

Springleik frå Vågå Gudbrandsdal

Springleik comes from the area in and around Gudbrandsdal, Norway. Gudbrandsdal is a cultural area located in the *fylke* or county of Oppland. Located just west of Østerdal, Gudbrandsdal is the more or less north-south valley that begins north of Oslo (around Hamar) and continues for 125 miles north west up towards Trondheim (to Dombås). It provides the main route between Oslo, the capital, and Trondheim. There are smaller side valleys that open onto Gudbrandsdal from an east west direction, mainly on the western side of the valley. Vågå is in Ottadalen, one of the western side valleys.

Gudbrandsdal is a rich agricultural area in Norway today and has been throughout it's history. Lillehammer in Gudbrandsdal is the site of the 1994 winter Olympics.

There are approximately 4000 people living in Vågå. Wintertime in Vågå lasts for almost six months. The main agriculture is growing barley and grass, and raising cattle.

Background

Springleik is a member of the family of dances known as *bygdedansar*, or regional dances. The regional dances make up the core of national dances in Norway. They are thought to have come to Norway in the 1600s. Most of the regional dances have been in continuous tradition since their arrival in Norway. Included in the *bygdedans* family are the couple dances in triple meter; *springar*, *springleik*, *springdans*, and *pols*, the couple dances in duple meter; *gangar*, *bonde*, and *rull/rudl*, and the male dance in duple meter; *halling* or *laus*. The regional dances of Norway are characterized by their individual and distinct styles and rhythms. The dances are all rich in variations, and improvisatory within the confines of the dialect.

The *springleik* dance form is unique unto itself, yet it seems to be a combination of the *pols* tradition of the east and north, and the *springar* tradition from the west and south. It incorporates figures as do the *springar* dances and has a one measure, clockwise, full turn at the end of the dance sequence.

According to Tor Stallvik (1990), the older dancers varied the dance more than one may see today. There was a lot of individuality within the dance form. As the dance became less popular the tradition began to shrink. There were much fewer couples who danced or remembered the dance, thus the range of variation diminished. This happened in the 1940's in particular. In the 1960's there was again greater interest in *springleik* and the dancers wanted to expand or widen the tradition. Those interested in the dance asked the older people what they had done, and how they had danced. Today one finds some couples with a rather specific interpretation of the dance and others with more variety.

The variety in the *springleik* can be within an individual, one community or area and can also be between neighboring areas. Stallvik spoke of variations particular to three different towns, Vågå, Lom and Skjåk. The variations include elements such as the speed of the dance music, the figures and the ways in which the figures are danced.

***Springleik* in the U. S.**

Springleik was introduced in the American Scandinavian dance community by Mary Barthelemy. Mary lived in Heidal, Gudbrandsdal in 1974-75. She learned to play and dance the *Springleik* from Vågå while living there. It was introduced in 1977, in Santa Cruz, CA, at a Scandinavian dance weekend workshop. In 1981 *springleik* was taught at Mendocino Scandia Camp in CA. Mary Barthelemy and Ingvar Sodal taught *springleik* at various workshops around the US.

In 1990 Tor Stallvik re-introduced the *Springleik* from Vågå, Gudbrandsdal at Julian, CA, Thanksgiving weekend camp. Stallvik taught the *Springleik* from Vågå in California and Illinois in April 1992 and returned in July to teach it at Buffalo Gap Scandinavian Week 1992.

The *springleik* may also be danced in the *bygdelaag* from Gudbrandsdal, and/or other Norwegian American groups. This study does not include the Norwegian American dance traditions.

Music

The music is played on the regular fiddle or violin. It is in a 3/4 meter. As with the other *bygdedans* traditions the three beats in the measure are of un-equal length. The music is rich and varied. There are tunes played primarily for listening and also for dancing. In the dance tunes, the rhythm is clearer and more distinct. The foot tapping, rhythm section, is an important part of the music

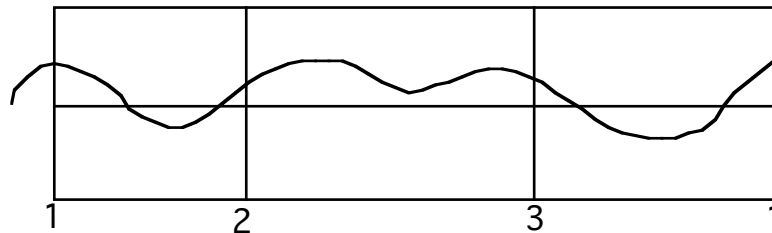
Dance¹

Springleik is a couple dance. The man begins on the inside of the circle with his partner on his right. The dance progresses CCW around the dance space. The dancers may begin dancing with either foot, although I have seen most men begin with the left foot and the women with the right. The dancers begin dancing once the music has started and they are clear of the rhythm and tempo. It is the man that leads, thus signaling the changes to be made in the dance. The dance progresses around the dance space the entire time. There is no dancing on the spot.

COUNTS

¹This is not intended to be a dance description, but instead to add to your own notes or other descriptions. It was written at the request of Tor Stallvik to accompany other descriptions.

	1	2	3
rhythm ²	short	long	medium
texture ³ -young dancers	heavy	light	heaviest
texture -older dancers	light	heavy	heaviest
basic step	step	step	step
step size	short	shortest	longest
part of foot	heel to whole	ball to whole	heel-whole
man's alternate step	step	svikt, svikt	step
woman's 1 meas turn	right	pivot	left
man's 1 meas turn	left	touch right	right
svikt	1 down up	2 down up	3 down up



Notes:

1. One may begin the dance with either foot, though often the men begin with the left and the women begin with the right.
2. There are three steps in each measure in the basic step, that is, a step on each beat.
3. All three steps move forward in the dance direction, though not all the same amount.
4. The down and up movement for count 1 is achieved as a normal part of walking or taking a step.
5. The down up for the 2nd count is achieved by allowing oneself to bounce on the ball of the foot. The articulation is in the foot and in the ankle. Release the muscles and

² Some musicologists may refer to the variation of the length of the beats as beat elongation, or contraction.

³ The texture of the beats may also be referred to as beat emphasis or accent.

allow the heel to come closer to the floor and then raise it up again, hence a bounce movement.

6. The down movement of the third count is larger and more accentuated than any of the other down movements.

7. The men and the women use the same amount of svikt. The women could have a little less, however, it needs to be the same as the man's in the one measure turn.

(Stallvik 1992)

8. Usually there is very little *lausdans*.

9. There is a closed position one measure clockwise turn at the end of a dance sequence.

10. **One must keep the rhythm and the svikt throughout the entire dance.**

11. The CCW turning for the woman may begin on either foot. The woman makes one full CCW turn in each measure. If she begins with the right foot, the turn is R, touch L, L, stepping facing the LOD with the left foot on count 3. If she begins with the left foot the turn is L, touch R, R, with her back to LOD while taking the step on the R on count 3.

12. In the *springleik* one can see all three of the structural elements described by Egil Bakka. The *vendingsdel*, turning/weaving/figuring section; there may be a short *lausdansdel*, or solo section for both the man and the woman; and a *samdansdel* for the couple, expressed especially in the one measure CW turning.

13. The dancers often have the impression that the 3rd beat is the longest, though it is not longest in the music, it feels like the longest from the dancer/movement perspective.