

Hambo

(Sweden)

The hambo is one of the folk dances of Sweden that quite possibly derived along some of the same lines as the mazurka and polska (Sjöberg 1980). In both the polska and hambo the dancers make a full clockwise one-measure turn, starting on the same foot at the beginning of each measure.

The late Gordon Tracie referred to the hambo as "the national dance of Sweden" (Lidster & Tamburini 1965). It is perhaps the most well known of the folk dances in Sweden, with Swedish cultural groups around the world, and with American folk dancers.

The hambo has been danced continuously for at least the last hundred years. It is basically the same dance throughout Sweden, yet one can see regional as well as individual characteristics.

In 1965 the province/cultural area of Hälsingland began an annual hambo competition in early July. The competition has influenced the style of the hambo. It has provided a lot of visibility for the dance, and for many years 1500 couples participated. There was a race to the postbox to apply for the event. The event still exists today though it has changed some and is not as popular as it once was. There are hambo competitions in a number of areas in Sweden today.

The hambo style described here is as one might find in the Hälsingehambon contest. It is based on what I have learned from Tommy and Ewa Englund, Stig and Helén Eriksson, Leif and Margareta Virtanen, who have all won the competition at least once, dance researcher-teacher Bo Peterzon, and from the late Gordon Tracie.

Pronunciation: HAHM-boh

Music: 3/4 meter Use the hambo recording of your choice, there are many available. Various styles and tempos are part of the hambo music repertoire. In Hälsingland they tend to use slower melodies. Two well known melodies are Hårgalåten and Karis Pers Polska.

CD: *At the Jonsson's, Traditional dance tunes from central Sweden.* Bands 1, 2

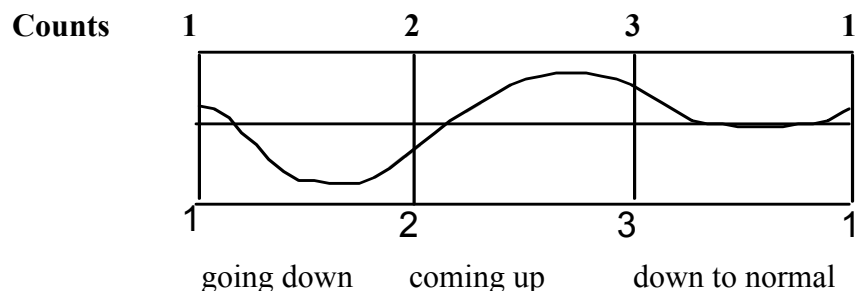
Formation: Couples progress LOD/CCW around the dance space.

Steps and Styling: Open pos: M and W face the dance direction, W on M's R. Inside hands joined, M's R and W's L, held chest to shoulder level with the arms bent. Outside hands, M's L and W's R, are usually placed on the hip with the fingers forward when in competition or performance, but hang at one's side when dancing at social/recreational events.

Closed pos, polska hold: Man's R hand on the Woman's L side of her upper back. Man's L arm is bent at the elbow to make a right angle and holds the Woman's upper R arm. Woman's L hand rests on the Man's R shoulder. Woman's R arm is bent at the elbow to make a right angle and her hand comes from below and up to hold on the Man's upper L arm, pushing up a little while keeping her elbow in contact with the man's L fore arm.

Svikt: Refers to the down and up movement(s) or spring that is a characteristic of dance/movement. The springiness comes from using one's knees, feet and ankles, both to cushion the steps and to add the down and up movements that are characteristic of the dance. The svikt should be applied to all parts of the dance at all times. The following graph indicates the line our heads might draw as we dance.

Hambo—continued



Dal Step: One step in a measure, described as step lift balance, M and W start and dance on opposite feet.

| Counts | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|--------|------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Step | Step | free ft close to but above the ground | |
| Svikt | bend | rise up | come back to normal |

Running step: A step on each beat, thus there are three steps in a measure. They are not actually running, but light springy steps.

| Counts | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|--------------|-----------------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| part of foot | step heel to whole | step ball | step heel to whole foot |

Hambo turning step: Each person makes one complete CW turn in each measure. The turning occurs both during and between the steps. Much of the turning is accomplished while one has weight on the L foot. Begin each measure with the same foot.

Hambo Turning Step Graphed by counts:

| Counts | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|-----------|--|----------------------------|--|
| M's steps | R forward in the dance direction & pivot | L facing out & pivot | Both facing center & pivot |
| W's steps | L facing out & pivot | Both facing center & pivot | R forward in the dance direction & pivot |
| Svikt | Going down | Coming up | Coming back to normal |

Important Details:

1. The dance progresses fwd in the dance direction during each meas, including while turning with the hambo step.
2. You make a complete CW turn in one meas dancing hambo steps, beginning each hambo step sequence with the same foot, M's R and W's L.
3. Most of the turning is on the ball of the L ft for both M and W, and occurs *during and between* the steps.
4. When you place your R ft on the ground for the "both," there is only a partial wt on the R ft, and you will step again with the R ft on the next beat.
5. When you step on your R ft, your body should be facing fwd in the dance direction, and stepping forward in the dance direction between your partner's ft.
6. The arms dance as well as the ft. This is noticeable especially during the first three meas.
7. This style of hambo is sometimes referred to as nighambo meaning dip or curtsy-hambo, referring to the svikt in the dance.

Hambo—continued

8. A “B&W” version of the facings of each Hambo turn step is: Turn/pivot on L to step fwd and in LOD on R; turn/pivot to step L and end facing out of the circle/dance space; turn/pivot on L to place R slightly behind and beside L for the Both. It is OK to continue turning while on both ft. Keep your wt over the fwd portion/balls of your ft to continue turning.
9. To maintain balance and move securely through the dance, keep your knees bent and flexible throughout. This is a key to the fluidity seen in Scandinavian dancing.
10. Both the M and W hold onto each other. This is quite different from some other forms of cpl dance. We must do our part to secure our hold with our ptr.
11. Maintain a solid upright proud posture throughout. It helps you and your ptr maintain balance while dancing.

Meas Music: 3/4 meter Pattern

I. DANCE SEQUENCE

- 1 M: L Dal step fwd in the dance direction (LOD).
W: R Dal step fwd in the dance direction (LOD).
 Hold: Open pos with the joined hands moving fwd.
- 2 M: R Dal step fwd in the dance direction.
W: L Dal step fwd in the dance direction.
 Hold: Open pos with the joined hands moving back to the beginning pos.
- 3 Three running steps fwd in the dance direction, M - L, R, L; W - R, L, R.
 Open pos with the joined hands moving fwd again.
- 4 Hambo steps and close into polska hold. This is the only hambo turn sequence that does not make a complete turn. M: R, L, Both, M ends the meas facing approximately ctr. W: L, Both, R, W ends the meas stepping R facing LOD/CCW around the dance space or slightly further CW in her turn.
- 5-7 Continuing with Hambo steps, make a full CW turn in each meas.
- 8 Three running steps while the cpl opens and progresses fwd in the dance direction, M: R, L, R; W: L, R, L to open up and prepare to begin the dance again repeating the dance sequence from meas 1 through 8 until the music ends.

Caveat: Dance descriptions are in Black and White, while life and dancing are in color with variations. Turning dances move continuously through space. The above description is B&W. We will move through the description and dance in color using the details above to guide us through the dance not hold us to a spot.

Presented by Roo Lester