



Scandinavian Couple Dance Basics

Scandinavian Dancers of Vancouver BC

SCANDINAVIAN COUPLE DANCE BASICS

A few words about the teaching

The dance steps listed below will be taught over this 9-week session. All of them appear in a wide variety of Scandinavian dances, and many of them are found in other “old-time” or “folk” dance traditions.

Buzz or Swing (as in contra & square dancing)

Snoa (walk and pivot)

Schottis or Reinlender

Waltz

Polka

Hambo (Swedish turning dance)

Polska or Pols (chiefly Swedish & Norwegian turning dances)

From 7:30 to 9:00, we'll work on these steps, putting them to use in a variety of dances. Everyone is then welcome to join in on general social dancing in the main hall. The social dance programme always includes dances you have learned. In addition, you're encouraged to write requests on the dance board - so all in all, this is a great opportunity to have fun practicing your new dances.

General observations about Scandinavian-style couple dancing:

- ❖ The “How” of couples is almost always counter-clockwise around the dance floor. Even if you've done ballroom or contra dancing, this “flow” may be new to you.
- ❖ While flowing counter-clockwise around the room, individual couples are usually rotating clockwise on their own axis. These couple turns can sometimes be a challenge to learn, but once learned, they can feel quite exhilarating, sublime or even meditative.
- ❖ Scandinavian dances are very egalitarian. Although the man leads, the energy for the turns is provided equally, or almost equally, by the woman. No free rides, ladies!
- ❖ Body movement in Scandinavian dancing tends to be fairly natural, based on the mechanics of walking. No “tippy-toes” or other artificial stylings.
- ❖ For the couple turns to work, it's important that the couple have a firm upper-body “framework”. To accomplish this, Scandinavians often use “polska hold” or “shoulder-waist hold”, though the more familiar “ballroom hold” is also found.