

## Sysmäläinen (Finland)

Sysmäläinen (SOOS-ma(a as in cat)-ligh-nehn) is a set dance from Savo Province. The name means *dance from Sysmä*, but refers to the style of dance rather than to the town itself. It was quite popular around 1850. The dance was taught by Jussi Aronen and Lennu Yläneva at the 1999 University of the Pacific Stockton Folk Dance Camp. The original description of the dance is by Otto Harju from Saarijärvi. The musician for this rendition was Timo Hukkanen. According to Jussi it is a tradition in many parts of Finland to end a set dance with a waltz or some variant such as the *Hoppawaltz* described here.

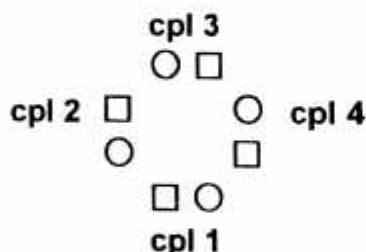
CD: 1999 Tanhukurssi, Band 6.

2/4 meter

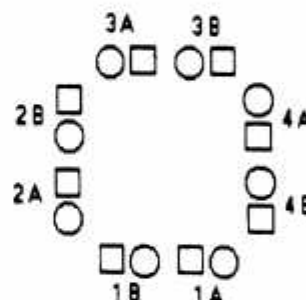
**Formation:** A square set of either 4 or 8 cpls, W to R of ptr, hands at sides. Directions for a four-cpl set are given first, followed by any details necessary for an eight-cpl set.

**Four-cpl set:** Cpl 1 has back to music. Remaining cpls (2,3,4) are numbered CW around the set.

**Eight-cpl set:** Two cpls are on each side of the square. Numbered CW they are: Cpls 1A,1B (backs to music); Cpls 2A,2B; Cpls 3A,3B; Cpls 4A,4B.



Four-cpl Set



Eight-cpl Set

**Steps and Styling:** Front-Basket hold\*, Grand Right and Left\*, Closed-Ballroom pos\*, Promenade pos\*.

**Buzz step** (1 to a ct): To move L or turn CW, step on R in front of L (ct 1); step on ball of L to L (ct &). Step repeats exactly. To move R or turn CCW, step on L in front R (ct 1); step on ball of R to R (ct &). Buzz steps are smooth and vigorous.

**Change step** (1 to a meas): Step on L ft in designated direction bending knees a little (ct 1); step on ball of of R ft beside L, extending knees (ct &); continuing, step on L, bending and extending knees (ct 2,&). Next step would start with R ft. Very similar to a two-step but with a subtle "down-up" movement.

**Hoppawaltz** (1 to a meas): Cpls are in Closed-Ballroom pos with M back to ctr. One CW turn is made in one meas.

**M:** Starting to turn CW as a cpl, step on R ft diag fwd L twd W R side (ct 1); continuing, step on L ft around W to end facing ctr (ct &); bring R ft beside L, bending knees a little (ct 2); straightening knees, pivot on heels while moving toes to R (ct &). End with back to ctr.

W: Dance Hoppawaltz beginning with ct 2 of the M pattern. Facing ctr, bring R ft beside L, bending knees a little (ct 1); straightening knees, pivot on heels while moving toes to R (ct &); step on R ft diag fwd L twd M R side (ct 2); continuing, step on L ft around M to end facing ctr (ct &).

Hoppawaltz may also be danced one step to 2 meas (cts 1,2,1,2).

Unless otherwise instructed, use the Change Step throughout dance.

\*Described in *Steps & Styling* (rev. 1996) published by the Folk Dance Federation of California, Inc.Inc.

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Measures 2/4 meter

PATTERN

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2 meas INTRODUCTION No action but be ready to quickly form a circle with a Front-Basket hold (R over L). Wt is on the L ft.

I. CHANGING PLACES

A) Circle (Chorus)

1-7 Quickly form a circle with a Front-Basket hold, R arm over L. Dance 14 Buzz steps to L (CW), starting with R across in front of L.

8 Dance 1 more Buzz step (cts 1,&); step on R in front of L (ct 2); bring L leg fwd in a CW arc to reverse direction while M switch hand hold to L over R (ct &). M may shout to emphasize the switch of the hand hold. Four-cpl sets can usually make 2 complete revolutions during these meas.

9-16 Dance 16 Buzz steps to R (CCW), starting with L ft over R and ending in orig place.

B) Changing Places

1-3 Cpls 1 and 3 take Promenade pos (W L arm over M R). Starting with outside ft (ML, WR) trade places with 3 Change Steps, M passing L shldr.

4 Dance 1 more Change step turning in twd ptr while retaining hand hold. End facing orig place.

5-8 Repeat meas 1-4 back to place, W passing L shldr.  
Eight-cpl set: Cpl 1A dance with 3B and Cpl 1B with 3A.

9-16 Cpls 2 and 4 repeat meas 1-8.  
Eight-cpl set: Cpl 2A dance with 4B and Cpl 2B with 4A.

II. WEAVING (Pujottelu)

A) Circle (Chorus)

1-16 Repeat Fig I A, Circle.

B) Weaving

This figure provides an opportunity for each active cpl to flirt with the cpls they visit, using eyes and body language.

- 1-4 Cpl 1, holding inside hands, move twd Cpl 2 with 2 Change steps (meas 1-2). Releasing hands, M cross forearms out in front of chest with each hand resting on the opp arm just above the elbow. M 1 dance a small CCW circle with 2 Change steps while W 1 dance between Cpl 2 and pass behind M 2 to return to ptr (meas 3-4).  
Eight-cpl set: Cpl 1A visit with Cpl 2A as described and Cpl 2B visit at the same time with Cpl 3B.
- 5-8 Cpl 1 join hands (R with L) about chest level. Arms are rounded. Dance 4 Change steps making 1 CCW circle in the ctr of the set. At end of meas 8 open up (W to R of ptr) to face next cpl (Cpl 3).  
Eight-cpl set: Cpl 1A circle CCW and progress to Cpl 3A. Cpl 2B also circle CCW and move fwd to end facing Cpl 4B.
- 9-12 Cpl 1 repeat meas 1-4 with Cpl 3. Since Cpl 1 is already in front of Cpl 3, M use all 4 meas to dance a CCW circle and W use all 4 meas to pass between Cpl 3 and around M 3.  
Eight-cpl set: Cpl 1A visit with Cpl 3A and Cpl 2B with Cpl 4B.
- 13-16 Visiting cpl(s) repeat CCW circle with ptr as in meas 5-8.
- 17-24 Cpl 1 repeat meas 9-16 with Cpl 4 and return back home.  
Eight-cpl set: Cpl 1A repeat meas 9-16 with Cpl 4A and Cpl 2B with Cpl 1B. All end up at home.
- 25-96 Cpl 2, then 3, and finally Cpl 4 repeat meas 1-24 in turn.  
Eight-cpl set: Sequence is Cpls 2A,3B active; Cpls 3A,4B active and finally Cpls 4A and 1B.

### III. GRAND RIGHT AND LEFT

- A) Circle (Chorus)  
1-16 Repeat Fig I A, Circle.
- B) Grand Right and Left  
1-6 Beg with R hand, dance a Grand Right and Left. Pass each person with a Change step.
- 7-8 Take R hand of 7th dancer and with 2 Change steps turn CCW to end facing in opp direction. (Instructors recommend that a crossed-thumb hold be used to signal the change of direction and to aid in the turn.)
- 9-16 Return home with 8 Change steps. End in orig place, W to R of M.

### IV. ARCHES (Portit)

- A) Circle (Chorus)  
1-16 Repeat Fig I A, Circle.
- B) Arches  
1-16 All cpls face ctr except Cpl 1, who join inside hands and, dancing Change steps, move in LOD passing over Cpl 4, then Cpl 3, Cpl 2 and back to place. Each cpl (facing ctr) squat down while being arched over. After being arched over, Cpl 4 join inside hands, rise and follow Cpl 1. Cpl 3 and Cpl 2 follow in turn. When back in orig place, squat down to allow remaining cpls to pass over. Each cpl rise and face ctr as soon as all arches have passed.

Eight-cpl set: Arches are begun by Cpl 1A arching over Cpl 4B.  
Sequence in the line: Cpl 1A, Cpl 4B, Cpl 4A, Cpl 3B, Cpl 3A, Cpl 2B, Cpl 2A, Cpl 1B. Each arching cpl should pass over one squatting cpl on every meas.

Note: If a full squat is not made, keeping the back straight, bend knees and partially lower body. Avoid bending fwd.

V. HOPPAWALTZ (Hoppavalssi)

1-2 In Closed-Ballroom pos, M turn twd LOD so as to be able to walk fwd 4 slow steps beg R ft (1 step to a ct). W are facing ctr. W step sdwd on R (ct 1); step on L beside R (ct &); repeat (cts 2,&). Repeat all (meas 2).

3-16 In Closed-Ballroom pos, dance 14 Hoppawaltz steps.

Note: A slower version of the Hoppawaltz (Fig V) may be danced:  
Meas 1-2: M ftwk stays the same. W may dance 2 side-close steps (instead of 4) in the same rhythm as M slow walks.  
Meas 3-16: Dance 7 Hoppawaltz steps. One step is danced per 2 meas.

