

Stegvals

(Norway and Sweden)

Stegvals (STAYG-vahls), sometimes called Stigvals (STIG-vahls) in Sweden, means stride, walk, or step waltz. It is a traditional oldtime dance found primarily in the western and northern parts of Sweden and also in Norway.

Bruce Taylor introduced the Norwegian version at the 1973 University of the Pacific Folk Dance Camp. It was based on a 1967 film made in Granvin, Hardanger with Brita Tra and Lars S. Velken.

Gordon E. Tracie, who began researching it in Sweden in 1951, presented the Swedish version at the 1980 University of the Pacific Folk Dance Camp. The dance varies in style from region to region, but the form remains constant.

Alix Cordray taught the Norwegian version several places since 1977 and again at the 1986 University of the Pacific Folk Dance Camp. According to Alix's source, Egil Bakka: Danse, Danse Lett Ut Pa Foten (Norges Boklag, Oslo 1970.) Stegvals was known in many areas of Norway but was little used.

RECORD: Triola TNLP, Side A/1 "Vossavalsen"; or any Swedish or Norwegian waltz from a gammaldans record or tape. Alix says one with a faster tempo makes the dance easier.

Gordon says that the historically correct music is that of pre-polska "langdans" (long dance) rhythm. It is known that both Stegvals and Bakmes were danced in Scandinavia before the "real" waltz appeared in the first of the 19th century.

FORMATION: Couples any place on the floor. M face LOD, W RLOD, R sides together almost hip to hip. MR around W waist, ML holds WR upper arm. WR holds ML upper arm, WL comfortably on MR upper arm or shldr.

Alix used 2 different pos that are balanced (M and W the same):

1: R hip to hip as above, except R arm on ptr waist, L hand holding ptr R upper arm.

2: For faster turning (M and W the same) R hip to hip as above, except R hand on ptr L shldr, L hands joined with ptr under R.

STEPS and STYLING:

Basic Stegvals Step: Both step R -- M fwd, W bkwd (ct 1); step L beside R (ct 3). The motion flows smoothly throughout even though you are stepping only on cts 1 and 3. Keep ft close to floor.

It may be done moving in LOD or while turning CW as a cpl.

To turn as a couple, alternate stepping fwd (ct 1) with stepping bkwd (next meas ct 1). When M steps fwd, W steps bkwd and vice versa. To progress in LOD as a couple, take long steps fwd and small steps bkwd.

In Norway the turn is usually danced only in a CW direction. In Sweden it is danced both CW and CCW. To turn CCW, beg L with L hips adjacent. This CCW turn is called "Bakmes", meaning "backward".

Norwegian style is bouncy with a feeling of "down" caused by a flex of the knee and ankle (ct 1), raising "up" (ct 2) and "down" (ct 3).

Swedish style is smooth with little or no bounce.

MUSIC 3/4

PATTERN

Measures

INTRODUCTION Beg as desired

I. REST STEP

Any
number

Dance Basic Stegvals step progressing in LOD, M fwd, W bkwd.
Repeat as many as M desires -- usually 2 to 8.

continued...

- Transition into Turn:
- 1 M step Large step fwd R diag R across in front of W to beg CW turn, W feels this and steps R slightly behind L instead of bkwd (ct 1); both step L beside R, completing 1/2 turn CW (ct 3).
 - 2 Repeat Basic Stegvals step with M stepping bkwd R behind L in LOD, W taking large step R diag fwd R in LOD (ct 1); both step L beside R, completing one turn CW (ct 3).

II. COUPLE TURN

Any number Continue to dance 2 Basic Stegvals steps per turn CW while progressing in LOD around the floor. Both do the same step but alternately -- M R diag R fwd in LOD, W R bkwd LOD, then W R diag fwd R in LOD, M R bkwd LOD (cts 1).

Transition Back to Rest Step:

M initiates the transition by stepping straight fwd LOD, leading W bkwd.

In Sweden more often than in Norway they reverse sides and turn CCW. This is usually done during the last meas of a 4-meas phrase of the Rest step (Forsteg). Both step R,L,R as M shifts W to M L side, reversing arm hold (cts 1,2,3). Then dance the Turn CCW beg L. The shift R,L,R may also be done to change from the Turn CW (Polska), directly into the Turn CCW (Bakmes). Note that the M should beg the Turn when facing LOD -- R ft diag fwd R for the Turn CW, L ft fwd L for the Turn CCW.

Dance alternates between the Rest step and the Turn as M desires. The Rest step usually is not as long as the Turn.

(C) October 1986