

DRMEŠ

Notes by Dick Crum for *ŽviLA TAMBURA '93*

Drmeš ('shaking dance') is the generic name given to a folk-dance type specific to the northwestern regions of Croatia. Old-time musicians such as Charles Koss, Milan Verni and the members of the Banat Tamburitza Orchestra have told me that a number of *drmeši* were popular in the U.S. in the pre-World War I period. By the 1950's, however, only one *drmeš* was a living part of the kolo repertory in Pittsburgh; it was a two-part dance done in trios (one man and two women). Two other *drmeši*, one done in couples and the other done in small circles of two couples each, lived on in the memories of old-timers, although they had ceased to be done just before World War II.

These three *drmeši* are described below. I have arbitrarily named them *Drmeš for two*, *Drmeš for three*, and *Drmeš for four* for the sake of convenience.

DESCRIPTION OF THREE DRMEŠI

Meter 2/4

STEPS USED

There are two kinds of steps used in U.S. *drmeši* as revived in the 1950's: the *basic drmeš step* and the *traveling steps 1 and 2*.

Basic *drmeš* step (with or without double bounce)

This step is done either in place or moving forward or backward.

Meas 1 ct 1 Step (or chug on) Rft, flexing R knee.
 ct & -
 ct 2 Hop on ball of Rft, straightening knee.
 (ct & Hop again on ball of Rft, knee still straight.)

Meas 2 ct 1 Step (or chug on) Lft, flexing L knee.
 ct & -
 ct 2 Hop on ball of Lft, straightening knee.
 (ct & Hop again on ball of Lft, knee still straight.)

Repeat the above movements *ad libitum* or until change in music.

Note: The count "&'s" in parentheses are an optional "double bounce"; kolo dancers in Pittsburgh aimed at achieving it, since it was considered more skillful. Most dancers merely did step-hops, as indicated above.

Traveling step 1 - Buzz step

Meas 1 ct 1 Step Rft across in front of Lft, flexing R knee.
 ct 2 Step Lft to Lft, straightening knee.

Repeat the above movements *ad libitum* or until change in music.

Traveling step 2 - Step-hop-step

Meas 1 ct 1 Step Rft across in front of Lft, flexing R knee.
 ct & -
 ct 2 Hop on Rft.
 ct & Step Lft to Lft.

Repeat the above movements *ad libitum* or until change in music.

A. DRMEŠ FOR TWO

Formation Couple, one man and one woman. In Part 1: Partners facing. Each extends R hand forward and places it on partner's R shoulder, own L hand on own L hip. For positioning in Part 2, see below.

Part 1 - *Drmeš* in place

In the position described above, do the basic *drmeš* step (with or without double bounce). Part 1 is done as long as man wishes; he need not stop it when there is a change of melody.

Part 2 - Couple turn

Partners release hands-on-shoulders position, and take shoulder-waist position (she places both hands on his shoulders, he places both hands on her sides, just above waist). In this position, both do the traveling step (either 1 or 2), turning as a couple clockwise. Some old-timers would reverse the turn: after turning clockwise, they would change direction, leading with the left foot and doing the turn with opposite footwork.

B. DRMEŠ FOR THREE

Formation Trio, one man and two women. In Part 1: Women side-by-side facing man. They place inside hands on his nearest shoulders, their outside hand on own hip. (In this description, woman on his right will be called "R-woman", and the woman on his left, "L-woman"). He has hands on women's outside hips. For positioning in Part 2, see below.

Part 1 - Traveling about the floor

Music A (8 + 8 = 16 measures):

In the above trio position, and using the basic *drmeš* step with or without double bounce, trio moves as a unit randomly about the dancing area, the man dancing backwards as the women dance forward.

Part 2 - Man turns alternately with each woman

Music B (8 + 8 = 16 measures):

Man takes R-woman in shoulder-waist position and turns with her clockwise in place for 8 measures using either traveling step 1 or 2, starting with Rft. L-woman in the meantime dances the basic *drmeš* step alone in place, with both hands on hips.

Then man leaves R-woman, takes L-woman in shoulder-waist position and turns with her clockwise (same direction as with R-woman) in place for 8 measures using either traveling step 1 or 2, again starting with the Rft. R-woman in the meantime dances the basic *drmeš* step along in place, with both hands on hips.

Then all resume original position to begin Part 1 again.

C. DRMEŠ FOR FOUR

This version of the *drmeš* was collected by Michael Herman of Folk Dance House in New York City, from local Croatian dancers in the late 1930's.

Formation Four dancers (usually two couples) in a circle, all facing in toward center; men's hands joined at women's backs, women's hands either on men's nearest shoulders or joined with each other at men's backs or necks.

Part 1 - *Drmeš* in place

Music A (8 + 8 = 16 measures):

In the position described above, do 16 basic *drmeš* steps (with or without double bounce) in place, or moving *very slightly* leftward.

Part 2 - Circle revolves clockwise

Music B (8 + 8 = 16 measures):

Maintaining this position, do 16 traveling steps (either 1 or 2), so the circle revolves clockwise.