

## RØROSPOLS

Norwegian

PRONUNCIATION: RUHR-ohs-pohls

TRANSLATION: Dance from Røros

SOURCE: Dick Oakes learned this dance from Gordon E. Tracie who did extensive research on the Rørospols. At the original time of presentation of his writing, it was the only written information and dance description available on this unique dance form, either in Norway or the United States. Many teachers have taught Rørospols, including Ingvar Sodal at the 1970 and 1971 San Diego State College Folk Dance Conference, Bruce Taylor at the 1970 Stockton Folk Dance Camp, and John Hancock at the 1973 Idyllwild Folk Dance Workshop.

BACKGROUND: Rørospols is a couple dance from the mining town of Røros in eastern Norway and is as genuine a folk dance as may be found in all of Scandinavia. It is one of the Norwegian "bygdedansar," or regional ethnic dances. "Pols" is a generic name for a type of dance known as "rundspolska," which means "clockwise turning." Among the art treasures preserved in Gropsholm Castle near Stockholm, Sweden, there is a wall textile from around the year 1500 showing four couples in various dance positions in which every detail corresponds to the figures of the Rørospols exactly as it is danced today. Thus, the Swedish tapestry indicates that this most ancient of couple dances, once common throughout northern Scandinavia (it was danced in western Sweden up to around the early 1900s) has managed to survive a span of five centuries in Norway without perceptible change.

Among Norse wedding customs was a widespread tradition of a bride's dance done to pols music. All the men, including the minister, took turns dancing with the bride – clearly a pre-Reformation custom. The dance seems to have had two parts: a slow, dignified opening followed by a fast, gyrating "round dance." Quite likely, the Gammal Polska of Sweden and the Sønderhoning of Denmark are remnants of this same tradition. In all of these dances, however, the slow fore-dance music has given way to the livelier after-dance music, leaving the introductory figures to be danced to the same rhythm as the following fast turn. In most areas of Norway, the latter fast part, usually danced in Closed Position, is the only figure still danced (an example is the Springpols which is similar to the Hambo Polska). Only in the district of Røros has the entire "original" sequence of figures survived in suite form.

MUSIC: Viking (45rpm) V 307;  
Harmoni (45rpm) NGK TD-7;  
Karussell (LP) 2915058 "Gammeldans frå Rørostraktom," side 1, bands 1,4,9 and side 2, bands 2,6,8;  
Polydor (LP) 2920 125, "Sven Nuhus' Kvartett og Sekstett," side A, bands 2,8 and side B, bands 2,5,9;  
Polydor (LP) 2920 105, "Med Hopp og Hiv til Sven Nyhus' Kvartett," side 1, abands 1,4,8 and side 2, bands 5,8.

Geisler, Richard. Sheet music, "Lark in the Morning Free Music Library,"  
<http://larkinam.com/LITMLibrary.html#Geisler>.

FORMATION: Cpls facing CCW around the dance area with W to M R side, inside hands joined and held down at sides, free hands hanging naturally at sides.

METER/RHYTHM: 3/4

STEPS/STYLE: OPEN POLS: Both M and W step L fwd (ct 1); pause (ct 2); step R fwd (ct 3). The movement is smooth and flowing and resembles an ordinary, natural walking step with the heel making contact first and with the wt rolling fwd onto the ball of the ft in LOD.

TRANSITION "A": W crosses over in front of M as she twirls CCW under joined L hands (W ends on M R side). Dance pos now changes so that the M still holds W L hand with his L, but directly in front of them with elbows bent, in addition to which he places his R hand under L forearm and grasps her L wrist with his R hand.

TRANSITION "B": Preferably occurring on the LAST meas of a phrase, M stamp L in place without wt, stopping his fwd movement and simultaneously leading W across to his L side (ct 1); W completes her 1/4 CCW turn across in front of M to end in Closed Pos with a pivot on her L as M pauses on his L (ct 2); both step R (ct 3).

REVERSE TURN: This step takes 2 meas to complete. Cpl assumes a Closed Reverse Pols turning pos: with L shldr somewhat adjacent, ptrs place L arms around each other's waist, R arms sharply bent with R hands holding ptrs upper arm.

MAN'S STEP: Step L fwd, turning L toe slightly outward (ct 1); pause on L (ct 2); pivoting CCW on L, step R next to L (ct 3); Small lift on R heel (ct &); step L bwd perpendicularly to R heel (ct 4); pause on L (ct 5); pivoting CCW on L, step R next to L in LOD (ct 6).

WOMAN'S STEP: Step slightly bwd on L with toe turned slightly out (ct 1); step R next to L (ct 2); pivoting CCW on R, step L fwd, L toe turned slightly out (ct 3); small quick step R fwd (ct &); Step fwd L with L toe turned slightly out (ct 4); pause on L (ct 5); pivoting CCW on L, step R next to L in RLOD (ct 6).

TRANSITION "C": As M steps bwd on ct 4 of Reverse Turn, he grasps W L hand with his R and twirls her one or more times CCW under raised joined hands with the following steps: M continues fwd with Open Pols steps as W pauses on both (ct 1); step L, turning CCW (ct 2); step R, turning CCW (ct 3). (Or, W may turn with the basic pols step.) As the M determines, he lowers their joined hands between them, stopping her turn, and assumes a Semi-Closed Pols pos with M R arm around W waist, W L arm on M R shldr, M L and W R hands are joined and held fwd, except that W R palm is down and M L hand grasps her fingers from the top.

TRANSITION "D": Without pausing, M steps L across in front of W as she pauses on both and they assume closed pos dancing the Pols turn.

POLS TURN: This step takes one meas to complete. Cpl assumes a Closed Pols turning pos: R hand on ptrs back slightly above waist, L hand on back of ptrs shldr

with L elbows bent, ptrs slightly to L of each other.

MAN'S STEP: Step L, leading around W with toe turned in (ct 1); Pivot CW on L, keeping R close by so that it trails around in contact with the floor and bending knees slightly (ct 2); continuing to turn CW to complete one full revolution, step R in LOD (ct 3).

WOMAN'S STEP: Pause on L, touching R beside L as in "both" (ct 1); step R between M ft with R toe turned out and bending knees slightly (ct 2); step L, leading around M with toe turned in (ct 3).

W ftwk is very close together and low to the floor and her turning is determined by the M as he leads her in the Pols.

TRANSITION "E": When the M determines, and with firm control in the process, he releases the W out to the R and the cpl separates--the M continues fwd in LOD with Open Pols steps as the W makes a turn CW with another Pols Turn step, falling behind the M and then trailing him with the Open Pols step. (Or M may stop W with no turn.)

There is no fixed number of times each step of the sequence is danced to the music available but is determined by each M at his own discretion.

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MEAS

MOVEMENT DESCRIPTION

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INTRODUCTION

None.

I. OPEN POLS

M takes his ptr by inside hand (M R, W L) as they progress around the dance area in LOD. After a few meas, M changes her L hand into his L hand across behind his back as she trails behind and gradually comes up alongside M L side. The Open Pols step is used throughout.

II. TRANSITION "A"

The Open Pols step is used throughout.

III. OPEN POLS

In the wrist-hold pos that ptrs changed into in Transition "A," continue in LOD with the Open Pols step.

IV. TRANSITION "B"

M leads into Transition "B" on the last meas of a phrase.

V. REVERSE TURN

This step is continued for an indefinite number of times as determined by the M.

#### VI. TRANSITION "C"

M continues in LOD with Open Pols steps as W dances both-L-R.

#### VII. OPEN POLS

In the Semi-Closed Pos that ptrs changed into in Transition "C," continue in LOD with the Open Pols step.

#### VIII. TRANSITION "D"

This quick transition is actually the first step of the Pols Turn that follows.

#### IX. POLS TURN

This step is continued for an indefinite number of times as determined by the M.

#### X. TRANSITION "E"

This transition concludes the Rørospols sequence.

Repeat entire dance from beg.