

# **Masha Poka! (Bye, Masha!) Waltz Mixer**

*Susan de Guardiola ~ v.2.0, February 2020*

**Choreographer's note:** *this dance is an adaptation of the Welsh circle mixer "Farewell Marian" or "Ffarwel Marian", which was written by Gwyn Williams in the 1950s. I created it in Moscow, so the official name is the Russian version, pronounced "MAH-shuh pah-KAH". "Bye, Masha!" is the direct English translation. The name is a play on the name of the original dance ("Masha" is a Russian nickname for "Maria"), the tendency in Russia for "Masha" to be used as a sort of generic girl's name, and the repeated partner-changes (bye!) in the dance. The name turned out to be sadly prescient; just a few weeks after writing this dance and teaching it for the first time, I left Russia for what I thought would be a few months of pandemic but has turned into a yearslong, possibly permanent, absence.*

## **Music**

Any slow (~120bpm) waltz with a 32-bar repeat structure; originally danced to "Captain O'Kane's" by The Atomic City Rhythm Rascals off the album *The Split Tree Recordings - The Waltzes*.

## **Formation**

A circle of couples facing line of dance; Larks stand to the left of their partners and start the dance by putting their backs to the center of the circle and turning slightly to the right.

## **Figures**

- 4b Robins leave partners and progress counter-clockwise around the outside of the circle, moving forward two places to second Lark after partner. Larks don't move!
- 4b Taking left hands with this Lark, make a half-turn to put the Robins in the center; all turn single to the right
- 4b Larks (on the outside) progress counter-clockwise around the outside of the circle to their own partners. Robins don't move!
- 4b Taking left hands, partners make a half-turn to put the Larks in the center; all turn single to the right
  
- 4b Taking right hands, partners balance forward and back, then make a bit more than a half-turn) to bring the Robins to the center and get everyone aimed toward their left diagonal
- 4b Taking left hands with the person on their left diagonal (dropping right hands), balance forward and back, then make a half-turn to change places, the Robin turning CW under the Lark's arm (Lark pushes their arm out and away), coming into a closed ballroom hold with the Lark's back to the center
- 4b One complete turn of waltz (2b) followed by two sideways slide-closes (2b)
- 4b One complete turn of waltz (2b) followed by the Lark raising their left arm and the Robin turning CW under it and curling in a wide circle outward to face LOD, ready to restart

## **Watch points**

- (1) dancers traveling around the outside should pace themselves for a just-in-time arrival at the end of four bars
- (2) turn single is not a spot-turn; use the six steps and make it a beautiful curved movement
- (3) there is no underarm turn after the right hand balance, really truly, it should be a nice, big, flowing right hand turn
- (4) the circle tends to shrink; don't let the Larks back up at the end or there will be no space in the center for the turns single

## **Special note**

Masha Poka! also works just fine to polka music, becoming Masha Poka Polka! (Sorry, sorry...but it really does work!)