

GÅNGLÅT / SNOA

(GONG-loht SNOO-a)

Skandia CD, track 1

NOMENCLATURE

Credible English Title Walking Tune / Pivot Dance.

ETHNO-CULTURAL ATTRIBUTES

Heritage Sweden, primarily in north-central and northern districts of the land.
U.S. Source As researched and learned in Sweden in 1948 by Gordon E. Tracie and taught at Skandia Folkdance Society, Seattle.
Category Restored old-time dance.
Motivation and application Recreational, non-performance-oriented.

MUSICAL ATTRIBUTES

Type Duple-meter (4/4), walking-tune (Swedish: *gånglåt*) rhythm, slow to moderate tempo, legato temperament.

CHOREOLOGICAL ATTRIBUTES

Function Individual couple dance.
Character and form Legato, very smooth, free-form.
Footwork Repetitive throughout. Opposite.
Specific steps Walking, smooth pivot-spins.
Dance holds Open shoulder-waist. Basic polska hold (as described in Appendix A).
Formation Couples in circle, progressing LOD (CCW).

THE DANCE ROUTINE

Open walking steps forward:

In open shoulder-waist hold, free hands hanging loosely at sides, begin on outside foot, couple moves forward in LOD (CCW) with firm walking steps, one step to each count of the music.

Closed pivot-spin turn:

Whenever desired, preferably on the 1st count of the 1st measure of a phrase but could be on any odd count, W starts to turn CW on his L foot, then steps between W's feet with his R foot into LOD, to assume closed polska hold. During this, W steps R, L. Couple then continues to rotate CW with smooth walking-type

cont...

pivot-spins, M: L, R; W: R, L making a full rotation on each 2 counts.

Couple may return to open walking steps at any time by merely breaking out into open position again.

Note: Throughout the entire dance, the same alternation of feet is maintained without interruption.

Suggestions for a smooth pivot-spin: Do not lift feet from the floor any more than necessary, but let the foot pivot on the appropriate part of the shoe, so as to make a natural turn, a half-rotation on each count of the music. For the M (who is leading), this implies stepping out and around CW with his L foot on count 1 while allowing his R foot to come back so that the L heel and R toe are somewhat adjacent. On count 2, the M makes a simultaneous pivot on his L sole and his R heel (so that his R toe comes about to face LOD). This completes one full turn. Woman steps between M's foot into LOD with R foot on count 1, pivoting on R sole. On count 2, she steps to the outside of M's foot with her L, while continuing to pivot on R sole. Feet always stay close to partner's and to the floor.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Snoa is a word meaning "to turn or rotate," and is used throughout a good part of northern Sweden to identify dances involving a simple pivot-spin step in duple-meter. For a long while such turning was pretty much confined to the polka-like music, which, depending on the emphasis given by the musician, usually involved a rather bouncy step.

Since the renaissance in ethnic dancing which began in Sweden about 1970, a great number of previously unknown or at best obscure dance forms have been "resurrected," among them turning with a pivot-spin to the *gånglåt* (walking-tune) music which has always been an essential part of the country fiddler's repertoire. This dance, too, is called *snoa* in Sweden.

Because a sensitive response to the smooth, flowing Swedish *gånglåt* rhythm evokes quite a different feeling from that derived from a bouncy polka, a different dance style is called for. It apparently was Gordon Tracie who coined the name "gånglåt / snoa" to identify this smoother type of pivot-spin dance.

In order to fully appreciate the beauty of this simple dance, dancers should strive to keep their feet on the floor as much as possible, thus assuring maximum stability, "grounding," if you will. This naturally calls for both a smooth floor and a smooth-soled pair of shoes!

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