

Stordans

(Norway)

Stordans means “big dance.” It is also known as Langedansen (“long dance”) or Kjededansen (“line dance”). It is the only Norwegian dance to have roots in the Middle Ages. The particular form called Stordans has a 6-count step pattern, well known in the Faroe Islands, but in Norway there is no direct historical evidence for it. As a dance form, it was retrieved from the Faroe Islands in the 20th century. In Norway, any ballad, either ancient or modern, can be used for this dance. It is always performed to the singing of the dancers without musical accompaniment. The main point of the dance is usually to sing the ballad - the dance itself is secondary.

The Faroe Islands dance also formed the basis for what was to become “song dance” among Norwegian dance groups. The basic “Faroe” step as danced here is rougher, heavier, and freer than the steps in Norwegian song dances.

Pronunciation:

Music: Dans Norsk, Heilo PAK 1004, Side 2/6. Stordans - Tale ved Kleng Spelemanns grav. (In Norway, the dancers would sing themselves—there would be no music.)

Formation: A long line holding hands at shldr height. Leader is on the L. Hand hold is “heavy”: with R hand, grasp over neighbor’s L palm-to-palm so that R thumb is between neighbor’s thumb and forefinger. Elbow are usually “on your own side,” but may also be crossed. Face ctr (or slightly to L).

Steps: Fall on L to L (ct 1); step heavily on R beside or in front of L (ct 2); fall on L to L (ct 3); bounce usually leaving R toe on ground (ct 4); fall on R in place (ct 5); bounce (ct 6). Variations: jump onto both on ct 1; raise free ft, usually behind, on ct 4 or 6; hop just before ct 1, 3 or 5; stamp, especially to accent the song words.

Movement: The leader snakes around the room. The best Stordans is performed by a large number of people in a very small space. The leader does *not* go under any arches—rather leads the line round and round, turning as he goes. As you round corners, you can swing back joined hands to face your neighbor on the R.

Presented by Alix Cordray