

Per Spelmann (Norway)

Per Spelmann is one of the very early Norwegian song dances, created shortly after 1900 and performed in 1902. Song dances in Norway are a revival found mainly in organized folk dancing (as opposed to song games, which are widely practiced). The purpose of the dances was to get people to sing the songs. Every school child in Norway learns this song. The title means "Per Fiddler", where spelmann may also be spelled spelemann, spellmann or spillemann.

Source: Semb, Klara, Norske Folkedanser, Songdansar, Oslo 1991.
ISBN 82-521-2621-9.

Music: 6/8

Recordings: In Norway, the singing of the dancers would be the only music. For Americans, we can dance to recordings. *Per Spelmann*, by Pudding TV, is sung the way we dance, although it is a bit mechanical sounding. *Per Spellemann*, by Geirr Lystrup, has more of the folk sound, but you will need to repeat the basic step in the musical interludes.

Formation: Couples standing in a circle facing ctr, W to M's right. Couples are not strictly necessary. Arms are held at shoulder height.

Meas Ct Movement

Basic folk song step (folkevisesteg)

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|---|---|--|
| 1 | 1 | Facing slightly L and moving hands to L, step on L to L. |
| | 3 | Step on R beside L. |
| | 4 | Step on L to L. |
| | 6 | Close R to L and turn to face slightly R, moving hands to R. |
| 2 | 1 | Step on R to R. |
| | 2 | Close L to R. |
| | 3 | Rise up on toes. |
| | 4 | Lower weight and then hold. |

Repeat as needed. Dance 4 times in all in the straight song. For the Geirr Lystrup recording, you'll need to add extra times for the musical breaks.

Chorus – step swings

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|---|-----|--|
| 1 | 1 | With hands in W position, step on L to L. |
| | 3 | Swing R ft in front of L, lowering wt on ct 3. |
| | 4 | With hands in W position, step on R to R. |
| | 6 | Swing L ft in front of R, lowering wt on ct 6. |
| 2 | | Repeat meas 1. |
| 3 | 1-3 | Repeat meas 1, cts 1-3. |
| | 4 | Close R beside L. |

/:Per Spelmann han hadde ei einaste ku,:/
/:Han bytta bort kua, fekk fela igjen.:/
Du gode, gamle fiolin, du fiolin, du fela mi!

/:Per Spelmann han spela og fela ho let,:/
/:så gutane dansa og jentene gret.:/
Du gode, gamle fiolin, du fiolin, du fela mi!

/:Per Spelmann han spela og fela var god,:/
/:så gutane dansa og jentene lo.:/
Du gode, gamle fiolin, du fiolin, du fela mi!

/:Og om eg vert gamal som stein under bru,:/
/:nei aldri eg byter bort fela for ku.:/
Du gode, gamle fiolin, du fiolin, du fela mi!

/:Og om eg vert gamal som mose på tre,:/
/:nei aldri eg byter bort fela for fe.:/
Du gode, gamle fiolin, du fiolin, du fela mi!

In the Pudding recording, they sing “gamle, gode” instead of “gode, gamle”.

Translation:

Per Fiddler had only a single cow,
He traded away the cow, got his fiddle back.
You good old violin, my violin, my fiddle.

Per Fiddler he played and the fiddle rang out,
So that the boys danced and the girls cried.

Per Fiddler he played and the fiddle was good,
So that the boys danced and the girls laughed.

And if I become old like the rocks under a bridge,
I'll never again trade away my fiddle for a cow.

And if I become old like the moss on a tree,
I'll never again trade away my fiddle for cattle.
You good old violin, my violin, my fiddle.

Presented by Alix Cordray