

Mach

Pronunciation: makh

Record: ZM-40591, "Tańce ludowe z Polski" (Folk Dances from Poland), side A, band 5, available from Ada Dziewanowska.

Mach is a couple dance in 2/4 time from the district of Krzczonów in the Lublin region, in eastern Poland. The name derives from the verb "machać"--to swing, to sway, or to wave. The dance has 2 parts and the tune is composed of 2 melodies: a 12-meas. Melody A, and a 24-meas. Melody B. Melody A is slow, almost solemn, and can be accompanied by singing (see the song section). Melody B has 3 parts of 8 meas. each. Each part is played in a faster tempo than the preceding one. The tempo becomes very fast and maybe that is why the dance is also called "wiater"--the wind. We can see some Byelorussian influence in the style of the dance, for instance, the abrupt change of direction of the walking couple. Originally Mach was done at weddings in lines of couples led by a "wodzirej" (M of the first couple of each line), moving in any direction chosen by him. It was also done as a show-off dance of one or two couples (bride and groom, master of ceremonies and his partner, best man and bridesmaid). The rest of the guests would then participate in the dance by singing, whistling, uttering shouts like "heej," "eech," "uuch," "uch, uch," or "uha," and also by clapping their hands, which was done in a characteristic way: both hands were in front, palms facing the ceiling; moving up and over, the right hand emphatically clapped the left hand on the left side of the body; then the movement was reversed. During the fastest part only the right hand clapped the left hand and the onlookers stooped down as if to see the dancers better. They stood up at the end, the dancing couples stopped abruptly, and stretching their outside arms up all shouted "Mach!"

Steps and Styling:

Walking step: Couple join hands in skater's position, with inside ft step forward with an accent, outside ft remains in the back, toes touching floor, knees straight, and turn head to side away from partner (ct 1); thrust straight outside leg forward slightly above floor, abruptly bending knee of the inside leg, and nod with head (ct &); repeat action of ct 1 & with opposite footwork, head movement, and direction (ct 2&).

Change of direction step, used to end the phrase: Step with inside ft (ct 1); hold (ct &); bending knee of outside leg pivot on inside ft toward partner to face opposite direction, straighten, and thrust forward outside leg, which now becomes the inside leg (ct 2); hold (ct &). Throughout these steps torso is erect, and movements are done in a very emphatic fashion.

Pivot step: In either shoulder-waist or waist-waist (W's arms above M's arms) position, with upper body erect and slightly leaning backward, pivot CW in place, with 2 steps to a meas., M starting with L ft and stepping backward, W starting with R ft and stepping forward. The insides of couple's R ft are close together; with L ft each tries to reach as far as possible around partner in order to make as many revolutions as possible. The pivot is smooth, there is no bouncing; there is, however, a slight rocking backward and forward in the slow part of the pivot, which disappears in the faster part.

Formation: Couples with hands joined in skater's position, facing LOD, either in a circle or in lines of 4-6 couples which will be moving in the direction chosen by the M of the first couple. If there are any onlookers, they should sing in Part I, and clap their hands in Part II, as described above.



Measures

Pattern



INTRODUCTION

1-4 No action.

I. WALKING (Melody A)

1-3 Starting with inside ft (M-R, W-L), with 6 "walking" steps move in LOD, nodding head alternatively to outside and to partner.

4 Dance "change of direction" step.

5-8 Repeat action of meas. 1-4 (Fig. I) (inside ft is now L for M and R for W) moving in RLOD.

9-11 Repeat action of meas. 1-3 (Fig I).

12 Step with inside ft (M-R, W-L) (ct 1&); making 1/4 turn toward partner, face him/her, get into shoulder-waist or waist-waist position and bring outside ft to inside ft without any change of weight.

II. PIVOT (Melody B)

1-8 Dance 16 "pivot" steps at a slow tempo.

9-16 Dance 16 "pivot" steps at a faster tempo.

17-23 Dance 14 "pivot" steps at a very fast tempo.

24 Stepping with an accent M to the L with L ft, W to the R with R ft, get into open ballroom position, facing center, and abruptly extend outside (M-L, W-R) arm diagonally upward (ct 1); with inside ft (M-R, W-L) do a weightless step in place and shout "MACH!" (ct 2).

Repeat dance from the beginning.



Dance introduced in 1973, at Ralph Page's Fall Camp in Troy, N.H., by Ada and Jaś Dzięwanowski, who learned it in Poland from Ryszard Kwiatkowski, noted Polish folk dance authority. Do not reproduce these directions without Ada's permission: 41 Katherine Road, Watertown, Mass. 02172, tel. (617) 923-9061.