

Springleik fra Vågå

The springleik from Vågå is the bygdedans from the area around the town of Vågå. Nearly every region of Norway has its own bygdedans, called *springar* (and *gangar*) in the south and west, *pols* in the north and east, and *springleik* in the middle.

As far as I know, springleik was introduced in the US by Mary Barthelemy and Ingvar Sødal. Later, the dance has been presented numerous times, especially by Tor Stallvik, an excellent instructor who was a long time resident of the area. Other teachers from the region who have taught in the US are Knut Odnnes, Ivar Odnnes, Leif Inge Schjølberg, and Ola Grøslund.

The springleik from Vågå is one of several variations found in the Ottadal offshoot of the long Gudbrandsdal valley. These variations are mostly slight variations in the figures, but in one place (Lom) the woman's and man's step in the final turn are swapped.

In 1970, Statens Filmsentral (The State Film Archive) made a film together with Noregs Ungdomslag showing many of the variations. This film is now available on YouTube from Nasjonalbiblioteket (The National Library). Search for "Springleik fra Gudbrandsdalen).

The springleik from Vågå is the variation most commonly danced in Norway outside its home area. In Oslo, there are many good musicians who play the music and there has been a concerted effort over a number of years to revive the dance among folk dancers.

Recordings: Any springleik played in the Gudbrandsdal style.

Meter: 3/4. It is characteristic that the third beat starts a bit late. The amount varies from fiddler to fiddler, and from tune to tune. It can even vary within the same tune.

Formation: Couples facing LOD, holding nearer hands. A variety of starting hand-holds are acceptable.

Steps: There are two main steps, with 3 and 2 changes-of-weight per measure. In principle, you can use either step most of the time, except in the couple turns. In earlier times, many men (but not usually women) used mostly 2 changes of weight. Currently, it is most common to use 3 changes of weight most of the time.

3 change-of-weight step. Short step fwd on L (ct 1), step slightly fwd on R (ct 2), longer step fwd (ct 3). Repeats with opposite feet. Lead with your heel as in ordinary walking (ct 1), step on ball of foot (ct 2), and lead with heel or step on whole foot (ct 3). There is a svikt (bounce) on each step. The ct 3 is slightly delayed, and the dancer should try to wait for the musician's beat before stepping. (We used to do this step with only 2 svikts, and a very long and low push fwd between cts 2 and 3. This style is now regarded as a bit exaggerated.)

2 change-of-weight step. Short step fwd on L (ct 1), svikt while swinging R ft fwd (ct 2), longer step fwd on R (ct 3). Repeats on the same ft. Can also be

done on R ft. It is most common for M to use L and W to use R. While turning, you may place the ball of the free foot on the floor on ct. 2.

Style: The movement in LOD is continuous, although not always at the same speed. This has a drone quality, and is a common trait of many eastern bygdedans in Norway. The accenting of the music is mainly with step variations and the svikt (bounce), which can vary a lot according to mood, variations in the music, and communication with partner. The woman's svikt is generally more subdued than the man's, and her whole style is "smoother" than his.

Bygdedans is generally regarded as form of conversation – between the two partners, and between the couple and the musicians. Making something happen in this conversation is generally more important than having perfect steps.

Meas Movement

I Opening & promenade

- 1-2 Dance fwd for a few meas to get into the feeling of the music and your partner. It works best if you have opposite feet, but it is not absolutely required.
- 3 The M signals that he is about to begin. I like it very much if the M turns slightly twd his partner, but other signals are also possible.
- 4 The M lifts the joined hands and turns W to her R about 3/4 turn.
- 5 M leads W around behind him. She should have her side toward his back as she crosses. The W does *not* move in RLOD. Instead, he moves slightly faster than she does, so there is room for her to cross behind.
- 6 The W continues around, coming up on the inside of the M and facing LOD.
- 7 M leads the W into the "rock". He changes to his L hand holding her L. Lift the joined arms over her head as she turns L to face diagonally toward the center. He lowers the joined hands to roughly her shoulder level. (Some feel that this needs to be on a given foot for the W; I think the W should just do it on whichever foot he leads). It works best if the M leads the turn so W is facing center on ct 1 of a meas.
- 8 M lifts joined hands and swings W across in front of him. She ends on the outside track and they join R hands under L.

The measures given above are the way many experienced dancers phrase the movement, but they are not absolute. You can dance fwd more than 2 meas before starting. You can pause for a measure or more at meas 6. The "rock", however, is very characteristic and is usually not divided up.

II Turn the girl, lausdans, and join together on "wrong" side

- 1-4 Moving fwd, man lifts joined hands, brings W in front of him, and starts turning her CCW. Keep the hands joined as long as possible, more than 1 turn. After that he lets go with his L and she keeps turning under his R. She can use 3 changes-of-weight steps, using 2 meas for one turn. Most experienced W change to the 2 changes-of-weight after a couple of meas. Change when you have your R ft free, and make one turn per meas. Step on R in LOD, turning twd L (ct 1), continue turning on R while placing ball of L on floor (ct 2), continue turning and step L fwd in LOD (ct 3). After a few measures, the M lets go entirely and W keeps turning.
- 5-10 M dances fwd, past W, and to the outside track. As he crosses to the outside (and afterward), he can make a few one measure turns CW (using L 2 changes-of-weight, touching R ball to floor on ct 2). He may also cross behind W rather than in front of her.
- 11-16 M extend his L arm to W. She sees it and stops turning, placing her R arm around him at waist level. His L is now around her waist over her R. They dance fwd in LOD. (If the W is not able to turn until the M signals, she can of course stop and just continue dancing fwd.)

The measures given above are very approximate. Especially in the parts from meas 5-16, the phrasing is quite variable and you can do the movements for a longer or shorter time.

There are quite a few variations of this part. A common one is a pancake turn, without any lausdans. As in meas 1-4, the M starts to turn the W CCW in front of him. He keeps both hands joined and, as she completes her first turn, he moves up next to her on the outside. There he turns once himself CW under the joined hands (lifting his L hand), then turns W once more CCW and leads her into the final position.

III Couple turn

- 1 The M makes a transition to bring the W into a closed position. The most common is for him to do a 3-change-of-weight step on his R and bring the W in front of him. (If the W has the opposite ft, she also does a 3-change-of-weight. But if she has the same ft, she changes ft by doing a 2-change-of-weight step as she crosses in front of him.) Because of the position of the arms when they start, the W R arm will be under the M L. Usually the M R arm is around the W, while her L rests on his R shoulder or upper arm.
- 2-3 Do a slow 2-measure CW turn with 3-change-of-weight steps, speeding up the rotation at the end. (This is called "skotske springaren".)
- 4-8 Do 5 one measure CW turns, each turn with a 2-change-of-weight-step. M steps around W on L (ct 1), svikt on L (ct 2), surge fwd in LOD on R (ct 3). W steps fwd twd M on R (ct 2), svikt and pivot on R (ct 2), surge bkwd in LOD on L (ct 3). The turn has an oval rather than round shape. To make this happen, turn quite sharply on 1-2 and then surge forward or backward in LOD on ct 3.

The measures given are very approximate. You can repeat meas 2-3 more times. However, many experienced dancers leave it out altogether going straight from meas 1 to 4.

M can go in front of W on meas 1, so that the first turns are CCW instead of CW. Reverse direction on one meas (usually with M facing LOD) and then do 0-2 slow turns before going into the fast turn.

M may dance straight forward for a few meas, especially before meas 2 or in the transition from the slow to the fast turn.

Dancers may choose to dance only the 2 measure turn (with no fast turns).

Repeat dance from meas 1 part I

Open out to start over.

On the repeat, the M may just lead the W across behind in the first part, leaving out the her CW turn. It used to be traditional for the W to do the CW turn only the first time – the M was “trying out” the W.

Experienced dancers will usually change from one part to another approximately when the musical phrase changes. They will also usually dance once through the dance for each time through the music (if the music is squarely phrased, and if the dancers start when the music starts). No matter when the dancers start dancing, they always start at the beginning of the dance.

A certain amount of individuality in both steps and phrasing is not only encouraged, but highly prized.

Presented by Alix Cordray and Gunnar Bogsrud