

SNURRBOCKEN (Sweden)

Snurrbocken (Snoor-book-en, *not* Schner-bocken), a whirling-bowing dance, is a traditional couple dance from Sweden. It probably originated in Uppland or Hälsingland, and is now danced throughout Sweden. It is one of the most lively Swedish polska couple dances, and one with an added touch of humor. The name *Snurrbocken*, or *Snurrbottjen* (or even *Snurrebocken*, depending on dialect) is a play on words. *Snurr* refers to a whirling or gyrating motion, but *bock* has two different meanings: either "a he-goat" or "a bow or bend"; thus, the name can be translated as "the whirling billy-goat" or "the whirl (and) bow," the latter, of course, precisely describing the action of the two figures. Inasmuch as the dance is fundamentally a couple polska, it properly begins with the partner turn (not with the bowing, as in some American versions). The second part is a bit of rustic satire, in which the farm folk burlesque the gentry and their pompous, affected mannerisms. Traditionally it was at just this point that the fiddler could have *his* fun with the dancers, by setting the tempo of the bow—sometimes with long delays, sometimes without any pause at all; it was up to the dancing couples to follow him! Hälsingland fiddler Eric Ost, in a play of musical buffoonery for which he is famous, imparts to his recording the original jesting temperament of this lighthearted dance.

Snurrbocken was first learned in Sweden in 1948 by Gordon E. Tracie, who taught it at Skandia Folkdance Club, Seattle; the dance is described in *Svenska Folkdanser and Sällskapsdanser*, Stockholm, 1952.

FORMATION: Cpls at random on the floor, in shoulder-waist pos, M facing LOD.

STEPS AND STYLING: Running step (small and light), L-foot polka, *Delsbo-polska* (DALES-boo). *Delsbo-polska* derives its name from the district of Delsbo in the province of Hälsingland, northern Sweden.

M: Step fwd and pivot CW on L (ct 1); complete pivot on L, while touching R beside L without shift of wt (ct 2); step R fwd in LOD (ct 3). (*Cue:* L, both, R.)

W: Take a small, low jump onto both ft (ct 1); a small leap onto R, pivoting CW (ct 2); a small leap onto L, continuing pivot (ct 3). (*Cue:* both, R, L.) The steps should be short, off, but close to, the floor. One full turn is made for each meas of music as in all cpl polskas. An even bounce is maintained with equal emphasis on each beat of the meas.

MEASURES

I. *Polska turn*

- 1-8 In shoulder-waist pos, dance 8 polska steps, turning CW and progressing in LOD. Since the turn is very fast, good ft control and balance must be maintained. Lean away from ptr and keep arms well extended. *Note:* As danced in Sweden, *Snurrbocken* properly begins with the turn, *not* the bow.

II. *Run forward*

- 9-16 Assume open pos with outside hands on hips, fingers fwd, thumbs back, and beginning with outside ft (ML-WR) run fwd in LOD with 16 steps. Keep the steps small and light.

III. *Exchange bows*

M and W place both hands on own hips, M on inside of circle, W on outside.

- 17 Turn slowly twd ptr.
18 With feigned dignity, very slowly bow deeply to each other.
19 Each turn a half-turn CCW, back to back with ptr.
20 Bow again, but away from ptr.
21 M and W complete CCW turn to face ptr, and assume shoulder-waist pos to repeat entire dance from the beginning.