

Let's Dance!

In Wisconsin, music and dance forms have always been an important part of cultural identities in both indigenous and immigrant communities, past and present. This unit focuses on popular traditional dance forms brought to the Upper Midwest by European immigrants: the schottische, the kolo, the gallop, and the waltz. These are dances that students, ages 8 – 18 could learn and enjoy. So, teachers – clear away the desks and chairs and, let's dance!



The Gogebic Range Tamburitzans teaching people how to kolo.
North Country Folk Festival; Ironwood, Michigan, 6/30/79 – 7/1/79
Local Centers, Global Sounds Archives.

<https://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/R6CLOYKEUQ34F8B>

Unit Contents

1. The Schottische - Three Dances, & Dance Steps pp. 2 – 4
2. The Kolo - Two Dances & Dance Steps, and Tamburitzas (Balkan lutes), pp. 5 - 6
3. The Waltz, p. 7
4. The Galop, p. 8
5. Additional Online Resources (for teaching the dances) & References Cited, p. 9

The Schottische

The schottische is a popular European dance that most likely originated in Bohemia, and became popular throughout Europe during the late 1800s. Although the German name “schottische” means “Scottish,” the name does not indicate the origins of the dance. With its proliferation throughout Europe and the United States, there are many variations to the schottische dance.

These basic schottische steps and patterns are adapted from the *Children’s Folk Dances* CD (1998; Kimbo Educational). The patterns fit well with the Finnish “Ennen Mä Hyppään,” schottische, and the Norwegian “Oh Susanna,” both of which have a simple A-B pattern. More complex dance patterns may be added, depending on the age and ability of the students. The “La Crosse Schottische,” has a medley of schottische tunes, allowing for more creative variations.

The schottische is a partner dance (holding hands – you can have girl-boy partnering, or not). Have students form a counter-clockwise circle, forming a double “wheel,” with each set of partners forming a spoke on the wheel. Designate the partner on the inside of wheel (on left), as partner #1, and the partner on the outside (on right) of the wheel as partner #2.

I. Ennen Mä Hyppään Kuuseen Ja Mäntyyn (Finnish, instrumental version); George Nousianen, fiddle; Oren Tikkanen, guitar. Audio file: <https://cms.library.wisc.edu/music/wp-content/uploads/sites/18/2020/06/4.4-Ennen-Ma-Hyppaan-Kuuseen-Ja-Mantyyin.mp3>

Section A is danced with partners holding hands, forming a “V”. Since there is no introduction on this track, have dancers stand in place for A1, gently swinging arms and bouncing knees. Start dance at A2.

Form:

A (16 beats) A (16 beats) / B (16 beats) B (16 beats)

A (16 beats) A (16 beats) / B (16 beats) B (16 beats)

A

Beats: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

Steps: Step R, Step L, Step R, Hop R, Step L, Step R, Step L, Hop L

Beats: 5 + 6 + 7 + 8 +

Steps: Step R, Hop R, Step L, Hop L, Step R, Hop R, Stop! Rest (Repeat)

B - “Turning” - partners continue moving forward with the step-hop pattern below, as partner #1 turns under partner #2’s arm for 4 counts (beats 1 – 4), then partner #2 turns under partner #1’s arm for 4 counts (beats 5 – 8). Partners should turn in towards one another, not away from.

Dancers continuing moving forward, around the circle with the turning. This step in the B sections can be a walking step, depending on the age, ability, and stamina of dancers.

Section B - Turning

Beats: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4. +

Steps: Step R, Hop R, Step L, Hop L, Step R, Hop R, Step L, Hop L

Beats: 5 + 6 + 7 + 8 +

Steps: Step R, Hop R, Step L, Hop L, Step R, Hop R, Step L, Hop L (Repeat)

2. **Schottische Dance pattern for “Oh Susanna Schottische,”** Norwegian. Performed by Mrs. Vaughn Garfoot, recorded in August, 1946. This schottische tune has an extended AB form, with lots of room to add a variety of folk dance patterns. Use the same dance steps for the A and B patterns, above.

Audio file: <https://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/IO2NFK7LJ5CU78B>

For the promenade hold, have students shake and hold right hands together, then shake and hold left hands on top of right hands (making an “X” shape) and turn forward. As with the Finnish schottische, there is no introduction to the dance, so use AI for that purpose.

All sections are 16 beats

A1 – (wait, partners gently swing arms in hand-holding V, & gently bounce knees)

A2 – Basic step-step-step hop pattern

A3 – Repeat

A4 – Promenade (walking step)

B1 – Turning (see basic step-hop pattern, or students can use a walking step during the B section)

B2 – Repeat

B3 – Promenade (walking step)

A1 – Basic step-step-step hop pattern (as above)

A2 – Repeat

B1 - Turning

B2 – Promenade (walking step)

Suggested Variations:

- Make it a Mixer! On the last four beats of each section (or selected sections), outside partner moves up to meet the next inside partner on the “wheel.”
- Elbow partner swing on repeated A or B sections.
- Create your own variations. Also, see Additional Resources for online videos of Finnish, and other Schottische variations).
- You can break up the “wheel” and have partners dance freely around the room. Have them make up their own patterns.
- For additional variations, see Online Resources at the end of this unit.

3. **LaCrosse Schottische – Medley of Scandinavian Schottisches.** Performed by the Viking Accordion Band, recorded in 1934, in Chicago, Illinois. This lengthier track leaves plenty of room for creativity with variations on the schottische form.

Audio file: <https://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/YZDLYE6IZSHKL9A>

The Kolo

The kolo is one of the most popular, communal Balkan folk dances. The dance is well known for its intricate steps and the erect posture of the dancers (Leary, 1986, p. 15). There are many variations of the kolo, which is often performed at weddings and other festive, social occasions. The name itself may derive from the Slavic word for “wheel.” Kolo tempos are usually fast moving and lively. It is closely related to the Romanian hora and the Bulgarian horo, and is one if many European line dance that have survived since ancient times (Encyclopedia Britannica, online).

Alaj Gigi, is played here by the Balkan Troubadors, a tamburitza ensemble which is a traditional accompaniment to the kolo. The tamburitza is a type of long-necked lute. It was brought by the Ottoman Turks to the Balkans in the 15th century. It is still played today, by Muslims of Bosnia, and in parts of Albania. In other areas, the Middle Eastern form of the instrument was modified to suit Western scales and European design (from *Downhome Dairyland: A Listeners Guide*, Leary & Northland College 1996, p. 95).

I. Alaj Gigi (Kolo), traditional Serbian Song, played by Balkan Troubadors. (Fast, high-energy kolo)

Audio File: <https://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/EAN26RXAF52P59E>

The lyrics to Alaj Gigi lament that “a man what could drive a horse in the old days was much more a man than it takes to drive a car these days” (Leary, 2015, p. 49).



Balkan Troubadors, with tamboritzas (Dan Radakovich, Nick Mitrovich, Lubo Mitrovitch, Bob Rajacich, and George Rajacich) (Leary, 2015, p. 49)

2. Croatian Kolo, Tom Marcinel plays this kolo on the button box accordion, a somewhat unusual instrument for a kolo dance. Tom switches keys to create variation in the short, repetitive melody (Leary & Northland College, 1986). Audio link: <https://cms.library.wisc.edu/music/wp-content/uploads/sites/18/2020/06/5.4-Croatian-Kolo.mp3>

Basic Kolo Steps:

Have students hold hands in line or circle. Using small-medium steps, perform the steps below. These steps are from <https://folkways.si.edu/can-you-kolo-songs-and-dances-from-old-yugoslavia/music/tools-for-teaching/smithsonian>.

Note that these steps do not travel, but move back and forth, R to L.

Dancing one step per beat, moving to the right :

- 1 - Step R with R
- 2- Step R with L to touch R
- 3 - Step R with R
- 4 - Touch L in front of R
- 5 - Step L back in place
- 6 - Touch R in front of L
- 7 - Step R back in place
- 8 - Touch L in front of R

The same sequence, to the left:

- 1 - Step L with L
- 2 - Step L with R,
- 3 - Step L with L
- 4 - Touch R in front of L
- 5 - Step R back in place
- 6- Touch L in front of R
- 7 - Step L back in place
- 8 - Touch R in front of left

Variations:

- For interest, have two lines, one behind the other, moving in opposite directions, with the line behind starting the dance by moving left instead of right (A. Fraioli variation)
- To travel to the right, in a line (with leader) or counterclockwise in a circle, dance steps 1 – 7. On beat 8, step L foot behind R., be ready to step R on beat 1 to continue moving to the right (variation added by A. Fraioli).
- For a very simple young children's kolo (no step-hopping), see additional online resources at the end of this unit.

Waltz

There are many traditional waltzes to be found the Local Centers, Global Sounds archives. I have selected four at various tempos to suit a range of age levels and abilities. The term “waltz” is derived from the German *walzen* (to revolve). It is thought to come from the *landler* folk dance of the 18th century. Waltzes are in triple meter, or $\frac{3}{4}$ time. For easy, step by step instruction on learning to waltz, see Additional online resources at the end of this unit.

Faster Waltzes

1. **Swiss Ländler**, Mrs. Vaughn Garfoot. Recorded August 3rd, 1946; Wisconsin Folksong Collection. Moderately fast tempo: <https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/ALLV2GI56756S78T>

2. **St. Paul Waltz**. Recorded by Okeh Records, 1940-1948. This waltz is up-tempo, good for older students, nimble on their feet!

Audio file: <https://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/EAMHNJEPBPNRG87>

Slower Waltzes

3. **Waltz Varsuienne** Leizime Brusoe, Recorded, August 14 1941

Audio file: <https://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/S57BWF716J3SZ8Q> - WI Folksong Collection

Leizime Brusoe, A “formal waltz” not a “barn dance” waltz.

4. **Grudne Boli (Dream Waltz)** Croatian Tamburitza waltz, by Anne Elias. Recorded November 15th, 1940. Audio file: <https://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/MXBNERQIETSGU8U>



The Croatian Tamburitza Ensemble (Chas. Elias Jr., Martha Elias, Anne Elias, and Mary Filipovich) “Presenting Exotic Music of Jugo-Slavia” brochure, ca. 1940. (Helene Stratman-Thomas collection, Mills Music Library, University of Wisconsin-Madison), Leary, 2015, p. 33

The Galop

The galop is like the polka without the hop! Also, the galop does not change feet; it is danced with the same leg always in front. It is a lively couples dance, in 2/4 time, possibly of Hungarian origin. Step on right foot, hop on left foot while sliding towards right, step on right foot again. On the YouTube clip (link provided in Additional Online Resources), the dancers (ballroom style) change feet every eight (or four, and two) beats. Dance along with Bob Mathiowetz playing this lively galop melody on the concertina.

The Concertina Galop, played by Bob Mathiowetz, on the concertina. (Leary, James P., and Northland College, 1986; See p. 9 of this unit for full citation). Local Centers, Global Sounds UW Digital Collections, audio file: <https://cms.library.wisc.edu/music/wp-content/uploads/sites/18/2020/06/5.9-Concertina-Galop.mp3>

Additional online resources to for learning and teaching the dances:

Schottische: Variations

Click on the following link for a version of a Finnish Schottische danced by the Kivajat Folk Dancers, a children's dance group from Chassell, Michigan. It starts with the basic step, step-step, hop pattern, but then adds more complexity: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xRLu-dq5m0>

For a very pretty and not too complex schottische variation for older elementary and up, see:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-FZFTR-IheM>

Waltz: To learn the basic “box step” pattern of the waltz, see:

1. Waltz Basic Steps | Dance Lesson for Beginners: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9S0444vc8I8>

2. Learn How to Dance the Waltz: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=io3IZ0oKoM8>

Galop: To see a ball-room style gallop steps in action, go to:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=idSvyeWQMhg>

Kolo: for a young children's kolo that uses walking steps throughout (no step-hops) see:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oTSfsWUhrv4>

For school bookings: **The Stoughton Dancers:** This Stoughton High School organization has been going since 1953. They will come to your school to perform and teach. Find out all about them at:

<https://stoughtonnorwegiandancers.com/>

References cited:

- Leary, James P., and Northland College. 1986. *Accordions in the Cutover: Field Recordings of Ethnic Music from Lake Superior's South Shore*. Produced by Northland College. Ashland, WI.; Project Director, James P. Leary.
- Leary, James and Rick March. 1996. *Down Home Dairyland: A Listener's Guide*. Songs from this unit were accessed from “Down Home Dairyland - Extras!,” on the Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures website: <http://csumc.wisc.edu/publications/down-home-dairyland/extras>
- Leary, James P. 2015. *Folksongs of Another America: Field Recordings From the Upper Midwest. 1937 – 1946*. University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, WI.