

Ma Seal's Mazurka

Australia, SA, Kimba

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. It consists of four staves of music. The first two staves represent the first section (16 bars), and the last two staves represent the second section (16 bars). Chord symbols are placed above the notes: D, A7, D in the first section; and D, A, G, D, A7, D in the second section.

NOTES

This is another version of Ma Seal's Polka Mazurka. It is actually called 'Waltz Mazurka' as it is tune specific for a dance by that name. Connie Whitwell, Ma's friend, was there as well as Ma's daughter Mary, and between the latter two, I was able to reconstruct the dance. Ma was grumpy as usual, singing out, 'doesn't the music tell you what to do?' I was getting the blame, but daughter Mary was putting in a reverse Viennese Waltz which obviously was wrong according to Ma. We actually filmed it in Bendigo with this Viennese Waltz and sent it over for Ma's scrutiny. Connie worked it out, also saying they thought we'd confused it with the Varsoviana in the second section. We reworked it, deleted the Viennese Waltz and altered the Varsoviana turn and stop to a more subtle Hesitation Waltz, waltz stop while bringing the other foot up to the ankle instead of stopping on the floor. This seemed to meet with approval.

So the first 16 bars is straight Circular Waltz, the second section which is strongly marked with some Varsoviana part B emphasis, consists of 2 mazurkas forward, polka step half turn (as in Varso), then a natural waltz turn one way, bringing the foot up to the other ankle, then repeated reverse direction. This part B section of 8 bars is then repeated mirror image or reverse pattern to the previous. Then back to Circular Waltz etc. Merro remembered Ma waltzing round and round while playing the tune on an earlier visit, but by the time of my visit she was 90 and not dancing.

NB. Ma's grumpiness which Merro didn't seem to pick up on. We'd been recording her for some time when she said 'what about you playing a tune Mr Meredith, who's the mug around here!' Also on our return, she didn't want to see us, sitting in a rocking chair with an Afghan crochured rug over her knees, pretending to be a disinterested old lady. Once we got the tunes going, it was a very different story, and she'd look me in the eye at the end of each piece.

Peter Ellis, April 2013

Rhythm: Waltz Mazurka

Source: collected from Ma Seal

John Meredith Collection, NLA, TRC 2222 R-93, R-94

Transcription: transcribed by Greg O'Leary