

## Danish Varsovienne

(Denmark)

A great deal of confusion has arisen with respect to the allocating of the Varsovienne to any specific country due the fact that it is a popular dance form common to, and claimed by, many national groups. Various dance historians ascribe its origin to different countries including Sweden, Poland, France, Italy, Mexico and Spain, basing their conclusions upon the etymology of the title as used in these countries and attributing its development in some instances to specific dancing masters responsible for its introduction and popularization as a ballroom dance comparable to the waltz. For example, some historians state that the name Varsovienne arose in Warsaw, capital of Poland, and that its title is a derivative of the name of that particular city. Others state that it is of French origin and became a favorite dance of the Empress Eugenie after its introduction at the Tuileries balls. Those who have attributed its source to Italy, where it was known as La Versuvianna, have pointed out a possible connection between the Varsovienne and Mount Vesuvius as the source of its title. In Spain and Mexico, it is known as La Varsoviana and the dance is accompanied by the singing of words suggestive of the step patterns executed.

Despite these discrepancies among dance historians with reference to the ultimate origin of the Varsovienne and its somewhat questionable allocation to any specific country, data gathered seem to substantiate the following conclusions: first, the Varsovienne is a traditional dance form common to many countries, danced in triple meter in either a two or three-part form; second, the Varsovienne was originally a peasant or folk dance which probably developed first in Sweden and was carried to other European countries as well as to Mexico and the United States in the same manner in which other folkways have been exchanged; third, during the middle of the nineteenth century, the Varsovienne was sponsored by dancing masters in various countries who introduced it, with certain adaptations, as a popular social dance form to the ballrooms of the royal courts and more sophisticated circles; and finally, while the Varsoviennes of various countries claiming it as an indigenous dance differ somewhat in name and step pattern, there are decided similarities consonant with the traditional form of the dance to which all versions belong.

The Danish Varsovienne is very similar to the Swedish and Norwegian folk dances of the same title in that the melody to which they are danced is identical and the version representative of each of these countries follows the same form using the varsovienne step in Figure I, a combination of the varsovienne step and a mazurka in Figure II, and a waltz in Figure III. This identity of the Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian Varsoviennes is not surprising in view of the kinship between these three Scandinavian countries.

Formation: Any number of couples in a double circle facing CCW, M on L of Partner in open social dance position, outside hands on hips.

### Figure I

- 1 Both beginn L, M dances in place while W dances across in front of M making a complete turn L to finish on L of partner, facing in original direction, position of arms reversed, with one varsovienne step as follows:
  - 1 Step L
  - 2 Step R
  - 3 Step L

- 2 1 Place heel of R foot diagonally forward to floor, toes up.  
 2-3 Hold position.  
 3-8 Repeat 3 times, beginning alternately R, L, R. On each varsovienne step, the M swings the W forward and across in front of him with the arm which he holds in back of her and around her waist, receiving her with the opposite arm as she dances into place beside him.

Figure II

In the original starting position, beginning on L feet, partners progress forward CCW around the large circle with the mazurka step as follows:

- 9 1 Stamp L.  
 2 Close R foot to L, taking weight R, at same time kicking L leg forward.  
 3 Hop on R foot, bending L knee which remains lifted in front.  
 10 1-3 Repeat  
 11-12 Beginning L, all dance 1 varsovienne step as analyzed in Meas 1-2.  
 13-16 Repeat all, beginning R, with W beginning on L of partner. W takes weight on L foot at end of the varsovienne step (ct 3 of meas. 16) so that her R foot is free to begin Figure III.

Figure III

- 17-24 In closed social dance position (M beginning with L, W with R), couples make four turns CW while progressing CCW around the large circle with 8 waltz steps. W hold ct 3 on the last waltz step finishing with weight on R and the L free to repeat the dance from the beginning.

Repeat entire dance as many times as desired.