

THE NORDIC MINUET

ROYAL FASHION AND PEASANT TRADITION

EDITED BY PETRI HOPPU, EGIL BAKKA
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A New Chapter in European Dance History



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19. New Forms and Contexts of the Minuet in the Nordic Countries

Göran Andersson and Elizabeth Svarstad

This chapter discusses various revivals of the minuet in the Nordic countries. In this context, we use the term *revival* to mean attempts to bring back into practice dances that are about to lose their position as regular social dances or that have been out of use so long that they can only be reconstructed from descriptions or composed as new dances with particular references to historical sources. In this sense, the Nordic revivals started in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and aimed mainly at resurrecting folk dances.

A study of the social background of the pioneers interested in reviving theatre dance, ballroom dance, and folk dance in Norway, Finland, and Denmark shows that their ancestors were often farmers, countryside teachers, or clergymen. On the other hand, ancestors of Swedish pioneers were more likely to have been academicians or aristocrats, or at least to have occupied a higher level in the social hierarchy than in the other Nordic countries.¹ This may explain why the Swedish folk-dance movement (as opposed to movements in other countries) shows more interest in the upper classes' dances. Folk dancers introduced a special concept to distinguish these particular performances from regular folk dances. Swedish folk dancers called this *högreståndsdanser* [dances of the upper classes]. In the other countries, similar terms mark similar phenomena: in Denmark *anstandsdanse*, in Finland sometimes *salonkitanssit* (in Finnish-Swedish: *salongsdanser*), and in Norway *storgårdsdanser* or *eller stildanser*.² The importance of those dances in Sweden and the efforts to revive them began much earlier

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- 1 Egil Bakka, 'Class Dimensions of Dance Spaces: Situating Central Agents Across Countries and Categories', in *Nordic Dance Spaces: Practicing and Imagining a Region*, ed. by Karen Vedel and Petri Hoppu (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 129–58.
 - 2 The Norwegian folk-dance collectors and publishers did not differentiate between dances used at the small mansions and the dances used at the peasant cottages.

than in the other countries. For that reason, these are given a significant amount of space in the following section.

The Minuet as a Part of the Repertoire of Historical Dances

Although the minuet ceased to be popular among the upper classes in Nordic countries at the beginning of the nineteenth century, it continued to be danced among ordinary people. Still, it fell into more and more disuse, so much so that in the second half of the nineteenth century, it was performed only in select areas of Finland and Denmark. A news item from 1867 reported how a couple, sluice inspector Uddman and his wife, who were celebrating their golden wedding anniversary in Vänersborg:

Very few would have preserved one's body mobility and almost juvenile happiness like the respected 85-year-old in his senior years; yet, when he hears an old familiar melody, he participates with joy in a minuet, polska or so-called engelska trippen, these dances, which now belong to the tradition, were the most appreciated in his youth.³

This means that, at Uddman's marriage in 1817 and for some time to come, the minuet was still common, but it had become by 1867 'an old-fashioned melody at the gold[en] wedding'. Another example confirming a change in the minuet's status is a letter from Jakobstad in Finland, dated 7 July 1865, in which the author wrote about a midsummer wedding that had just been celebrated:

Common dances were: a kind of polonaise, waltz, polka, 'with the hook,' and pot-pourri. [...] The older people were merely spectators but complained of little dissatisfaction that the old peasant dances, such as polska and minuet, were now forgotten.⁴

The Swedish-speaking Ostrobothnian coast in Finland is regarded as one of the core regions when it comes to the minuet in the Nordic countries, but, in some areas within Swedish-speaking West Finland, the minuet was already in decline at this time.⁵ As is clear from the examples above, during the first half of the nineteenth century, the popularity of the minuet continued to decline. During

3 'Guldbröllop', *Barometern*, 2 October 1867, p. 2.

4 'Jakobstad den 7 juli 1865', *Åbo Underrättelser*, 13 July 1865, pp. 1–2.

5 Gunnel Biskop, *Menuetten—älsklingsdansen. Om Menuetten i Norden—särskilt i Finlands svenskbygder—under rehundrafemtio år* (Helsingfors: Finlands Svenska Folkdansring, 2015), p. 112.

the second half of the nineteenth century, 'the old peasant dances' were all but forgotten.

Dance schools and traveling dance teachers, however, continued to include a minuet in their repertoire. An example of this phenomena is the school of *Dramatiska teatern* [Dramatic Theatre] in Stockholm. In 1890, it held a public rehearsal during which a minuet was performed to show the student results of their dance lessons.⁶ Of course, there might be several other different reasons for the retention of the minuet in this school. Among other things, it was believed that learning the minuet contributed to good body knowledge and posture.⁷ A Swiss dance teacher Martinet,⁸ whose book was translated into Danish in 1801, wrote the following:

For a long time, the minuet has been abandoned, and it is almost no more used as a social dance; however, it does include all the basic rules of the art of dance, and it is effortless to prove that one cannot dance in a mediocre manner, much less well, when one is not taught in it. This dance develops the limbs, gives them a beautiful outline, power, and regularity in the movements.⁹

One might expect to get the same training and body knowledge from any of the popular dances at that time. Could it be that the name 'minuet' itself held a special status, so much so that the concept remained well known? For example, there are dance descriptions in which the dance is called 'the minuet', but the steps and movements are decidedly un-minuet-like. Another explanation could be that the dance teachers, in many cases, were performers at some theatre houses, perhaps primarily in Sweden and Denmark, and they toured around the Nordic countries to reinforce their often relatively meagre incomes. Many of their productions included a minuet or at least a dance called by that name. The best known of these is a minuet from the play *Elverhøj* by Johan Ludvig Heiberg with the music by Friedrich Kuhlau (1828), or Alexandra-Minuet, which was to be taught in Karlskrona.¹⁰ It should be mentioned that the minuet from *Elverhøj*

6 'Teater och Musik', *Aftonbladet*, 29 May 1890, p. 3.

7 Biskop Menuetten, p. 111.

8 Martinet has the initials J. J. in the original French version whereas they are J. F. in the Danish translation.

9 J. J. Martinet, *Begyndelsegrunde i Dandsekonsten, Bestemt til nyttig Selvøvelse, og for de Forældre som ej holde Dansemester til deres Børn* (Copenhagen: L. Reistrups forlag, 1801), p. 21.

10 Dansskola i Karlskrona', *Blekings-posten*, 21 June 1864, p. 1; 'Dansinformation', *Carlskrona veckoblad*, 31 July 1861, p. 3; 'Diverse', *Jönköpingsbladet*, 14 January 1845, p. 4.

is still today included in the training package of dance teacher education of the Danish dance schools' organization.¹¹

Yet another explanation might be that there were only a few fashionable dances at the time and, therefore, a dance teacher simply extended his repertoire with dances that were not in everyday use. Staged folk dances, or 'national dances' as these were often called, including dances from the rest of Europe, often appeared on the dance teachers' advertised syllabi. One example declared, 'Besides, a few character dances will be rehearsed for the final ball'.¹² Another promised to teach '[t]he Spanish national dance La Cachucha and the English sailors' dance "The Merry Sailor Boy"'.¹³

In Sweden, several national dances were choreographed by Anders Selinder, who was a ballet master at the Royal Theatre in Stockholm from 1833 and 1856 (with an interlude between 1846–50).¹⁴ After each dance school course, a final ball was organized, which began with a dance recital where the students presented their newly acquired knowledge. Selinder's choreographies, such as *Vingåkersdans*, *Halling*, *Daldans*, *Fryksdalspolska* and *Jössehäradspsolska*, were perfectly suited for this purpose.¹⁵ Anna Skousgaard, a well-known dance teacher in Sweden, wrote in her memoirs about working for her mother as an assistant dance teacher and how she taught a minuet for two couples within this capacity. The occasion is not precisely dated, but Skousgaard opened her dance school in 1917, so this occasion was before that, probably during the first half of the 1910s: 'We practiced the neat tours under the mother's supervision. The final of the Minuet was a dramatically interpreted duel between the two cavaliers'.¹⁶ Because the minuet was slightly different from other dances, it might have been experienced by the audience as spectacular. It was performed at not only final balls but also other public balls.¹⁷ As mentioned earlier, we cannot judge by these references to 'minuets' exactly which type of minuets were danced or even if they resembled anything we might call a minuet at all.

11 De Danske Dansskoler (2017), *Uddannelse i standard- og latinamerikanske danse, samt børne- og ældredanse*, https://www.dedanskedanseskoler.dk/fileadmin/ddd/documents/uddannelser/DDD_s_standard__latin_uddannelse_2017.pdf

12 'Dansinstitut', *Härnösandsposten*, 24 September 1880, p. 1.

13 'Slutbal', *Blekinge-posten*, 19 February 1864, p. 1.

14 Göran Andersson, 'Anders Selinder, nationalromantikens företrädare inom svenska dans', in *Norden i Dans*, ed. by Egil Bakka and Gunnel Biskop (Oslo: Novus, 2007), pp. 206–14 (p. 206).

15 'Slutbal', *Nerikes Allehanda*, 6 February 1880, p. 1; 'Slutbal', *Sydsvenska Dagbladet*, 15 February 1895, p. 1.

16 Anna Skousgaard *Slutbal: Minnesanteckningar Från Min 60-Åriga Bana Som Danspedagog* (Helsingborg: Schmidts Boktryckeri, 1974), p. 38.

17 'Bal masque', *Göteborgs-Posten*, 11 February 1865, p. 1; 'Skyttegillet barnbal', *Tidning för Wenersborgs Stad och Län*, 4 March 1890, p. 2.

During the nineteenth century, no dance book with a description of the minuet was published in Sweden. In Denmark, by contrast, minuets were published in several dance books throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In Norway, one dance book in Norwegian with a description of the minuet was published in the nineteenth century and none in the twentieth century (see Table 19.1).

Table 19.1: Nordic Dance Books with Minuets during the 1800s and 1900s

Publication	Year	Author or publisher	Additional information
<i>Begyndelsesgrunde i Dandsekonsten</i> [<i>Basics in Dance Art</i>] ¹⁸	1801	J. J. / J. F. Martinet, Switzerland	Translated into Danish by C. H. Lund.
<i>Terpsichore</i> ¹⁹	1823	Jørgen Gad Lund, Denmark	The book came later in two more editions.
<i>Veiledning for mine Dandselæringer</i> [<i>A Guide for My Dance Students</i>] ²⁰	1825	P. J. Kaastrup, Denmark	According to Gad Lund, this was a copy of his book.
<i>Anvisning til at danse 'Menuet,' 'Les Lanciers'...</i> [<i>Instructions for Dancing the Minuet, Les Lanciers...</i>] ²¹	1875	Vilhelm Balling, Denmark	
<i>Veiledende Text til Familieballet Før og Nu</i> [<i>Guiding Text for Family Ball Past and Present</i>] ²²	1877	Paul Petersen, Denmark	

18 Martinet, *Begyndelsegrunde*.

19 Jørgen Gad Lund, *Terpsichore, eller en Veiledning for mine Dandselæringer til at beholde de Trin og Toure i Hukommelsen, som de under mig have gennemgaaet* (Mariboe: C. E. Schultz, 1823).

20 P. F. Kaastrup *Veiledning for mine Dandselæringer til at beholde de Trin og Toure i Hukommelsen, som de under mig have gennemgaaet* (Thisted, 1825).

21 Vilhelm Balling, *Anvisning til att Danse 'Menuet', 'Les Lanciers', 'Française', 'Jule-Kvadrille', 'Les Prince Impériale', 'Eugenie-Kvadrille', 'Sextur', 'Jernbane-Kvadrille' samt 28 forskellige selskapsdanse tillige med 75 in-teressante og let udførlige Kotillons-Ture* (Copenhagen: Herdah, 1875).

22 Paul Petersen, *Veiledende Text til Familieballet Før og Nu* (Copenhagen: Wilhelm Hansens Forlag og Eiendom, 1877).

<i>Lommebog for Dansende</i> [A Pocket Book for Dancers] ²³	1886	Janny Isachsen, Kristiania, Norway	
<i>Regler for god tone og danseanvisning i de fornemste turdanse</i> [Rules for Good Tone and Dance Instruction in the Most Prestigious Round Dances] ²⁴	1900	A. G. Sandbæk, Denmark	Sandbæk appeared mostly in Norway and Sweden, and his books were published in Norway as well.
<i>Svenska Folkdanser och Sällskapsdanser</i> [Swedish Folk Dances and Ballroom Dances] ²⁵	1933	<i>Svenska Ungdomsringen för Bygdekultur</i> [Swedish Youth Association for the Rural Culture]	The first edition came out in 1923 but the minuet was not included until 1933 edition.
<i>Lærebog i Moderne og Ældre Danse</i> [Textbook in Modern and Older Dancing] ²⁶	1943	Fredie Pedersen, Denmark	The book contained the minuet as well as other dances of the time, such as the Quick-step, Slow-fox, Tango, etc.
<i>Lærebog i ældre danse</i> [Textbook of Older Dances] ²⁷	1944	<i>Dansk Danseforbund</i> (Danish Dance Association)	
<i>Lærebog i ældre danse</i> [Textbook of Older Dances] ²⁸	1952	<i>Danseringen</i> , an association of dance educators in Denmark	Reuses the name and much of the same content as the previous publication.

23 Janny Isachsen, *Lommebog for Dansende: Til Støtte for Erindringen ved Menuet, Française, Lanciers, Fandango med flere af de Mest Brugelige Nutidsdandse: Samt Anvisning Til Nogle Cottillontoure* (Kristiania: Alb. Cammermeyer, 1886).

24 A. G. Sandbæk, *Regler for God Tone Og Danseanvisning i De Fornemste Turdanse* (Copenhagen: [n.pub.], 1900).

25 *Svenska Folkdanser och Sällskapsdanser* (Stockholm: Svenska Ungdomsringen för Bygdekultur, 1933), p. 103.

26 Fredie Pedersen, *Lærebog i Moderne og Ældre Danse* (Copenhagen: [n.pub.], 1943).

27 *Lærebog i ældre danse* (Copenhagen: Dansk Danseforbunds Forlag, 1944).

28 *Lærebog i ældre Danse* (Copenhagen: Danseringen, 1952).

The Minuet within the Swedish Folk-Dance Movement

The early folk-dance movement in Sweden dates back to 1880 when a few students at Uppsala University started the Students' Dance Association; in 1884, the group adopted what seemed the more-worthy name 'Philochoros'. Philochoros still exists today, and many students are introduced to Swedish folk dance through it. Currently, both women and men are members, but during its first decades it was a male-only association. Women were not excluded, but only a few female students attended the university at this time. As more women pursued higher education and grew interested in becoming part of the association, however, its existing membership considered their pursuit a problem. In 1910 the statutes were changed to open the membership only to 'every male academic citizen', which meant that women were specifically excluded from joining for a period of time.²⁹

As early as May 1881, a full-evening program had been rehearsed, and it was performed four times at Uppsala Theatre. The group's originally plan for the event included a minuet, but this dance was removed and not performed (for reasons unknown). In the following year, however, performances were given in Uppsala and Gävle, and a *Menuet de la reine* was danced in the program. Despite the association's extensive and well-ordered archives, this is, unfortunately, the only information it contains about the minuet. That the minuet was danced by the association from its earliest years, however, shows the influence of its first dance teacher, Carl Peschel Barowiak, who had it in his repertoire. Born in Szczecin, Barowiak danced at various theatres in Poland, Germany, and St. Petersburg. He arrived in Sweden as a dance teacher via Finland in 1861. After the first performances of the organization in 1881, Barowiak departed because of dissatisfaction with the repertoire as well as financial problems. Hilding Sandström, a member of Philochoros, took on the role and was named *maitre de ballet*.³⁰

Another early folk-dance association, Svenska Folkdansens Vänner [Swedish Folk Dance Friends] (SFV), founded in 1893, included a minuet on the program. From its beginning, SFV had a collaboration with Skansen, the large open-air museum in Stockholm, founded in 1891, which was a suitable environment for holding dance balls (*lekstuga*) and other events. This association also performed dance programs in Skansen, including one, in 1934, entitled *Dansen genom tiderna* [*Dance through Time*].³¹ They were assisted by Valborg Franchi, who was

29 Andersson, 'Anders Selinder', p. 209. Women were allowed as members in 1931.

30 Mats Wahlberg, '1880-talet', in *Philochoros 125 år—Minnesskrift utgiven av föreningen Philochoros*, ed. by Mats Wahlberg and Katarina Korsfeldt (Uppsala: Philochoros, 2005), pp. 9–21 (p. 12).

31 Monica Norberg, 'Dansövningar, uppvisningar och lekstugor', in *Svenska Folkdansens Vänner 1893–1993*, ed. by Gunnar Benediktsson (Stockholm: Svenska

the premier dancer at the Royal Theatre in Stockholm and, between 1924 and 1949, leader of its ballet school. Franchi choreographed a minuet for SFV, which they then included on their repertory.³²

As I mentioned earlier, *Svenska Folkdansringen*, the umbrella organization for a large part of Sweden's folk dance, also includes the minuet among the ballroom dances in its repertoire.

High Society Dance

In the middle of the twentieth century, some became more interested in high society dance, such as the minuet, in the Nordic countries. Small groups were formed who danced these historical dances, but the trend was also reflected within the national dance organization. The folk-dance association *Folkungagillet* in Linköping became interested in these dances quite early. They formed groups that practiced historical dances, and the minuet was an essential element. One reason for this may have been that during the years 1941–45, Count Magnus Stenbock (1911–2007), the chairman of Östergötland's district of Ungdomsringen, and his mother, Countess Louise Montgomery, were interested in dancing. During her childhood, Montgomery had watched the servants who worked in her family's mansion amuse themselves with their dances. Countess Montgomery was the chairperson of Östergötlands-Holaveden Hembygdsring for a period in the 1930s.³³



Fig. 19.1 Count Magnus Stenbock. Photograph by C. G. Holm. Wikimedia, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=32866932>, CC BY-SA 3.0.

Folkdansens Vänner, 1993), pp. 29–41 (p. 35).

32 *Dansboken* (Stockholm: Svenska Folkdansens Vänner, 1992), p. 170.

33 'Östergötlands-Holavedens Hembygdsring', *Hembygden*, July 1932, p. 21.

Count Stenbock was primarily interested in the old extinct mansion life and sought to revive some of its customs. During his studies in Stockholm, he led a dance club for an association that was devoted mainly to 'court dances from the eighteenth century'.³⁴ It is difficult to get a clear picture of how Stenbock had acquired knowledge of historical dance. What we can surmise is that it developed through contact with the dancer and the choreographer Baron Carl-Gustaf Kruuse af Verchou as both men lived in Stockholm at the same time and belonged to the same social class. As early as the 1940s, people in the Östergötland district were inspired by with Stenbock to engage with historical dances. This fruitful collaboration was probably facilitated by Folke Kennryd, a dance instructor both at the district and on a national level and also a district chairman from 1958 to 1979.³⁵ *Folkungagillet*, founded in 1944, was also created for those who were interested in dance-historical events as a result of close contact with Countess Montgomery and Count Stenbock. The initiators within the association were Ulf and Marianne Ohlsson.

Knowledge of the minuet, concerning both its history and its performance, was not deep or widespread during the 1960s. It was difficult for dance-interested amateurs to learn about the minuet because the only knowledge that did exist was concentrated in the world of theatre. Members of *Folkungagillet* made contact with the Finnish dancer and choreographer Kerttu Thorén, who was active at *Östgötateatern* (Östgöta Theatre) in Norrköping. Through Thorén, the association received an interpretation of a minuet retrieved from *Le maitre á danser* by Rameau and a minuet known as *Liten Menuett* [*A Small Minuet*] that had been choreographed by the dancer and dance teacher Ronny Johansson, probably around 1967.³⁶ Johansson was born in Riga, which was also where she grew up in a cosmopolitan upper-class environment and received training in dance. In 1912, when Johansson was twenty-one years old, the family moved to Stockholm. She began her studies in theatrical dance with the artist Olga Raphael-Linden. To further her education, Johansson moved to Dresden, where she took lessons from Heinrich Kröller. After her long dance career, she worked at *Dramatens elevskola* as a teacher, among other things. She organized summer courses and invited prominent international teachers in the 1950s and 1960s, in cooperation with the *Svenska Danspedagogförbundet* [Swedish Dance Education Association], an organization she initiated.³⁷

34 Maria Waxegård, 'Greve Stenbock ur tiden', *Norrköpings Tidningar*, 5 May 2007, <https://nt.se/nyheter/norrkoping/artikel/greve-stenbock-ur-tiden/jnw7xq4j>

35 *Folkdansringen* (2018), <http://www.folkdansringen.se/ostergotland/Historik.htm>

36 *Några Sällskapsdanser Från 1700–1800 Talen* (Linköping: Folkungagillet, 1987). Johansson, somewhat contradictorily, is seen as a legend in Swedish modern dance.

37 Birgit Boman, *Amasoner och Trollpackor: Fyra Svenska Danskonstnärer Under Mellankrigstiden* (Stockholm: Carlssons Bokförlag, 2001).

Nordic Groups with a Focus on Historical Dances

In the 1960s, the popularity of folk dance and folk music began to rise in the Nordic countries, prompting the publication of several works containing dance descriptions. A compendium of dance history, *Folkdans*, was an educational text published in Sweden in 1969 to be used by the increasing number of people interested in dance. Its authors were, among others, Ivo Cramér, a choreographer who created ballets based on historical themes, Folke Kenneryd, and Henry Sjöberg, one of Sweden's best-known dance researchers. The book contained an initial section on the minuet from a theoretical perspective, following by a description of the minuet step, and descriptions of two minuets.³⁸ More accessible study material followed in *Folklig Dans* [*Vernacular Dance*] (1972)—a series of three books, of which part two dealt with the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and included descriptions of the minuet.³⁹

Although these were textbooks of Swedish folk-dance, their historical perspective contributed to a strong upward trend in interest in historical dance. After their publication, several folk-dance associations added historical dances into their repertoire. These included the Farandole, forms of the Branle, and, of course, baroque dances like the minuet; the associations also included popular dances of the twentieth century such as the Charleston, Lambeth Walk, etc. In 1996, the *Forum för Historiska Danser och Musik* [Forum for Historical Dances and Music] was formed as an umbrella organization for the dance groups who performed historical dances in Sweden. It was founded by Stig and Eleonor Larsegård with the assistance of Sjöberg, leading author of *Folklig Dans*. Through a previous collaboration between Swedish and Norwegian groups, several local Norwegian groups also became members of the new Swedish organization. In August 2017, thirty-four groups who were dancing historical dances joined together via the Forum. Further groups exist, but these are not affiliated with the national organization.⁴⁰

Groups specializing in historical dances were also formed in Norway and Denmark and, to a lesser extent, in the other Nordic countries. Their development in Norway followed a similar trajectory to that in Sweden insofar as interest in high society dances within the folk-dance movement gradually led to the organization of specialized groups, which focused only on historical dances. In 2000, *Nettverket for historisk dans i Norge* [Network for Historical Dance in

38 Ivo Cramér and others, *Folkdans* (Stockholm: Brevskolan, 1969), p. 295.

39 Henry Sjöberg, *Folklig dans 2: 1600-och 1700-talens dansformer* (Jönköping: Brevskolan, 1972), p. 54.

40 *Forum för Historiska Danser och Musik*, <http://www.forum-historiskdans.se/foreningar.html>

Norway] was founded. By the summer of 2017, nineteen groups were affiliated with this network and were collaborating on various issues and arrangements regarding historical dances.⁴¹ In Denmark, cooperation between groups that dance historical dances has been more informal. No more than ten of these groups existed in the country in 2017. These have no umbrella association of their own, but most belong to one of the two general folk-dance organizations located in Denmark. Such groups with historical dances as their main repertoire have prompted interest in locating and interpreting dances from handwritten dance books from the second half of the eighteenth century and the nineteenth century. Printed dance books from the same period are also used to expand the repertoire. The development path for interest in historical dancing is similar in the remaining Nordic countries. It should be remembered that the work to recover and share these dances is undertaken primarily by amateurs, and the amount and level of knowledge varies. One big difference between these groups is how they interact with the dances. As noted previously, historical dances were first primarily performed in various ways, and the dancers still participate in these events. However, balls are currently often held at which attendees participate only in historical dances, and these events have become more and more popular.

One reason why interest in historical dances grew in the Nordic countries in the early twenty-first century might be traced to an event in Stavanger, Norway, in 2000. At the thirty-second annual Nordic folk-dance gathering, a dinner was followed by historical dancing. Smaller meetings of interested dancers had already taken place at the event in Vejle in 1991 and in Linköping in 1994, where short courses and balls emphasized historical dances. After the event in Stavanger, however, a historical ball (including dance course), became a fixture on the agenda at Nordic folk-dance events.⁴² Every two years since 2005, two enthusiasts in Denmark, Per Sørensen and Ole Skov, have arranged week-long courses in historical dances at the folk high school in Snoghøj. About seventy-five percent of the participants come from the Nordic countries, which confirms that interest has increased.

In addition to the groups practising historical dances in Norway, there are so-called *stildans* ['style dance'-groups]. These usually derive from folk/traditional dance societies, with amateur dancers being led, more or less, by professional dance teachers. Some of the most active groups in Norway are *Akershus slottsdansere*, *Oslo historiske dansegruppe*, and *Trondheim Balldans*.

41 *Nettverket for historisk dans i Norge* (2018), <http://www.historiskdans.com/>

42 *Ibid.*

The dance group *Akershus slottsdansere* was established in 1993 to perform dances from the history of Akershus Castle. With historical costumes and under the leadership of choreographer Brit Ingrid Wang (1941–2016), the group participated in historical plays arranged by *Stiftelsen Akershus Festning for Kunst og Kultur* [Akerhus Castle Foundation for Arts and Culture], lead by actress Gudrun Waadeland (1937–2020). Its members are passionate amateur dancers and historians; some have participated in the group since its inception. Wang specialized in historical dances at the Norwegian academy of dance in Oslo and studied later with the Swedish dancer and choreographer Regina Beck-Friis (1940–2009) and the English dancer and choreographer Mary Collins. Wang was a teacher in historical dances at *Statens balletthøgskole*, *Statens teaterhøgskole*, and *Den norske balletthøgskole* for many years. Through her teaching, the group added the court minuet by dancing master Pierre Rameau to their repertoire which was instructed by Wang and by her student Elizabeth Svarstad.⁴³

The Ringve International Summer Course in Early Music has been held yearly since 1978.⁴⁴ For many years, the course was held in Trondheim, and later it was moved to Sund Folkehøgskole at Inderøy. Collins was the dance teacher, and this role was then assumed by Svarstad. The course has often included different minuets from French, German, and English sources, including ordinary minuets, choreographed minuets, and minuet country dances. Also, Collins has reconstructed and taught the *Menuet d'Anjou* by the early-eighteenth-century dancing master IHP (only the initials of the name are known).

Oslo historiske dansegruppe is lead by Per Kristian Elvestad. He is a former ballroom dancer and has specialized in historical dances. The group was established in 2007 and have participated since then in workshops and balls.⁴⁵

According to Jon Andreassen, a member of several amateur dance groups and also an instructor in the field of amateur historical dance, these groups do not often perform minuets. The minuets on their repertoire are a minuet reconstructed by Dag Vårdal, and two Danish minuets: a choreography called *Menuett fra Strandby* and a traditional minuet *Molevitt fra Ærø*. They have also used *Mr. Lanes Trumpet Minuet* from Playford a few times.⁴⁶

Trondheim Balldans is a group of amateur dancers in Trondheim. The group was established in 2007 as a cooperation between two organizations,

43 'Akershus Slottsdansere', *Akershus Slotts Venner*, <https://www.slottsvenn.no/akershus-slott-og-festning/andre-foreninger/akershus-slottsdansere>

44 'Ringve International Summer Course in Early Music', *Ringve Musikmuseum*, <https://ringve.no/ringve-international-summer-course>

45 'Oslo historiske dansegruppe', <https://historiskdans.no>

46 Jon Andreassen. Personal communication. SMS to Svarstad, 22 April 2019.

BUL i Nidaros and *Folkedanslaget i Malvik*, to promote period ballroom dances.⁴⁷ *Trondheim Balldans* has quite an extensive repertoire of dances, and part of their purpose is to show how social dance developed through history. In 2010, the researcher and musician Eva Hov suggested that the minuet should be added to their repertoire. Although she had in mind the *menuet ordinaire*, the group members decided that they wanted a dance for more than one couple at a time so they began to study the *menuet à quatre*. To connect it to Trondheim, they performed to minuet music composed by Johan Daniel Berlin, who worked in Trondheim in the eighteenth century. Hov arranged the dance for four couples, and the group performed it for some years. In 2012, they prepared another minuet, the *Menuet de la reine*, to perform at the folk-dance gathering NORDLEK in Steinkjer. This minuet, which is danced in rows, remained on their repertoire for many years after 2012.⁴⁸ The group has yet another minuet on their repertoire called 'The Beethoven Minuet'. According to Hov, the dance is not a minuet but contains what she describes as a 'star figure' and steps resembling the foxtrot. Swede Lars Abrahamsson choreographed the dance in 1967, and it was danced in his dance group *Les Perruques Blanches* until the 1990s.⁴⁹

Semi-professional Groups

In parallel with the amateur groups, semi-professional groups emerged in the Nordic countries in the late twentieth century, first mainly in the Stockholm area in Sweden. This movement was led by the English dancer and choreographer Mary Skeaping, who was the ballet manager at the Royal Theatre in Stockholm 1953–62, and a choreographer at Drottningholm's eighteenth-century theatre for a series of ballets in historical styles. Skeaping had a broad historical dance knowledge, which she passed on to her assistant Regina Beck-Friis. Beck-Friis continued to deepen her understanding of historical dances and, in turn, acted as a choreographer for various performances at Drottningholm Palace Theatre.⁵⁰ Beck-Friis was also a teacher of historical dance at *Danshögskolan* [University College of Dance], which belongs to Stockholm University of Arts today.

47 *Trondheim Balldans*, <http://www.trondheim-balldans.com/46663501>

48 Eva Hov, Personal communication, email to Svarstad, 22 April 2019.

49 Eva Hov, Personal communication, email to Svarstad, 10 April 2018.

50 Mary Skeaping and Anna-Greta Stähle, *Ballett på Stockholmsoperan* (Stockholm: Nordstedt Tryckeri, 1979).



Fig. 19.2 Mary Skeaping. Unknown photographer. Wikimedia, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=22118866>, public domain.

Beck-Friis was the main author of the books *Dansnöjen Genom Tiden, Västeuropeiska Danser Från Medeltid och Renässans* [*The Pleasure of Dance through Time, Western European Dances from the Middle Ages and Renaissance*] (1980) and *Dansnöjen Genom Tiden, Från Barock, Rokoko och den Gustavianska Tiden* [*The Pleasure of Dance through Time, From Baroque, Rococo and the Gustavian Era*] (1998).⁵¹ Presenting both history and several dance descriptions, these textbooks were addressed to students who possessed a completely different skill level than the audience of previously published textbooks. To follow these dance descriptions and learn the steps, dance training or exceptional amateur experience was required. Consequently, those who studied historical dances in Danshögskolan founded dance groups with members who could perform dances using steps from Beck-Friis's books rather than the simplifications found in other sources. The first such semi-professional group was *I Saltarelli*, which Beck-Friis started in 1976 to use for practice runs when developing her books.

51 Regina Beck-Friis, Magnus Blomkvist, and Birgitta Nordenfeldt, Birgitta, *Dansnöjen genom tiden 1. Västeuropeiska danser från medeltid och renässans* (Arlöv: Akademilitteratur, 1980); Regina Beck-Friis, Regina, Magnus Blomkvist, and Birgitta Nordenfeldt, Birgitta, *Dansnöjen genom tiden. Från barock, rokoko och den gustavianska tiden* (Lund: Historiska Media, 1998).



Fig. 19.3 Regina Beck-Friis. Photographer and year unknown. Svenskt Porträttarkiv, <https://porträttarkiv.se/details/sj9PGLAlnmUAAAAAACYzCA>, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

Even in Denmark, dance groups continue to exist to suit those with different skill levels. A leading figure in these groups, with wide experience of historical dances in Denmark, is Jørgen Schou Pedersen. He studied musicology at the University of Copenhagen and has since graduated as an instructor in historical dances at *The Dolmetsch Historical Dance Society* in England, where he is now also a teacher. He also conducts basic research and is often hired as a lecturer in historical dance. Schou Pedersen runs performing groups in Renaissance and Baroque dance. He teaches historical dance at The National Theatre School and Copenhagen Music Conservatory; he also leads amateur groups at different levels.⁵²

Appendix

The following is a list of the minuets or, more precisely, the dances where 'minuet' is included as part of the name and is danced by groups (primarily amateur groups) around the Nordic countries. This list is not complete because the dances vary over time. Moreover, some dances are used more frequently than others.

1. *Menuett* or *Stora menuetten* [*Great Minuet*], retrieved from Svenska Ungdomsringen's book *Svenska Folkdanser och sällskapsdanser* (1933 edition). In 2002, a thesis was completed at Danshögskolan in Stockholm on the so-called ballroom dances in the 1933, 1944, and 1952 editions of this book. It was found that *Menuett* did not have any named originator or creator. The dance consists of five figures plus

52 'Jørgen Schou Pedersen', *Anello*, <http://www.anello.dk/joergen.html>

an introduction and ending. Furthermore, it is stated that the minuet is not described in any of the Swedish sources used for comparison. It is danced in a square setup and contains figures that occur in country dances. The compliments (reverences) described are also not directly equivalent to other sources.⁵³ Mats Wahlberg, archivist at Philochoros's archive in Uppsala, believes that the *Menuett* was the same dance as was on the repertoire during the 1890s with the name *Hofkadrilj* (*Court Quadrille*) and that the name change occurred in 1899. Both *Hofkadrilj* and later *Menuett* were danced together with Old Polka. The minuet in Philochoros's repertoire in the 1880s was a dance for a solo couple, and when it was performed the group asked one of the Royal Theatre's female dancers, Mrs. Christiansen, to partner with one of the male dancers of the group.⁵⁴

2. *Minuet*, Rococo dance, choreography by Valborg Franchi for Svenska Folkdansens Vänner (see text above).
3. *Small Minuet* by Ronny Johansson, Kerttu Thorén (see text above).
4. *Court Minuet*, after a basic description from Rameau, *Maître à Danser* (1734), processed by Kerttu Thorén (see text above).
5. *Minuet Sabina*, performed longways with minuet steps from *The English Dancing Master* (1718). This interpretation appears first in the compendium *Folkdans* (1969) and then in *Folklig Dans 2* (1972).⁵⁵ There are two descriptions for the same music, one slightly clear and one somewhat more complicated which goes by the name *Mademoiselle Dupingle*.⁵⁶
6. *Signora Auretti's dance*. This dance is also included in the compendia *Folkdans* and *Folklig Dans 2*. The full title is *Menuett (Signora Auretti's dance)* by Johann Adolph Hasse (1699–1783). Hasse was a German composer who created the music for *Menuett (Signora Auretti's dance)*. The dance description is a translation from English and taken from Evelyn Porter's book *Music Through the Dance* (1937). The various

53 Eva Arnehall and Eva-Christina Söderman, 'Sällskapsdanser i "Gröna Boken"' (unpublished bachelor's thesis, University College of Dance, Stockholm, 2002), pp. 7–10.

54 Frithiof Holmgren, 'Philochoros: Ett företal', in *Philochoros 1880–1980*, ed. by Mats Wahlberg (Uppsala, 1980), pp. 7–18 (p. 13); 'Teater och Musik', *Stockholms Dagblad*, 8 May 1883, p. 5.

55 Sjöberg *Folklig dans*, p. 56.

56 John Playford, *The Dancing Master*, 3rd edition, 3 vols (London: John Young, 1718), vol. 2.

dance examples given in the book are written largely by Marjorie Woolnoth.⁵⁷

7. *Beethoven minuet*, part of degree project by Lars Abrahamsson, completed at the ballet academy in Gothenburg in 1968–69.
8. *Menuette* by Magnus Stenbock (see text above).⁵⁸
9. The minuet of *Elverhøj*. This minuet is from the play *Elverhøj* by Heiberg, which premiered in 1828. The choreographer is Poul Funck, and the minuet starts the big party dance in the final act and is followed by several dances. The minuet step used is strikingly similar to the step Jørgen Gad Lund uses in his minuet description. There are both typical minuet and country dance figures in the minuet of *Elverhøj*, and some are performed by groups of four.⁵⁹ Ballet master Hans Beck at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen arranged a simplified version of the minuet in 1920 for educational purposes.⁶⁰
10. *Menuetpolonaise*, from A. G. Sandbæk's book (see text above), revised by Dag Vårdal. Except for the name, the dance has nothing in common with the minuet. Many of its figures seem to be derived from nineteenth-century country dances.⁶¹
11. *Æbeltoft Menuette*.
12. *Minuet from Christiania*, an interpretation by Dag Vårdal, in collaboration with Torun Riise and Folke Flateland.⁶²

In Sweden, there is also an eighteenth-century society called *Gustafs skål* which convenes a group of enthusiasts primarily interested in the second half of the eighteenth century. Its activities include dancing. *Gustafs skål* and the dance group *Branicula*, based in Uppsala, have several minuets on their repertoire.

57 Evelyn Porter, *Music Through the Dance: A Handbook for Teachers and Students, showing how Musical Growth has been Influenced by the Dance Throughout the Ages* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1937), pp. 45–46.

58 Folke Kennryd, *Kontradanser, Menuett, Gavott: En samling högreståndsdanser upptecknade och sammanställda av Greve Magnus Stenbock, Herrborum och Balettmästare Friherre Karl-Gustaf Kruuse af Verschou* (Norrköping: Stencilupplaga, 1968).

59 Henning Urup, *Dans i Danmark: Danseformer ca.1600 til 1950* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanums Forlag, 2007), pp. 153, 241–42.

60 *Laerebog i aeldre danse* (1952).

61 Dag Vårdal, *Francaiser og Quadriller fra norske dansebøker* (Bærum: Eget forlag, 2005), p. 93.

62 Dag Vårdal, *Menuett i form etter Jannny Isachsen, Christiania 1886* (Bærum: Eget forlag, 2017).

1. *Menuet de la Reine* from Feuillet which is also used in some other groups.
2. *Menuet de Chevalier* from Feuillet.
3. *Menuet du Rameau* (Z-minuet). This dance is known in other groups by the name 'Court Minuet'.
4. New Minuet (Playford, 15th ed).
5. *La Petite Jeanneton*.⁶³
6. *Menuet a Quatre* [Minuet for two couples].
7. *Lange Menuett* [Anglaise for several couples].
8. *Menuett Mouliné* [line dance].
9. *Menuet amoroso* [Minuet for three persons], choreographed by Anna Löfgren.
10. *Minuet a Jig* by Mr. Holt.
11. *Menuet de village* (for two couples).
12. Mr. Lane's *Trumpet-Minuet* (Playford, anglaise).⁶⁴

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63 Anna Löfgren and Wilhelm Dahllöf, *Samling af svenska turer till utvalda dansar för nytta och nöje sammanställda* (Stockholm: Wilhelm Dahllöf, 2017).

64 Danssällskapet Brancula (2018), <http://www.upp17.nu/danser>

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