

CHERKESSIA

TSCHERKESSIA*
(Israel)

Tscherkessia or Cherkessia is a dance for men from Circassia. They were followers of the Mohammedan faith and seeking religious freedom in the Czarist days of Russia. They left the south eastern Russia and migrated to Palestine and Syria. The Circassians were noted for their horsemanship. The rhythmic movement of the dance portrays either horses or riders. The dance was taught at U. C. L. A., Los Angeles, California, 1943, and by Dvora Lapon of the Jewish Education Institute, New York City, 1946.

MUSIC:

Record: Israel 116; Israel LP 7, RCA Victor EPA 4140.

Piano: Bellafus, F. V., Dance and Be Merry, Vol. I, p. 12.

Chechem, Corianne, and Roth, Muriel, Palestine Dances, p. 31.

Lapon, Dvora, Dances of the Jewish People, p. 34.

FORMATION:

Groups of four or five dancers in a line, arms linked about one another's waists or any number of dancers in a single circle.

METER 2/4

PATTERN

NOTE: Directions are same for both lady and man.

Measures

A 1-2

I. Step right across left, step left in place, step back right, step left in place. Line or circle moves left. As cross step is taken, body leans forward, left knee bends to give flexibility to movement. As backward steps are taken, body should lean back as far as possible.

3-8

Repeat action of measures 1-2 three times.

B 9

II. Line or circle moves to the right. Beginning right, step to the side, cross left behind right.

10-16

Repeat action of measure 9 seven times.

Variations for Part II

1. Sixteen scissor kicks (cut steps) in front.
2. Sixteen scissor kicks (cut steps) in back.
3. Combination of scissor kicks in front and back.
4. Eight slow skips to the right (one per measure).
5. Keep-feet together, move both tops, then both heels to the right.
6. Semi-crouch position, execute a shuffle step, moving to the right.

NOTE: The action described in Part II may be used each time or a different action selected from the variations may be used for each repeat of the B music. The dance should be started in a slow tempo. Each repetition becomes faster until a climax of great excitement is reached. If done in a line, each group moves independently, allowing the action of Part II to carry them anywhere on the floor.

*Harris, Jane A., Pittman, Anne, Waller, Mariys S., Dance A While, Burgess Publishing Company, 1964, p. 240.