

ADA'S Polonez

Arranged and taught by Ada Dziewanowska.

Record: Muza XL-0203, side A, band 1, Ogiński's Polonez "Pożegnanie Ojczyzny," [poh-zehhg-nah-nye oy-chyhz-nyh] (Farewell to My Country), 3/4 time.

Polonez [poh-loh-nez], the Polish national "Grand March," is Poland's oldest dance in 3/4 time, dating back to the fifteenth century, and is derived from the peasant walking dance, the chodzony. The music for chodzony was simple, slow, and even in rhythm, which made the dance dignified, serious, but almost monotonous. It was first written in 2/4 time. Later on, the rhythm was changed to 4/4: one step on each of the first three beats of the measure with a pause on the fourth beat. The peasant chodzony, sometimes also called wolny (slow), okragły (round), or polski (Polish), was usually done with singing. It was always part of wedding and other family rituals, and various communal ceremonies. It was an honor to be the leader, the wodzirej [voh-jee-ray], and usually an older man was chosen. He played an important role, as he led the couples into intricate, moving, winding, serpentine patterns.

From Poland, the peasant chodzony migrated to neighboring countries: to Morawy (Moravia, presently part of Czechoslovakia) and to Łużyce (Lusatia, presently in East Germany), where it became almost its national dance.

In Poland, from the village folk the chodzony was taken up by the nobility. First it was done as a slow, triumphant procession of knights, with all the elements of a medieval marching dance. It is said that in 1574, during the coronation of King Henry Valois, in the royal castle of Kraków, it was danced for the first time with ladies. In this way dignitaries of the state and their wives were introduced to the new French king, who came to rule Poland. This was also the first time that the polonez was danced in 3/4 time. From that time on, it became a court dance and was used to open all great, stately balls. The music became more elaborate, livelier, and acquired a wider range, the steps became embellished and numerous new figures choreographed; singing was eliminated, but facial expression and hand gestures became important.

The polonez reached the peak of its development by the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries. The lovely music and the graceful movement of the dancing enchanted foreigners and it spread all over Europe under its French name, polonaise. Practically all great composers and choreographers tried their hand at it and, of course, Chopin made it famous. It also reached Sweden during the reign of the Swedish dynasty of Waza kings in Poland; even now, there exists a Swedish singing folk dance, called the "polska."

The tradition of polonez survived all the political and social changes that took place in Poland throughout the centuries, and it has remained the queen of Polish dances to this day. It is still danced in present-day Poland: older people remember it, young people learn it through participation in numerous folk dance groups. Research on the old figures is continued and even contemporary music is composed. The polonez has its triumphant hour every year, when literally thousands of couples in folk costumes dance it in a stadium during the annual harvest celebrations, the all-Poland dożynki, held in a different city each year.

The polonez "Farewell to my Country," used for this arrangement, is an old piece of music, known and beloved by every Pole. It has an interesting format of 10- and 8- and 6-measure phrases. It was composed in 1794, by Michał Kleofas Ogiński (1765-1833), an aristocratic man of wealth and a diplomat. He created this haunting melody, in a nostalgic mood, after the downfall of the first Polish insurrection, when he was about to leave his fatherland for Italy to continue the struggle for Polish independence abroad.

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Basic Polonez Step (1 measure): Both start with outside ft; ct 1: dip the inside knee and stretch the outside leg, sliding the pointed ft, and step; ct 2: step pointing the toes; ct 3: step pointing the toes. Next measure: repeat starting with inside ft.
Bow at the end of the 10-meas. phrase: ct 1: step fwd on a straight inside leg; ct 2: dip back on the outside ft; ct 3: step fwd on straight inside leg (which right away starts to dip on 1st ct of new phrase).



Starting position: Couples entering in line or around the room moving in LOD, inside hands joined pointing fwd, Man's outside arm extended to side, or fist on his hip, Woman holds her skirt; or their L hands joined pointing fwd, Man's R arm extended behind the Woman's back.

Wodzirej [voh-jee-ray] (the leader) calls the figures. Suggested figures:

Para za para [pah-rah zah pah-ron]: MARCH of couples around the room.

Panie do śródeczka [pa-nye doh shroh-dech-kah]: LADIES STEP INSIDE the circle helped by their partners and move RLOD walking on their tip toes with smooth, tiny steps, one to each ct. Meanwhile Men move in LOD with regular polonez step, their L fists on their hips and R arms extended diagonally upwards. When partners meet Man takes Woman's L hand with his R hand, they turn in place CCW and resume movement in LOD.

Para w lewo, para w prawo [pah-rah vle-voh pah-rah fprah-voh]: Down the center, COUPLE LEFT AND COUPLE RIGHT, and when the two lines meet . . .

Brama [brah-mah]: One row makes a GATE for the other row by lifting the joined hands and when they meet again, the other row makes the gate.

Czwórkami [chfoor-kah-mee]: When they meet again, march down the center again, IN FOURS.

Gwiazda [gvyahz-dah]: Make a L-hand STAR formation (4 abreast) and move in LOD.

Kółeczko [koo-wech-koh]: Join hands in a CIRCLE; w lewo [vle-voh]: MOVE IN RLOD.

Ślimak [shlee-mahk]: Leader leads the "SNAIL" until the circle starts walking in LOD.

Para za para [pah-rah zah pah-ron]: MARCH of couples.

Trójkąt [trooy-kont]: TRIANGLE: Inside hands joined; meas. 1: with a big dip Man crosses with L ft in front of Woman under the joined arms, she does the step in place; meas. 2: Man moves backwards, fists on hips, Woman moves forward, holding her skirt; meas. 3: Man moves forward at a L diagonal, Woman turns in place CW, extending arms to sides; meas. 4: Man takes Woman's L hand with his L hand and extends his R arm in back as they move forward together. At the beginning of next meas. Man takes again Woman's L hand with his R hand. Repeat the whole figure one or three more times.

Zmiana miejsc [zmyah-nah myeysts]: CHANGE PLACES: Inside hands joined; meas. 1: couple moves in LOD; meas. 2: Woman steps in front of Man making half-a-turn CCW and finishes on his L side, facing LOD, Man does the step almost in place; meas. 3: couple moves in LOD; meas. 4: facing LOD Woman steps in front of Man under the joined arms, back to original place on his R side, Man does the step almost in place; meas. 5: couple moves forward in LOD; meas. 6: Man takes Woman's L hand with his L hand and

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extends his R arm in back as they move backward in RLOD; meas. 7 and 8: with 2 polonez steps couple does a full CCW turn in place, Man moving backward. At the beginning of next measure, Man takes again Woman's L hand with his R hand. Repeat the whole figure from the beginning or start the next figure.

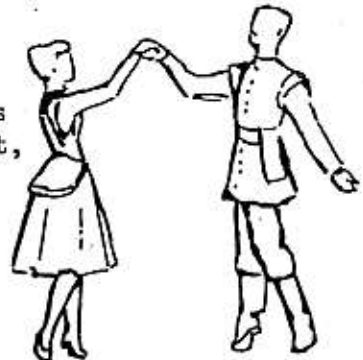


each other for 4 meas.; 5th meas. stepping in place change hands and direction; starting with L ft walk CW for 4 meas.; with R hands still joined bow starting with L ft for both.

Another Brama [brah-mah]: down the center, leading couple lifts the joined hands and the second couple walks under this GATE and in turn lifts their joined hands; rest of the couples follow in like manner.

Para za para [pah-rah zah pah-ron]: MARCH of couples around the room.

Ukion [ook-wohn]: Big or final BOW done with the 10-meas. phrase: partners join L hands, elbows bent, palms up; starting with R ft they walk with polonez step CCW around



This can be the end or couples can march away, or Grand R & L can be done here, followed by marching or other figures. Depending on number of couples and figures record must be played more than once.

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