

Danse vanlig

The name “Danse vanlig” means “ordinary way of dancing”. When I arrived in Norway in the mid-1970s, there was still a dance every Saturday night in many communities. People usually went to the dance regularly from the time they were confirmed (age 14) until they got married, although those who really enjoyed dancing might continue throughout their lives.

This dance can be done to virtually any kind of music, including slow pop music, tangos, rock-and-roll, and gammeldans music. Indeed, it was one of very few dances that people knew how to do. (They might also know swing and waltz.) It was common to put in a few variations that reflected the flavor of the music, especially in tangos. Internationally, we would call this dance a type of foxtrot.

Recordings: Almost any kind of 2/4 or 4/4 music, especially slow Scandinavian “dance band” music.

Meter: 2/4

Formation: Couples holding ballroom pos. Usually, the M starts facing LOD. The dance progresses in LOD, although the dancers are not usually in a strict circle – the dancing couples do not usually related to one another.

Steps: Byttomfot (change-of-step), walk. The basic step is one byttomfot plus one walk, starting on L for M and on R for W. Notice how this step “crosses” the music, with a 6 ct pattern against 8 ct music. Notice also that, by starting on ct 2 instead of ct 1, we could say “slow-slow-quick-quick”.

Ct	Movement
1	Start with M facing LOD, W facing him. Swinging round to face outside (turning CW), M step to L on L (ct 1), on R beside L (ct &).
2	Continuing to turn CW to face RLOD, M step bkwd on L in LOD, W fwd on R. This completes the “byttomfot”.
3	M step diag bkwd on R in LOD, and start to turn CCW, ending facing away from ctr. W step diag fwd on L.
4	Facing outside, M step to L on L (ct 1), on R beside L (ct &).. Continue turning CCW.
5	Continuing to turn CCW to face LOD, M step fwd on L in LOD, W fwd L.
6	M step diag fwd on R in LOD, and start to turn CW, ending facing away from ctr. W step diag fwd on L.

Notes

- (1) Some men dance in a straight line. Some move twd ctr in ct 3-5 and away in ct 6-2.
- (2) Some men might begin with 3 cts (one step pattern) going straight fwd in LOD.
- (2) Variations inserting one or more slow reinlender turns between cts 3-4 (CW) or between cts 6-1 (CCW) are common. Fast CW turns are also possible.