

KOWOL  
(Poland)

Pronunciation: KOH-vohl

Kowol is a couple dance in 3/4 time from the region of Opoczno (oh-POH-chnoh), situated south of Łódź (wooch), over the Pilica (pee-LEE-tsah) river. Opoczno is part of the Mazowsze (mah-ZOF-sheh) region in central Poland. The Opoczno inhabitants make their living mainly from cultivating crops and raising livestock. The region has also some ceramical industry. The spacious meadows over the Pilica river provide excellent grazing ground for sheep. Their wool supplies plenty of material for weaving. Heavy woven woolen cloth with multicolored narrow stripes is used for making the traditional Opoczno peasant attire. The color combinations are very bold. For instance, a green vest is matched with purple pants, or an orange one with wine-colored pants. The predominant color of a woman's apron will contrast, even almost clash, with that of her dress. There are endless varieties of the color combinations as each weaver follows his or her instinct and imagination. The final touch to the man's and woman's costume is a white shirt or blouse with full sleeves, richly ornamented with cross-stitch embroidery. The artistic craftsmanship of the Opoczno people is also seen in the decorations of the interior of their homes: the furniture is ornamented with carving, the walls with paper cut-outs, and the ceiling with chandeliers ("pająk" - spider), made out



of straw and colored tissue paper. The clay floors, as well as the outside walks, are decorated with yellow sand in geometrical and floral patterns. (Illustrations by M. H. Czurkova, from the book Folklor Regionu Opoczńskiego (Warsaw, 1974) by J. P. Dekowski and Z. Hauke.)

The Opoczno people love to sing and dance. They are also fond of making music, the so-called "muzykowanie." The most characteristic instruments are: the fiddle, the "harmonia" (Polish accordion), bass, trumpet, and drum. The predominant rhythms, as in other parts of central Poland, are in 3/4 and in 3/8 time. There exist in the Opoczno region several amateur village and factory ensembles, who practice the old music, songs, and dances.



KOWOL (continued)

At a special festival in Kazimierz-on-the-Vistula, held every summer in order to promote and encourage the preservation of the work of folk artists (often passed on from parents to children and grandchildren), Ada met this old Opoczno folk band from the village of Rzeczyca (zheh-CHIH-tsah). She taped their music and they showed her the dance Kowol. The name means a blacksmith. The spelling is in "gwara" (peasant talk), in literary Polish it should be "kowal." Contrary to other trade-dances this one does not imitate the work of a blacksmith. The music of Kowol has an interesting changeable tempo. A funny little song goes with it:

Record: JA-222 "Tańce Ludowe z Polski - Volume 3" (Folk Dances from Poland), side B, band 3. 3/4 meter.

Formation: Cpls around a circle, M facing out, ptrs facing each other in closed social dance pos, joined arms extended to side.

MeasPatternINTRODUCTION

- 1-4 No action.
- I. SDWD ROCKING (Melody A - 6 meas repeated)
- 1 Beg outside ft (M L, W R) step sdwd in LOD, bending torso sharply in the same direction (ct 1); close inside ft to the other, straightening torso (ct 2); hold (ct 3). Note: do not lower or raise the joined arms; bending in waist will bring them down and up.
- 2 Repeat action of meas 1, except do not put wt on the last step.
- 3 Using two small, low running steps, cross inside ft in front of the other (ct 1); step sdwd in LOD with outside ft (ct 2); close inside ft to the other ft (ct 3).
- 4-12 Repeat action of meas 1-3 three more times (four times in all).

Variation to Figure I.

- 1-2 Repeat action of meas 1-2, except put wt on the last step.
- 3 With three small running steps do a 1/2 CW turn in place (cts 1,2,3) -- M ends facing in, W out.
- 4-6 Repeat action of Meas 1-3 (Variation) with opp ftwk, but same direction.
- 7-12 Repeat action of meas 1-6 (Variation).

CHORUS: SPIN AND BOW (Melody B - 6 meas repeated).Faster tempo.

- 1-4 With torso erect, beg M L, W R, spin in place with 12 small, flat steps, making as many revolutions as you wish; end cpl facing out.
- Slow tempo.
- 5 With ft slightly apart, knees straight, bend diag in waist in a big bow, bringing joined arms down.

KOWOL (continued)

- 6 Straighten torso and bringing joined arms overhead, bend diag bkwd.  
 7-12 Repeat action of meas 1-6 (Chorus), except do the big bow twd ctr.

- II. TRAVEL FWD AND BKWD (Melody A - 6 meas repeated)  
 1-2 Facing M LOD, W RLOD, acquire round shldr-shldr blade hold and beginning M R, W L, with six small, low running steps move in LOD.  
 3 Do three stamps in place (M, R,L,R, W, L,R,L).  
 4-5 With one step (M L, W R), do a 1/2 CW turn (ct 1 of meas 4), and with the remaining five small running steps continue moving in LOD (M bkwd, W fwd) (cts 2,3 of meas 4 and cts 1-3 of meas 5).  
 6 Repeat action of meas 3 (Figure II)with opp ftwk.  
 7-12 Repeat action of meas 1-6 (Figure II).

REPEAT CHORUS

Repeat the entire dance once more.

<u>Polish text</u>	<u>Pronunciation</u>
:Zagrajta my kowolika, kowola,	Zah-gry-tah mih koh-voh-lee-kah koh-voh-lah
Bede ja se tańcowała dokoła.:	beh-deh yah seh tahnee-tsoh-vah-wah doh-koh-wah
:Za kuźniom, przed kiźniom, Panie Boże, odpość nom, Kowolika, kowola.:	zah kooz-nyohm psheht kooz-nyohm pah-nyeh boh-zheh oht-pooshch nohm koh-voh-lee-kah koh-voh-lah.

Translation

Play me the blacksmith tune and I'll dance around,  
 behind the forge and in front of the forge; oh, Lord, forgive us.

Dance introduced in the summer of 1981 at the Stockton and the San Diego Folk Dance Camps in California by Ada Dziewanowska. Please do not reproduce these directions without her permission.

Presented by Ada Dziewanowska