

THE DRMEŠ

Croatia

To folkdancers in the United States, the word *drmeš* probably comes to mind first when anyone mentions Croatian dance. In the effort to catalogue, standardize, and therefore create dance patterns to which any folkdancer can move no matter where he or she may be, we have attached various descriptive names to each set of patterns making them easily recognizable. This situation, while both workable and valid for us, differs from the situation in Croatia, both now and in former times.

The word *drmeš* means "shaking dance." In earlier times, in the northwestern part of Croatia, each village had one or more tunes to which its particular *drmeš* patterns could be performed. Typically, a *drmeš* would alternate its shaking patterns with some kind of traveling step, each of which could be of indeterminate length, often depending upon the will of an acknowledged leader or sometimes the general mood of a group of dancers who were used to dancing with each other. To the people of any given village, the word *drmeš* would be synonymous, very often, with the word for dance. To someone in a village in Posavina, for example, it was not necessary to call the dance *Posavski drmeš*, since that was the only *drmeš* danced in that place. There were, of course, localities where more than one dance of this type existed; but, a repertoire of some 200 dances, not at all unknown among American folkdancers, was simply unheard of.

Today, these *drmeš* dances have all but been forgotten in this part of Croatia. In the fairly rare cases where they are performed, they often are danced in couples and look very much like a polka. In some instances, they are in fact called polka. Sometimes a small circle of dancers, usually older, will get up



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THE DRMEŠ (continued)

at a wedding or other celebration, and dance some of the older patterns which often appear to be in "poor repair." What does exist, however, is a group of *drmeši*, reconstructed from the memories of these older dancers, for presentation at such regional festivals as the *Smotra Folkloru* in Zagreb. The result of such activities is the creation of a sort of "living museum" of dances.

Today's class will concentrate on three regional variations of this dance called *drmeš* and the styling differences in them. The *drmeš* step from that large region of Slavonia has its own styling emphasis and can be seen in many versions on any of the days during the Zagreb festival. The Posavina variations are based on the work of Z. Ljevaković, former choreographer of the "LADO" ensemble of Zagreb. The *drmeš* from the village of Zdenčina was learned by Dick Crum in 1954, and represents a reconstruction of the type discussed earlier. All three of these *drmeš* types are in 2/4 time.

DRMEŠ IZ ZDENČINE (Pokupje)

Recording: Folk Dancer MH 3030-B; Folkraft F-1500x45

Formation: Closed circle, integrated (M & W), hands joined in back-basket, i.e., with second person over on either side, across in back of nearest neighbor. There is no "rule" about which arms are over or under those of the neighbor, though when the circle alternates exactly M,W,M,W, etc., W's hands tend to be joined over M's arms.

MEASURE

ACTION

Part 1-a

- 1 Facing ctr, fall onto flat Rft, bending R knee (1); stamp onto full Lft (stressing heel) beside Rft, sharply straightening both knees (&); repeat mov'ts of counts 1, & (2,&). Note that these mov'ts are all loudly and evenly stamped and have a distinct down-up appearance.
- 2-7 Repeat mov'ts of meas 1 six more times, gradually moving 1 (CW).
- 8 Stamp in place, Rft (1), Lft (2).

Part 1-b

- 9 Still facing ctr, step flat Rft twd ctr (where it will retain this same position relative to Lft thruout meas 9-16) (1); quickly flex R knee and straighten (&); step back onto Lft (2); quickly flex L knee and straighten (&).
- 10-15 Repeat mov'ts of meas 9 six more times, gradually moving L (CW).
- 16 Stamp in place, Rft (1), Lft (2).

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THE DRMEŠ (continued)

MEASURE	ACTION
<u>Part 2</u>	
1	Turning to face L, stamp fwd in this direction with Rft, taking wt (1); hop on Rft, continuing to move in this direction (2); step fwd in this direction with Lft (&).
2-8	Repeat mov'ts of meas 1 seven more times, traveling rapidly so that circle revolves CW.
9	Stamp fwd onto Rft in this direction, taking wt (1); abruptly pivot on Rft 1/2 turn to face R (i.e. CCW around circle) and pause (2).
10	Facing in this new direction, stamp onto Lft beside Rft, taking wt (1) and pause (2).
11	In place, stamp onto Rft beside Lft, taking wt (1) and pause (2).
12	Moving fwd in this direction, stamp fwd onto Lft, taking wt (1); hop on Lft continuing in this direction (circle revolving CCW) (2); step Rft in this direction (&).
13-15	Repeat mov'ts of meas 12 three more times traveling rapidly.
16	Repeat mov'ts of meas 12, but instead of a step on the last "&", pause and ready Rft to begin Part 1 again.

KOLO (Slavonia)

Recording: Kolo Festival KF-7221-B

Formation: Closed circle, integrated (M & W), hands joined in front-basket, i.e., with 2nd person over on either side, L arm under, R arm over.

- 1 Facing ctr, step on full Lft sideward L (1); close Rft halfway to Lft and raise and lower heels twice (2,&).
- 2 Step in place on Rft (1); step sideward L onto Lft and raise and lower heels twice (2,&).

This step moves gradually L during the dance. Often the *drmeš* will be interrupted by sung verses during which the dancers may stand or walk in and out or to the L in some fashion, often a "grapevine."

DRMEŠ (Posavina)

Recording: AMAN 102; Festival FM-4003-A

Formation: Same as for *Drmeš iz Zdenčine*

Part 1

- 1 Facing slightly L and moving in RLOD step flat Rft across in front of Lft, bending R knee (1); continuing in RLOD, step on ball of Lft fwd in this direction, with L knee slightly bent, but not as deeply as R knee was on count 1 (2).
- 2-16 Repeat mov'ts of meas 1 fifteen more times for a total of sixteen.

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THE DRMES (continued)

MEASURE	ACTION
Part 2	
1	Facing center, stamp onto flat Rft beside Lft, taking weight and bending R knee (1); rise onto ball of Rft (&); come down on both heels together, knees stiff (2); come down on both heels again as in count 2, but immediately release weight from Rft in preparation for following mov't (&).
2-16	Repeat mov'ts of meas 1 of this Part 2 fifteen more times, for a total of sixteen. Note that the circle moves very gradually in RLOD during this part.

Presented by Barry Glass