

The Dorozhka Challenge

Bill Wenzel, 4/19/10

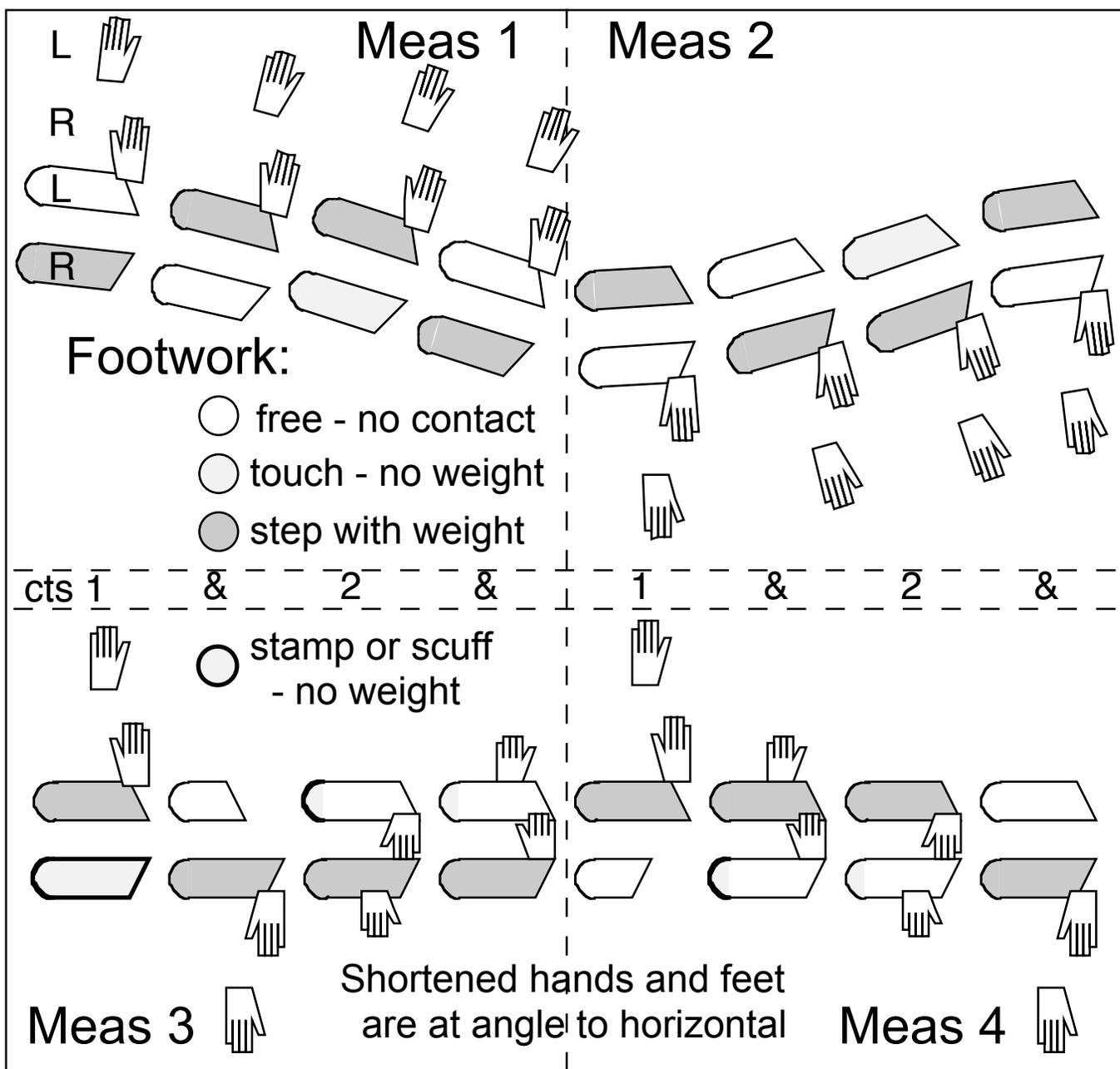
Dance description by Suzanne Rocca-Butler, Bill Lidicker and Bill Wenzel: *Let's Dance*, Oct., 2008.

Why is Dorozhka so difficult to learn, despite a clear 2/4 meter, steps that fit the rhythm and lots of repetition in Figures I, III and V? Also, when both arms are moving, they move together.

The big challenges are in the arms-footwork correlations. In Fig II these are correlated throughout:

L to L, R to R. Figure IV, however, includes multiple, often abrupt, changes in the correlations:

- A. Meas 1-2 (anticorrelated). In meas 1 steps move R, with arms extended L; each reverses in meas 2.
- B. Meas 3, cts 1, &. (anticorrelated quickly becomes correlated): Stamp R (ct 1) - leap onto R (ct 2), with CCW movement of arms to full L extension (ct 1), then down-back to original full R (ct 2).
- C. Meas 3, cts 2, &, plus meas 4, ct 1 correlate L. Ftwk: scuff L heel, touch L heel, step L; CW arms: down, left, up. During meas 4, cts &, 2, &, feet and CCW arms reverse positions to correlate R.
- D. Measures 5-8 repeat meas 1-4 with opposite arms and ftwk; then meas 9-16 repeat meas 1-8.



Dorozhka (Russia)

Dorozhka (duh-ROHZH-kah) was choreographed by Hennie Konings to this marching song, and is based on folk dance movements from the repertoire of the Cossaks of southern Russia. It was introduced by Konings at the Russian Summer Dance Camp in Germany in 1998. The name translates as “small road,” and is a word from the title and first line of the accompanying song: *Proljegala stepj-dorozhka* (“the small road over the steppe”). Hennie taught this dance at the 2006 Stockton Folk Dance Camp. It was later taught at the Heritage Festival in San Carlos, CA (Jan. 13, 2007) by Denise Heenan, and at the Festival of the Oaks in Berkeley, CA (Feb. 24, 2007) by Suzanne Rocca-Butler.

CD: Russian Dances Selected by Hennie Konings, Stockton 2006, Band 8 2/4 meter

Video: Cassette or DVD; Hennie Konings: Stockton Folk Dance Camp, 2006.

Formation: Closed circle, hands joined in V-pos.

Steps: Walk: Stride with feet close to floor but not dragging, two steps per measure. Lead with the toe, but foot is relaxed.

Stamp: All stamps are flat-footed and taken with weight unless otherwise noted.

Styling: Body is held erect throughout. Figs. II and IV, especially, are danced with vigor and strong forward movement. Arm movements given are those taught by Hennie, but some variation is acceptable. For example, in Fig. II both Hennie and his ptr often held both arms high and outstretched to the sides with palms fwd.

Measures	2/4 meter	PATTERN
----------	-----------	---------

INTRODUCTION None, but see Fig. I, meas 1-4.

I. CIRCLING, TO CENTER AND BACK (instrumental)

1-4 Walk 8 steps CCW (LOD) beginning with R. These steps may be omitted at the beginning of the dance, with these 4 meas serving as an introduction.

5-6 Facing ctr walk 2 steps fwd (R, L) while slowly raising straight arms fwd about 30 degrees (cts 1,2); step fwd on R (ct 1), scuff fwd on L, flat-footed (ct &); gently fall fwd on L with stamp (ct 2).

7-9 Walk backward away from ctr with three steps slowly lowering arms (R,L,R); release hand hold and tum CCW, stepping L,R,L to complete 3/4 circle and end facing LOD.

10-18 Rejoin hands and repeat meas 1-9, except stamp on L with wt on last ct (meas 18, ct 2).

II. SCUFF, HEEL, STEP, STAMP (vocal)

1 Moving in LOD, swing R ft fwd with light heel scuff (ct &) and step on R heel (ct 1); step

on L behind R (ct &); still moving fwd, stamp heavily on R taking wt with slightly bent knee (ct 2). During this meas, both arms swing strongly in a curve starting downward and moving swd to the R ending with R arm fully extended and L arm bent near and in front of chest. Palms are closed in a loose fist. If arms are both extended up and to their own side, then palms are open and facing fwd.

2 Repeat meas 1 with opp. ftwk and arm movements.

3-6 Repeat meas 1-2 two more times (3 total).

7 Repeat meas 1.

8 Scuff L heel (ct &) while turning to face ctr and stamp L, R with wt (cts 1,2). At the same time bring L arm behind back at waist level, palm facing out, and bring bent R arm near front of chest with palm facing in (or slightly down).

III. SIDE STEPS (vocal)

1-2 Facing ctr and moving in LOD, step on L (L instep beside R heel) with knees slightly bent (ct 1); straighten legs and make small step sdwys in LOD with stamp on R (ct &); repeat cts 1,& (cts 2&). Repeat meas 1. During these 4 side-steps, R arm opens slowly to R side as forearm rotates, moving palm from facing in to up.

3-4 Repeat meas 1-2, but with R arm slowly returning to original pos across chest as palm moves from up to in.

5-8 Repeat meas 1-4, but on meas 8 step L,R,L (cts 1,&2) and turn to face LOD.

IV. SMALL ARCS WITH STAMPS, STAMP-LEAP, BRUSH-STAMPS (vocal/instrumental)

1 Moving in small arc to R and a little fwd, step on R (ct 1), step on L next to R (ct &), stamp R (no wt) (ct 2), step on R (ct &). Arms are held parallel to the floor with R arm bent at elbow, hand in front of chest, and L arm extended straight out to L, but arms are not rigid and can be moved about somewhat.

2 Swinging arms to R side, repeat meas 1 with opp direction, ftwk, and arm positions.

3 Facing LOD, stamp on R ft (no wt) in place or slightly fwd as arms move quickly from pos out to R, across and out to the L (ct 1); small leap fwd onto R with emphasis while raising L ft up behind and swinging arms down and back to the R (ct &); while swinging arms back to L, swing L ft from back to front with scuff fwd (ct 2) and touch L heel fwd (ct &).

4 Transfer wt to ball of L ft, raising R up behind (arms can extend more strongly to L) (ct 1), swing R ft fwd with scuff while arms swing down and across in front of body and extend to R side (ct &); touch R heel fwd (ct 2); transfer wt to ball of R ft while raising arms already on the R to shldr ht (ct &).

5-8 Keeping arms out to R side (L elbow bent) and still moving in LOD, repeat meas 1-4 with opp direction, ftwk, and arm movements (start with L ft dancing small arc to L).

9-16 Repeat meas 1-8.

Repeat Figs. II, III, IV, II, III

V. FINALE (instrumental)

1-18 Join hands down in circle and repeat Fig. I. On meas 18, cts 2, &, step on L (ct 2) while turning to face ctr (no stamp), and shift wt to R ft (ct &).

19-26 Retaining hand holds, repeat Fig. III, but with softer, smaller movements; on meas 26, step on L (ct 1), and then softly stamp R, L with wt (cts &,2).

Sequence: FIGS. I, II, III, IV, II, III, IV, II, III, V