubiec steps to L, Woman: 3 bieg steps forward.
- 4 2 stamps & hold: get into the position of blyskawica kowicka [bwis-kah-vee-tsah woh-veets-kah] ("lightning" turn from Kowicz) - both hands joined, stand L side to L side, R elbows high.
- 5-7 With 3 bieg steps couple turns CCW.
- 8 2 stamps & hold, change sides.
- 9-11 Repeat meas. 5-7 turning CW.
- 12 2 stamps & hold getting into position as in meas. 1.
- 13-23 Repeat meas. 1-11.
- 24 End with R hands joined, Man on one knee, his L arm extended diagonally to side.



Dance introduced in 1968 by Ada Dziewanowska. Assistance in writing the directions by Mary M. McKenna and Conny Taylor. Please do not reproduce them without Ada's permission: 41 Katherine Road, Watertown, Mass. 02172, tel. (617)923-9061.