

Name of dance: Patsh Tants

Pronunciation: pahtsh tahnts

Place of origin: Yiddish-speaking Eastern Europe, probably Poland, later brought to America

Source of music: Folkraft 45 rpm #1118, Side A (KW 387), played by Bennie Fairbanks and His Music

Learned from: Michael Alpert, 2002 at the Berkeley Jewish Music Festival; and Andreas Schmitges, Weimar Yiddish Dance Workshop 2007

About the dance: “Patch Tants” means “clapping dance”, named after its characteristically Germanic clapping sequence. Yiddish culture had originally migrated to eastern Europe from what is now Germany, beginning with the time of the Crusades. Two different versions of the dance are described below.

Rhythm: 2/4

Formation: In Version I, partners begin standing as part of a large circle, with hands held at or above shoulder height, men on their partners’ L side. The style is buoyant and dignified. In Version II, partners begin facing in the CCW direction of travel in the circle, men on the inside, women on the outside, holding hands in promenade position (R hand to R hand, L hand to L hand), lifting hands forward to lead the way.

Direction Measure Step

Version I (*beginning in large circle, facing center*):

→	1	Facing and moving to the R, step R (ct. 1), step L (ct. 2).
	2-3	Repeat Measure 1 twice more.
	4	Turning to face center, step R, L, R (cts. 1 & 2), pause (ct. &).
←	5-8	Repeat Measures 1-4 with reverse footwork and direction.
↑	9	Step toward center on R (ct. 1), step on L without weight next to R (ct. 2).
	10	<i>Hendelakh</i> (“hands”): Clap hands 3 times (cts. 1 & 2), pause (ct. &).
↓	11	Step back away from center on L (ct. 1), step with weight on R next to L (ct. 2).
	12	<i>Fisselakh</i> (“feet”): Stamp on L, R, L (cts. 1 & 2), pause (ct. &).
	13-16	Repeat Measures 9-12.
	17-20	Clasping raised R hands with your own partner, walk 8 steps CW in a small circle around each other until you arrive back where you started (2 steps per measure). Men should begin and end facing in toward the center; women should begin and end facing out.
	21-22	Releasing your partner’s hand, turn to take L hands with the person on your L side. Walk 4 steps CCW in a small

Direction	Measure	Step
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Version I (continued):

23-24 half-circle around each other until you have traded places. The man continues to walk CCW in a small half-circle with 4 steps while he raises the woman's L hand in front of her face and over her head to twirl her CW, switching hands at the end of the twirl (as he comes to face center) so that his R hand ends in her L, and his L hand becomes available to the new woman on his L. The woman turns under the man's hand to her own R to complete 1 full CW twirl in place, taking 4 steps to turn from facing center to facing center again. Her L hand remains with her partner while her R hand is free to take the hand of the new man to her R.

The dance repeats from here.

NOTE: In some versions of this music, the clapping and stamping sequence (Measures 9-16) comes after the sequence of circling and turning each other (Measures 17-24), rather than before. The music itself makes this clear.

Version II (*beginning facing direction of travel as a couple*):

♂→ ♀→	1	Take 4 steps forward in the direction of travel on R, L, R, L, with buoyant steps, following the lead of the hands, with men and women using the same footwork (cts. 1&2&).
	2	Repeat counts 1& of Step 1, stepping R, L (cts. 1&), step more quickly R, L, R to stop forward travel (cts. 2 "uh" &).
←♂ ←♀	3-4	Repeat Measures 1-2 with reverse footwork and direction to return to original starting spot.
	5-8	Repeat Measures 1-4.
♀↓ ♂↑	9	Turning to face partner, take one step forward on R toward him or her (cts. 1&), close L next to R (cts. 2&).
	10	Slap partner's palms 3 times (cts. 1&2), pause (ct. &).
♀↑ ♂↓	11	Take one step back away from partner on L (cts. 1&), close R next to L (cts. 2&).
	12	Stamp 3 times on L, R, L with weight (or 3 times on R without weight) (cts. 1&2), pause (ct. &).
	13-16	Repeat Measures 9-12.
	17	Take R hands with partner and walk ¾ of a CW turn

Patsh Tants (continued):

Direction	Measure	Step
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Version II (continued):

		around your joined hands with 4 steps on R, L, R, L (cts. 1&2&).
18		Taking L hands with the person of your partner's gender who is in the circle behind your partner (the next man behind your male partner, or the next woman behind your female partner), take 4 steps on R, L, R, L to either turn the woman CCW under your joined hands or simply to lead her into promenade position next to you (cts. 1&2&).

From here the dance repeats with new partners.

Note: *In this Version II, the third melody is not repeated (making the dance be in the form AABBC, instead of AABBC as in Version I). If this is awkward, the last two measures can simply each be stretched from 4 to 8 steps to allow the musicians to play their repeat of C).*

dance notes by Erik Bendix