

Aalistullaa (Finnish)

Aalistullaa (AH-ah-liss-tool-lah) is a couple dance of the Röntyskä type from Ingeria, the region around St. Petersburg which had a Finnish speaking majority until World War II. It was taught by Jussi Aronen and Lennu Yläneva at the 1999 University of the Pacific Stockton Folk Dance Camp. The name has no known meaning. Research by Jussi Aronen and Viola Malmi indicates that the Röntyskä dances are derived from the classic quadrilles (originally from France) danced by the upper classes in St. Petersburg. Traditionally, they were in six parts with a pause between each. In this region, a strong tradition of singing while dancing led to the adding of song to the quadrilles. In the case of Aalistullaa the lyrics are mostly nonsense sounds, probably corrupted from Russian words; at least one phrase (kakkunassi) seems derived from the Russian "kak u nas" meaning to do something "our way." This type of dance is also popular in nearby areas of Finland. The origin of the word "röntyskä" is controversial. Most researchers accept that it comes from the Russian "frantsuskaya" meaning French, and subsequently was modified by the local Finnish dialect. An alternative theory, also plausible, is that it came from the Finnish verb "röntyskää" meaning to do something in a careless or tired way, and perhaps describing an unsophisticated or peasant way of doing the quadrilles. The musician for this recording was Timo Hukkanen.

CD: 1999 Tanhukurssi, Band 11.

4/4 meter

Formation: Two formations are possible for this dance.

A) In the original form of the dance cpls form a single open circle facing in. Cpl 1 is at the R (CCW) end of the line. In this form, the dance can be done with as few as 5 cpls. W is L of ptr with M L and W R hands joined in V-pos.

B) For large recreational groups, make 2 concentric circles of cpls with each inner circle cpl facing an outer circle cpl. W is L of ptr, same as in original formation. If the group of dancers is not large enough to make a complete circle, an open circle works fine.

Steps: Walking: 1 step to a ct, 4 per meas; may begin with either ft.

Running: Small low steps, 1 to a ct; may begin with either ft.

Scuff Step: Step or low leap onto R (ct 1); scuff L heel fwd near R ft (ct &); repeat with opp ftwk (cts 2,&).

Twirl: Face ptr and join hands palm to palm (M L, W R and M R, W L). ~~Hold hands out to side~~ about shldr level with elbows slightly bent. Circle CW with 8 steps (meas 1-2) and then CCW 8 steps (meas 3-4). May also be danced with opp.

Styling: Dance is fast moving and lively. Dancers should sing along with the music as much as possible. As the words are mostly nonsense sounds, the exact pronunciation is not important.

2 meas INTRODUCTION: A) Original Form (single open circle). During these 2 meas Cpl 1 moves in to face Cpl 2.
B) Recreational Group. No action (cpls already facing); start with vocal.

I. FORWARD AND BACK

1-2 Facing cpls dance 4 Running or Scuff steps twd each other and 4 steps back.

3-4 Repeat meas 1-2.

5-8 Ptrs Twirl 8 Walking steps CW and repeat CCW.

II. PASS THROUGH AND TURN

1-2 Change places with opp passing L shldr with 2 Running steps (cts 1,2); turn alone to R (CW) with 2 steps (cts 3,4). Repeat back to original place.

3-4 Repeat meas 1-2.

5-8 Twirl with opposite person, 8 steps CW and 8 steps CCW. End in orig place.

III. ARCHES

1-2 Cpls on inside of circle join inside hands to make an arch and with 8 Running or Scuff steps change places with outside cpls who join hands and pass under the arch. On last 2 steps change hands and, turning twd ptr, face back to orig pos.

3-4 Repeat meas 1-2 with orig outside cpls forming the arch, and orig inside cpls passing under.

5-6 Twirl CW with ptr.

7-8 Twirl CCW with ptr while making progression.

Original Form: Cpl 1 move on to face Cpl 3; Cpl 2 remain in place.

Recreational Group: Inside cpls gradually move to face next outside cpl to their R.

Cpls progress on Fig III, meas 7-8. When a cpl reaches the end of the inner circle, they step into the outer circle, face ctr, and wait for a cpl to come to face them. When a cpl reaches the R end of the outer circle, they wait out 1 time through the dance and then on the progression, move into the inner circle. Repeat dance until music ends.