

Klapok from Łowicz (Poland)



I first learnt this dance in 1989 during the World Festival of Polish Folklore in Poland, in which, Sławomir Mazurkiewicz, well-known Łowicz expert from Lodz, used it in his choreography for the finale number involving many dance groups from around the world. He explained to me that like many other regions of the country this clapping (klapać means to clap in Polish and hence the name) dance is meant to be done for fun by people of all ages from young children to the very old. There are many variations of the dance and I have included one that, although quite simple, is very enjoyable to do.

Pronunciation: KLAH-pohk

Music: Excerpt from the “Łowicz i Opoczno Suite” recorded by the folk band of the Folk Dance Company Podhale of Montreal, Canada. Edited by Richard Schmidt. (2/4 Meter – 1 measure = cts 1, &, 2, &)

Formation: Circle of couples in the closed-social position facing each other with the man facing the LOD.

Styling: Couples

Basic Steps

Style and Posture

The dance is quite simple and made for all ages so there is no particular style or posture expected.

Side Step

Man always starts with L ft and Woman always starts with R ft. As the name indicates couples move sideways in a designated pattern.

Man – Take a step to the Left with L ft (ct 1, &) and bring R ft next to the L ft (cts 2, &). Holding in closed-social position with partner’s R hand in his L, he extends his L arm out to the L parallel to the floor on ct 1 and holds it there for ct &. On ct 2 he brings his L arm back to his L side but continues the swinging motion by bending his arm at the elbow and bringing the hand in between himself and his partner just below the chest and holds it there on the ct &.

Woman – Follows with her partner, beginning with R ft to the Right allowing her partner to control her arm movement.

Clapping Variation 1

Couples stand facing each other approximately 1 to 2 feet apart and follow the precise sequence below:

Measure 1:

Ct 1& - Bending knees slightly, clap both hands on the front of your own thighs (L hand on L thigh/R hand on R thigh)

Ct 2 - Straightening knees clap own hands together at chest level

Ct & - Hands are held slightly apart after clapping

Measure 2:

Ct 1& - Clap R hand with partner’s R hand

Ct 2& - Make a small jump with both feet kept together and put your fists on your hips

Measure 3:

Same as Measure 1

Measure 4:

Same as measure 2 but use Left Hand and make a small jump on ct 2&

Measure 5:

Same as Measure 1

Measure 6:

Ct 1& - Clap R hand with partner's R hand

Ct 2& - Clap L hand with partner's L hand

There is no jump this measure

Measure 7:

Same as Measure 1

Measure 8:

Ct 1& - Clap both hands with partner – R to L and L to R

Ct 2& - Make a small jump and place fists on hips

**Clapping
Variation 2**

Couples stand facing each other approximately 1 to 2 feet apart and follow the precise sequence below:

Measure 1:

Ct 1& - Bending knees slightly, clap both hands on the front of your own thighs (L hand on L thigh/R hand on R thigh)

Ct 2 - Straightening knees clap own hands together at chest level

Ct & - Hands are held slightly apart after clapping

Measure 2:

Ct 1& - Clap R hand with partner's R hand

Ct 2& - Make a small jump with both feet kept together and do a ½ turn so that you end with your back to your partner while putting your fists on your hips. Turns are made facing the ctr of the circle (men turn CCW – left shoulder back while women turn CW – right shoulder back)

Measure 3:

Same as Measure 1

Measure 4:

Ct 1& - Clap L hand with new partner's L hand (this is the man or woman of the couple next to you in the circle)

Ct 2& - Make a small jump with both feet kept together and do a ½ turn so that you end facing your partner while putting your fists on your hips. Turns are made facing the ctr of the circle (men turn CW – right shoulder back while women turn CCW – left shoulder back)

Measure 5:

Same as Measure 1

Measure 6:

Ct 1& - Clap R hand with partner's R hand

Ct 2& - Clap L hand with partner's L hand

There is no jump this measure

Measure 7:

Same as Measure 1

Measure 8:

Ct 1& - Clap both hands with partner – R to L and L to R

Ct 2& - Make a small jump and place fists on hips

Hand Formations

Closed-Social

Partners stand facing each other as in social dancing position. Man places his R arm around woman's waist and extends L arm out to his left with palm facing down. Woman places her L hand on Man's R shoulder and places her R hand in Man's L hand also palm down.

Individual

When dancing without a partner hands should be made into fists and kept on the dancer's hips

Figures

Introduction (4 meas)

Meas 1 - 4 Couples wait in a large circle in the closed-social position with Man holding his partner's R hand in his L with the arms kept parallel to the body. Men are facing the LOD while women have their backs to the LOD.

Fig. 1 (16 meas)

Meas 1 – 16 Couples will take a total of 16 Side Steps in this figure forming a Figure 8 lying on its side as shown in the diagram. Couple begin and end where the arrow is placed, starting by going twrds the ctr of the circle. All couples should be moving at the same pace. 2 measures to the ctr, 4 measures out and across and 2 measures back into the diameter line of the circle to equal 8 measures and then the same proportions to return to original place in the circle.

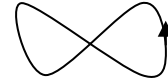


Fig. 2 (16 meas)

Meas 1 - 8 Clapping – Variation 1

Meas 9 - 16 Clapping – Variation 2 – It is worth noting that the music is slowed down for the first 4 measures and then speeded up for the last 4 measures, in this variation to add variety to the dance.

Pattern

The dance begins with an intro of four measures in which the couples prepare themselves for the dance by standing in the opening position. The complete dance consists of 2 Figures done one after another. The complete dance is done 4 times from beginning to end. The introduction music is played only once at the very beginning. The pattern is therefore the following:

Intro,[Fig. 1, Fig. 2], [Fig. 1, Fig. 2], [Fig. 1, Fig. 2], [Fig. 1, Fig. 2].

Dance notes and presentation: Richard Schmidt