

# GUSTAF'S SKÅL or GUSTAV'S SKÅL

(GOOSE-tafs skoal)

*Skandia* CD, track 16

## NOMENCLATURE

**Credible English Title** Toast to King Gustav.

## ETHNO-CULTURAL ATTRIBUTES

**Heritage** Swedish.  
**U.S. Source** As learned in Sweden in 1951 by Gordon E. Tracie and taught at Skandia Folkdance Society, Seattle.  
**Category** Court dance which has evolved to the "folk" level.  
**Motivation and application** Recreational.

## MUSICAL ATTRIBUTES

**Type** Duple-meter.

## CHOREOLOGICAL ATTRIBUTES

**Function** Square dance with mixer potential.  
**Character and form** Feigned pomp, frolicking.  
**Footwork** Opposite.  
**Specific steps** Walking, omdansnings ("dancing around") step: see below.  
**Dance holds** Simple hand hold. Skater's hold. Shoulder-waist hold (see Appendix A).  
**Formation** Four couples in square set, all facing center of square. Each couple's inside hands joined, shoulder height, W to R of M. Free hands always on hips, palms down with fingers forward, thumb back.  
**Primary couples** stand at right angles to front or the head of the hall.  
**Secondary couples** stand with back to and facing Front.  
 The Swedish positions for Primary and Secondary couples in a square are the reverse of the American Square dance positions.

## THE DANCE ROUTINE

MEASURES	ACTION
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	<b>Part I. Quadrille:</b>
	<b>A. Forward and Back ("Honors");</b>
1 - 2	Primary couples, beginning on outside foot, walk 4 steps forward toward one another, bowing slightly to opposites on last beat.
3 - 4	Return to places with 4 walking steps backward, bowing slightly to partner on last beat.
5 - 8	Secondary couples perform same action as above (1 - 4).
1 - 8	Entire figure repeated. (The cry "Skål" with raised outside hand, this second time, is optional).
	<b>B. Arch and through and partner turns:</b>
9 - 12	Secondary couples form an arch with inside hands. Primary couples walk forward toward one another, separate from own partner, take opposite person by inside hand, and go through nearest arch ( to M's left, W's right), separate on outside and return to own places to rejoin partner. <b>Note:</b> All this must be done in 8 walking steps.
13 - 16	Primary couples immediately assume closed shoulder-waist hold, and with stamp on 1st beat of 1st measure, dance 4 <u>omdansnings</u> steps (described below) around in place. Secondary couples meanwhile stand in place awaiting their turn.
9 - 16	Repeat B. as above, except Primary couples form arch and Secondary couples dance through, followed by Secondary couples omdansning.
	<b>Part II. Quadrille:</b> Entire figure repeated A. + B., as above
	<b>Part III. Quadrille:</b> Entire figure repeated A. + B., as above
	<b>Part IV. Quadrille:</b> Entire figure repeated A. + B., as above
	<b>Part V. Promenade with Partner-turn:</b>
	<b>A. Promenade around set:</b>
1 - 8	Couples with skater's hold (M on inside, W outside, facing CCW, R arm over, L arm under), beginning on outer foot, promenade 15 walking steps forward in LOD (CCW), then on 16th count, partners make half turn individually toward each other to face RLOD (CW), retaining handhold so M remains on inside, W on outside, and promenade with 16 walking steps back to original place.
	<b>B. Partner turns:</b>
9 - 16	In closed shoulder-waist hold, with stamp on 1st count of 1st measure, couples dance 16 omdansnings steps around in place. ( <b>Note:</b> tempo may accelerate at end).
9 - 16	

**Omdansnings** step (pronounced oom-dahns-nings, oo as in "look"): pattern is Both-R- Both-R, etc., for lady as well as gent during partner turn (*omdansning* means dancing around). Counting 2 beats to a measure, here's how you do it: on the 1st beat jump firmly onto both feet, keeping them close together, the L somewhat ahead of the R. On the 2nd beat leap onto R foot, slightly lifting L foot behind, and so on. Pull back at the waist (in shoulder-waist position, see notes in Shoulder-Waist Hold, Appendix A), turning CW in place, and making about half a turn on every measure. Feet should be kept close to floor at all times. This is not a vigorous step - it should be done lightly, fully relaxed in feet and body.

**"Mixer" Potential:** Additional fun may be had in this dance by allowing extra gents or ladies from the 'delines to "cut in" just when two partners separate to pass through the arch (Figure II, end of A.) and before they have time to come around back to home place. Former gent, or lady, is thus without a partner

*Cont...*

until the next time the arch is formed when he or she can either take back the original partner or find a new one. Likewise, a couple from the sidelines may "steal" the place of a dancing couple by jumping into the couple's home place before either of the other two has time to return from going under the arch.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This simple quadrille from the North of Sweden (Gustafs Skål, also spelled Gustavs Skål), named after 18th Century King Gustav III, is an example of a court dance which evolved to the "folk" level. The term *skål* (rhyming with "coal") is a toasting expression, but the word derives from "skull" and literally means "bowl." The first part of the dance may well be done with feigned pomp and ceremony, a farmer's satire on the cultured mannerisms of his aristocratic cousins.

Children love this feigned pomp. Place no strict expectation on the turning step to make the dance enjoyable for any age. Many Americans dancing with children also leave out the promenade figure. Adults who don't see much challenge in dancing with the very young haven't tried to pass, with feigned pomp intact, under the arch made by three year olds!

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GUSTAFS SKÅL

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