

## Telespringar

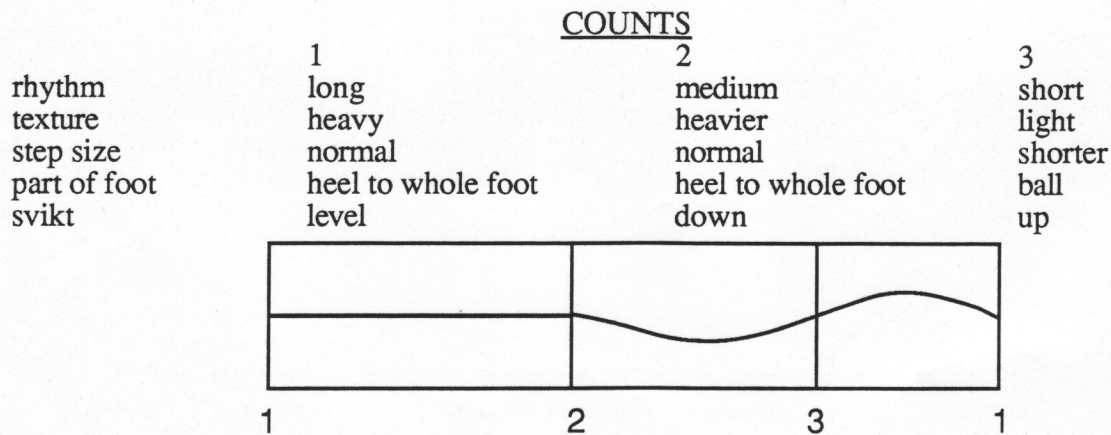
Telespringar is a live, rich and vital dance and music tradition in Norway today. Telespringar means the springar coming from Telemark. Telemark is a geographical, cultural and political area in Norway, located about two and one half hours, by train or automobile, west of Oslo the capital city. It is an area of mountains, rolling hills and valleys with each valley or community having individual dance characteristics. I am writing now about the telespringar tradition from Heddal after Olav Sem.

The springar is thought to have come to Norway from Europe in the 1600's and has had an unbroken tradition since then. It had a resurgence of popularity in the early twentieth century when with the help of Hulda Garborg and Klara Semb the regional dances were esteemed to be a valuable national treasure to be danced and preserved. Much of the music (slåttar) was written down at that time. Some of the other springar traditions were also recorded then, but to my knowledge the Telespringar dance tradition has never been officially recorded on paper. There has been a strong sentiment that the life would be taken out of the dance if it were to be written down. It is with great love for the dance but with trepidation that I undertake to write about the dance.

The music is written in 3/4, but it is an asymmetrical 3/4. The three beats are not equal in length. The first is long, the second is medium, and the third is short. Another expression of the beats is heavy, heavier, light.

The music and rhythm are the key to the dancer. The better dancers dance with the music, the rhythm, and the musician. They follow the dynamics of the melody and musician and their dance crescendos or calms as the music does. Often the dancer will inspire the musician to play to the dancer creating the most exciting dances.

The dancer can begin the dance with either foot. The rhythm and up down movements (svikt) to the music are the important parts. They are what determine or define the dance as Telemark.



Notes:

1. All three steps in the measure move forward.
2. The down movement on count two begins by first stepping on count two and as one transfers the weight to the foot one also bends slightly in the knee. The woman's movement is more subtle than the man's.
3. The upward movement on count three is accomplished by stepping on the ball of the foot and transferring one's weight up and forward as one takes weight. In this manner the body continues its forward motion. One then almost falls forward for the next step (count one).

In the basic step one takes a step on each of the three beats. The men however have the opportunity to ornament and decorate the basic step and thus do not always transfer their weight on each count. The idea is to keep the rhythm and svikt no matter what one does with their feet.

The dancers of the telemark tradition are very proud and take their dance seriously. Thus one notices the tall, erect, proud posture of the dancers. Olav would often speak of dancing like royalty, as if one has a crown on one's head.

The figures (turs) are less important than the rhythm and svikt. The connections between the dance partners and between the dancers and the music/musician are the basis for the dance.

When dancing telespringar the connection or balance between the man and woman is important to the flow of the dance. In American contra dancing, one way of describing the balance is to say the partners give weight to one another. This is something in springar which varies from moment to moment in the dance. By increasing the weight given as the speed increases or the dynamics of the movement build and then relaxing to change from one movement sequence to another there is added texture to the dance and the dance flows nicely.

The dance progresses around the room CCW and also dances on the spot at times, revolving CCW. The woman begins on the man's right and that is the basic position or relationship unless otherwise indicated. There is no specific amount of time for each of the dance figures. The figure changes should follow the music and flow of the tune.

To begin the dance one takes their partner onto the dance floor and listens to the music until they hear and feel the rhythm. While listening, one usually incorporates the svikt movements in their body and then begins to move forward. Often one actually takes their first step forward on count three in the music. They then dance forward, CCW around the room.

Each figure begins by the man turning the woman 1 to 2 times CW, each figure ends with the arm krok position described later, and the middle section varies. The figures are numbered here for convenience of this explanation and not as a set sequence to follow. Each lead into the arm krok position includes a marking by the man. A marking is an accentuated count two movement of his body often accompanied by a small sound on the floor. The accentuated movement in the man's body in addition to changing of the arms is what telegraphs to the woman the message of change that we call leading.

## Figures

Figure 1 (Front Basket)

- (a) Turn the woman CW 1 to 2 times.
- (b) Begin leading the woman CCW around man, man changes to L hand in L, continue leading the woman CCW around the man with the L arms going over the man's head, when the woman is to the R of the man, join R hands underneath.
- (c) The couple then proceeds CCW around the room.
- (d) The man finds a spot to dance in and begins the couple revolving CCW on the spot. This is a time when the man can use alternate steps.
- (e) The man releases the L hands and turns the woman 1 to 2 times CCW.
- (f) The man makes a marking and lowers the woman's R arm into his L.

forearm, releases her R hand and joins his R and her L hands (arm krok) while the woman dances forward and the man on the spot. Alternate step option for the man.

- (g) The man releases his L arm and opens the woman out to his R side with his R.
- (h) The couple dance forward, CCW, around the room.

#### Figure 2 (Left Forearm)

- (a) Turn the woman 1 to 2 times CW.
- (b) Begin leading the woman CCW around the man and place her L hand on his L forearm. The woman continues CCW around the man until she is to his R (her L arm is around his back). Join R hands.
- (c) The couple move forward CCW around the room, until the man finds a spot to dance.
- (d) Man makes a marking and revolves CCW on the spot (the woman is moving forward while the man moves backwards on the spot.) The man can dance alternate steps at this time.
- (e) Release the L forearm and woman's L hand and turn the woman 1 to 2 times CCW.
- (f) The man marks and lowers the woman's R arm into his L forearm and joins outside hands (arm krok).
- (g) Release man's L and woman's R arms and open the woman out to man's R side.
- (h) The couple dance forward, CCW, around the room.

#### Figure 3 (Laus Dans)

- (a) Turn the woman 1 to 2 times CW.
- (b) Lead her in front and change to his L hand and turn the woman 1 to 2 times CW, then lower the joined hands continuing the woman's turning and release hands.
- (c) Establish a small circle on the floor and dance CCW around the small circle. Visualize a square placed on top of the small circle.
- (d) The man then proceeds to make a CW turn in each of the corners. The woman follows the man and usually turns in each corner if the man has, though she may choose to watch her partner instead of turn.
- (e) The man may also make a marking in a corner to follow the music and/or to gain the attention of his partner.
- (f) The man may take this opportunity to show his expertise and dance many alternate steps. The woman follows by dancing forward, watching or turning in response to the man's movements.
- (g) To join together again the man offers his L arm to his partner and they join L forearms holding on the upper portion of each others arms.
- (h) They both dance forward (CCW).
- (i) The man uses a marking to propel or push himself backwards under the joined arms while the woman continues dancing forward. The man's backing ends with the woman's L hand on the man's L forearm.
- (j) The figure then continues as in figure 2, from (c) through (h).

#### Figure 4 (Pancakes)

- (a) Turn the woman 1 to 2 times CW.

- (b) Begin leading the woman CCW around man, man changes to L hand in L. Continue leading the woman CCW around the man, the L hands resting on the man's L shoulder. Join R hands in front of woman.
- (c) The couple dances forward, CCW around the room.
- (d) The man finds a spot to dance in, marks and without letting go of the woman CCW, turns himself CW, then turns the woman CCW. hands, turns
- (e) Then lowers the woman's R arm into his L fore arm, releases her R hand and joins his R and her L hands (arm krok).
- (f) The man releases his L arm and opens the woman out to his R side with his R.
- (g) The couple dance forward, CCW, around the room.

### Marking

Marking is an important aspect of Telespringar. It is used many times throughout the dance, and it enriches the dance greatly. One could dance the springar without the marking but the dance would be very flat and lifeless. Marking is an accentuated movement by the man during the second count. It may also include a small sound on the floor, not to be mistaken with a loud stamp. To make a marking the man deepens the downward movement of count two. He may also lengthen the second count to accentuate the movement. How does one lengthen the second count? One borrows a little (time) from counts one and three. The second count is also the heaviest beat of the music and so the marking ties into the texture of the music by taking place on the second count. The man should also listen to the music both for the phrasing and dynamics. As one becomes familiar with the dance and music and even the melodies, it is then easier to make the markings with the phrases and more dynamic parts of the melody. The markings always precede, or signal the change to go into arm krok. They can also precede other changes in the dance. Markings can precede direction changes, as well as figure changes. They can even be used to signal changes within figures. A marking can occur when the weight is on either foot or on both feet at the same time.

### Alternate Steps

There are alternate steps that can be used during the dance principally for the men. All steps, however maintain the svikt pattern through out the dance. The svikt pattern for Telespringar is count one, level, count two, down, count three, up. See counts and step description described on page one and two for details.

Three steps per measure.

1. The basic step can be used to turn CW. Normally one turns one complete turn in one measure. This can be danced by the man or woman. Sometimes the woman turns faster, up to one and one half turns in a measure.
2. The basic step can be used to turn CCW. One usually turns one complete turn in one measure. This can be danced by the man or the woman.
3. The basic step can be danced in a modified grapevine fashion. This is usually done by the man when he is dancing on the spot and facing his partner, as in arm krok.

Two steps per measure.

1. The man can dance both counts one and two on the same foot. This can be done when moving forward with ones partner, when in arm krok, as a marking, and during the laus dans.
2. The man can dance both counts three and one on the same foot. This is often done while dancing on the spot in the front basket position and in the L forearm position. This variation can also be used during the laus dans while the man is dancing with his back to LOD in the small circle. The man may also use this variation while turning either CW or CCW.

One step per measure.

1. The man can dance taking only one step per measure. I have only seen this during the laus dans.

Steps with foot slaps.

1. The man can add a slapping of his *foot to his hand* during a two step per measure sequence when he has stepped on counts one and three. The slapping occurs on count two. This often occurs when the man is turning during the laus dans.

### Roses

Roses are the embellishments to the dance. It is the way Olav Sem expressed this and I have kept the expression as I felt the term more clearly describes this aspect of the dance and the sort of poetry and beauty that it implies. One finds roses as decorations on the costumes, folk art, and also the Hardanger fiddles. They add beauty to the articles they are found on. The roses add life to the dance.

How does one make roses in their dance? One adds to the basic framework of the dance. One can take each part of the dance and expand upon it. One can add the alternate steps, markings and turnings to suit the mood, music, partner, dance space etc. For example the men can turn, usually CW several times, after he has turned the woman at the beginning of any of the figures. Another example would be to turn the woman more than 1 to 2 times at any of the times when one is already turning the woman. Also the men can combine several of the alternate steps together at one time.

This description is a recipe to get from one part to the next, to remind us of the elements of the dance. It is very dry and lifeless. Now it is up to us, the dancers, to bring life to the dance. Telespringar is an incredibly rich tradition. There seems to be endless variety even in one specific area or community. This is only a taste of that rich tradition. I hope that you will have many opportunities to learn more of and about the music and dance of Telemark.

Roo Lester 1989

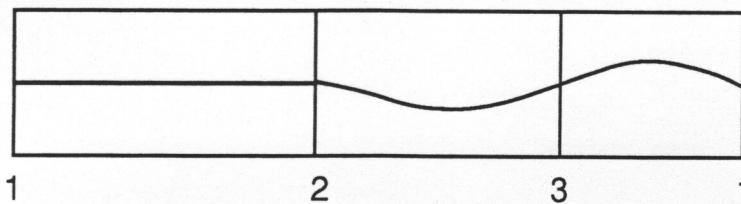
Overview  
Telespringar from Heddal

Recorded music- Spel til Dans, Knut Buen. cassette  
The name of the cassette means music for dancing. It is the only recorded music from Telemark that was made for dancing. It has a clear rhythm and foot tramping marking the beats for dancing.

Formation- W begins on M's R  
Couples progress CCW around the room

Music- 3/4, asymmetrical 3/4; 1. long, 2. medium, 3. short.

Svikt- Up down character. 1. level, 2. down, 3. up.



COUNTS

	1	2	3
rhythm	long	medium	short
texture	heavy	heavier	light
step size	normal	normal	shorter
part of foot	heel to whole foot	heel to whole foot	ball
svikt	level	down	up

Overview of figures

1. Turn W, front basket, arm krok
2. Turn W, L forearm, arm krok
3. Turn W with R, turn W with L, laus dans, L forearm, arm krok
4. Turn W, pancakes, arm krok.

## Notes

1. The dancers can begin with either foot.
2. One takes a step on each of the three beats in the basic step.
3. The down movement on count two begins by first stepping on count two and as one transfers the weight to the foot one also bends slightly in the knee. The woman's movement is more subtle than the man's.
4. The upward movement on count three is accomplished by stepping on the ball of the foot and transferring ones weight up and forward as one takes weight. In this manner the body continues its forward motion. One then almost falls forward for the next step (count one).
5. Use the marking to indicate changes, especially leading into arm krok.
6. The dance can begin with any figure.
7. The amount of time used for the various elements of the dance and the number of turns is individual.
8. Changes usually correlate to the music.
9. The men can use the alternate steps when appropriate.

This is a skeleton or framework of the dance. One creates each dance and may add what may be referred to as roses, or embellishments to suit the mood, music, partner etc.

I hope that you will enjoy this introduction to Telespringar and will have the opportunity to learn more of and about the music and dance of Telemark.

Roo Lester