

Szpacyr Polka

(Poland)

Szpacyr Polka, considered a turning dance done in a circle, from the region of Śląsk (Silesia) is derived from the Polish word “Spacer” (SPAĦ-tsehr) which means “to go for a walk or stroll.” According to the well-known expert of the region, Janina Marcinkowa, who I had the opportunity to learn from in the early 1980's, it was a social dance done by couples at gatherings throughout the whole region of Śląsk, from the mountaineers to the city folk. It is a combination of both a promenade and a polka, beginning with the stroll and hence the name of the dance. Couples execute spins and pivots as they follow each other in a large circle. At social gatherings in the region, the dance can be done for quite a long time with the musicians varying the tempo and challenging the dancers.

Pronunciation: SHPAĦ-tsirĦ POĦL-kah

Music: *Folk Dances from Poland, Vol. 1, Band 7* 2/4 meter
Recorded by the Folk Music Band of the Folk Dance and Song Ensemble from Ziemia Cieszyńska of Poland, under the directorship of W. Rakowski. Edited by Richard Schmidt.

Formation: Circle of cpls in the Closed-Hold pos facing LOD.

Styling: Even though the melody can be quite fast, dancers should remain calm and in control with steps quite flat to the floor and not too much bouncing. The transition between the figures and movements is very smooth. Dancers should keep upper body erect.

Steps: Promenade: The Szpacyr portion or promenade step is done energetically by taking one step at a time beg with the outside ft. There are two steps to every measure with the foot landing on the floor on the ct 1 and the ct 2.

Accented steps: While in a Closed-Social pos, M do 3 small flat steps in place beg L (L,R,L), while W beg R and swing slightly to R in front of ptr (R,L,R). This takes one meas (cts 1,&,2) with a pause on the last ct&. The accented steps are then repeated immediately using opp ftwk on the next meas.

Pivot: Cpls in Closed-Round pos, execute 2 complete revolutions CW. M beg bkwd on L while W beg fwd on R, both taking 4 smooth flat steps in LOD

Polka step: Ordinary (zwykly) polka steps are used in this dance either in a fwd motion or while turning with ptr:

1) Forward Polka Step is a step-together-step motion. Step fwd on R, (ct 1); step on L next to R (ct &); step fwd on R (ct 2); hold (ct &). Opp ftwk can be used.

2) The ordinary turning Polka step is also a step-together-step motion but done sideways. Facing the ctr of circle, step on R to R in LOD (ct 1); step on L next to R (ct &); step on R turning CW 1/2 turn (R shldr back) while lifting L ft off the floor to end facing out of the circle (cts 2, &). Continue steps using opposite ftwk in LOD and turning CW.

Swing: This step is done individually. M beg L and facing LOD, take 1 Polka step (L,R,L) fwd twd the ctr of the circle while swinging both arms from R to L (cts 1,&,2); hold (ct &). W do the same step to the L twd the outside of the circle away from ptr (mirror image). On next meas repeat with opp ftwk and direction to come back to each other.

Szpacyr Polka—continued

Hand formations: Closed-Social Forward: Ptrs stand hip-to-hip facing LOD. M places R arm around W's waist and extends L arm out in front of him with palm facing up. W places L hand on M's R shldr and places her R hand in M's L hand palm down.

Closed-Social: Ptrs stand facing each other with arms as in Closed-Social Forward pos.

Closed-Round: Cpls stand facing each other in Closed-Social pos except that M's L hand is placed on W's R shldr blade. W's R arm is placed on top of her ptr's L arm with her R hand resting on his shldr.

Individual: Both M and W: When releasing ptr to dance alone, fists are on hips, except during the Swing portion of the dance.

Swing Portion: Swing arms from L to R or R to L as is called for in the dance. Arms are swung from the shoulder so that when swinging to the L, the L arm is extended straight out to the L side of the body while the R arm is in front of the body bent at the elbow, and the opposite is true when done to the R.

MeasPattern

3 beats INTRODUCTION Ptrs wait in a large circle facing LOD in Closed-Social Forward pos (M on inside of circle).

FIGURE 1

- 1-4 Beg with outside ft (M L, W R), take 8 Promenade steps (2 per meas) fwd in LOD (2 per meas).
5-8 With a smooth transition and no break in the flow, let go of ptr, placing fists on hips and continue the Promenade step (M-L, W R). Going away from ptr in a circular motion, M following L shldr, move twd the ctr of the circle and then back twd ptr who are doing the opp twd the outside of the circle and then back in.
9-12 Coming back together in the Closed-Social Forward hold on meas 9, repeat meas 1-4.
13-16 Repeat meas 5-8.

FIGURE 2

- 1-2 In Closed-Social pos, M take 2 Accented steps (L,R,L then R,L,R) in place, while W dance R,L,R in front of ptr and then L,R,L back to his side.
3-4 Cpls pivot in LOD CW 2 complete revolutions switching hold to Closed-Round pos.
5-16 Repeat mess 1-4 three times (4 total).

FIGURE 3

- 1-2 Ptrs stand beside each other and face LOD, take 1 Swing step fwd away from ptr and take 1 swing step fwd toward ptr.
3-4 In Closed-Social pos, take 2 Turning Polka steps CW (1 revolution) in LOD.
5-8 Repeat mess 1-4.
9 -16 In Closed-Social pos, Polka with ptr in LOD turning CW and completing 4 revolutions.

Sequence: The complete dance consists of all 3 Figures done in order 4 times. The introduction music is played only once at the very beg.

Introduction (Fig 1, Fig 2, Fig 3) four times

Dance notes by Richard Schmidt

Presented by Richard Schmidt