

Swedish Varsovienne

(Swedish)

A brief resume of the origin of the Varsovienne, common to many countries, appears in conjunction with the analysis of this popular folk dance within the unit of Danish dances of the present collection along with an analysis of the Varsovienne and the music to which it is danced by the Danish people. Inasmuch as the Swedish Varsovienne is danced to the same music and is identical in step pattern and form, only the few differences which obtain between the Danish and Swedish versions of the Varsovienne are pointed out in this particular unit. In other words, those wishing to include the Varsovienne in a unit of Swedish folk dances may refer to the analysis of and music for the Danish dance of the same title, observing the slight differences explained below.

The folklorist is reminded of the fact that although the Varsovienne is a traditional dance form common to many countries, it probably originated as a Swedish folk dance. Among Swedish groups today, it is danced in two slightly different versions. The first is the peasant or folk dance which differs only from the Danish Varsovienne in two regards: (1) partners begin on outside feet in Figures I and II thus obviating any change of weight for the waltz in social dance position in Figure III; (2) the first step pattern in Figure II is simpler and more casual than the mazurka in the Danish Varsovienne in that it consists of two steps forward and a hop on the supporting foot, the free foot raised forward slightly with a bent knee.

The second version of the Swedish Varsovienne is designated as the ballroom Varsovienne and is more modern than the Swedish peasant or folk dance of the same title. It differs from the peasant or folk version only with respect to the positions of partners in Figures I and II, the direction in which the varsovienne steps are danced in these two Figures, and the feet on which they begin. In the ballroom version of the Swedish Varsovienne, couples stand side by side, man to the left and slightly in back of his partner with his right arm extended behind her shoulders to clasp her right hand in his right above her right shoulder; he clasps her left hand in his left, her left arm extended across and in front of his chest. Both begin with the left foot and, as the varsovienne steps are taken, the woman crosses alternately to the man's left and right WITHOUT TURNING while he dances the same steps alternately to his right and left in back of her so that each exchange of places results in a reversal of the positions of hands and arms. The woman looks at her partner over her shoulder as both touch the heel of the same foot lightly to the floor, diagonally forward, toes up. This is the same position used in the American Varsovienne, and the step differs only in that heels, NOT toes, are touched to the floor in the Swedish version of the dance.

Since both the man and the woman begin Figures I and II of the ballroom version of the Swedish Varsovienne on the same foot (Left), the woman must transfer her weight to the left at the end of Figure II in order to begin the waltz of Figures III on her right.