CIGANSKO SKOPSKO ORO

Cigansko skopsko oro is, as the name implies, a Gypsy ("Cigansko") circle dance ("oro") from Skopje ("skopsko"), in Macedonia, former Yugoslavia. The 3- (or 6-) count pattern of the the second figure is familiar from many dances in this region. I learned the dance from Ciga Despotovic.

Formation: open circle

Handhold: high handhold

Dance description:

count   steps

Figure 1

count	steps
1, 2, 3, 4 &	Beginning with left foot take three steps diagonally right into the center (1, 2, 3), step on ball of right foot next to left, lifting right hip (4), step on left foot next to right, sinking right hip (&).
5, 6, 7, 8 &	Repeat 1,2,3,4& with opposite footwork, moving away from the center (5, 6, 7, 8 &).

Figure 2

count	steps
1, 2 &	Moving diagonally to the right into the center: Step on left foot (1), step on ball of right foot (2) step on left foot (&).
3, 4	Moving away from center: step on right foot behind left (3), step on left foot behind right (4)
5, 6 &	In place: Step on right foot (5), step on ball of left foot next to right (6), step on right foot in place (&).

Ciga sometimes teaches this dance with a set number of repetitions of each figure. I find it much more enjoyable (and more in the "Gypsy spirit") to let the leader call the changes. The leader can, if he wants, try to make the transitions match the musical phrases in some interesting way.

(Ciga's dance descriptions describe the rhythm of Figure 1 as "1,2,3&4" and Figure 2 as "1&2,3,4,5&6." I have never seen Ciga dance this dance in this rhythm and believe the dance notes are imprecise here. The question is complicated by the fact that the underlying bass rhythm is neither 1-1-2 (or 2-2-4 or QQS) or 2-1-1 (or 4-2-2 or SQQ), but 3-3-2 (or SSQ), a rhythm I have chosen to render here as as "1,2 &.")

The style is very "Gypsy," that is, very free. Do not forget a sprightly use of the knees which accentuates an upward movement of the body (and coincidentally the hands and arms.) The shoulders can "vibrate" freely, the feet can "twizzle" and small hops be added on the upbeat ("grace notes.")

Presented by Lee Otterholt at the Laguna Folkdancers Festival 1999