

Erkečko

(Thrace, Bulgaria)

Erkečko means “from Erkeč.” Erkeč is the old name of the village of Kozičino, Burgas district, eastern Thrace. The dance is performed by young women, called Lazarki, only once a year on the Day of Saint Lazar—a week before Easter. That is a day for celebrating the waking up of the nature after the winter and of the young woman inside the girl's body. On that day groups of unmarried girls dance and sing in every house yard of the village, wishing the hosts health and wealthy crop, and themselves getting married in the year to come. According to the pagan calendar, still recognizable in Bulgarian folklore, the new year begins with the spring. Source: a group for ethnic dancing from the village of Erkeč.

Pronunciation: Ehr-KEHCH-koh.

Cassette: Folk Dances from Bulgaria - NK 1995.03.

Rhythm: 2/4 meter counted 1, 2 or 1 &, 2 &.

Formation: Couples form a single dance line as an open circle, everybody faces ctr, hands in belt-hold position, L over R. Everybody knows his partner, but couples are not visibly separated.

Styling: There is a specific Erkeč style, which is a bit jerkier than the usually soft Thracian style: step on whole ft, slightly knee-bent position, accented, sharp feet and arms movements.

Meas

Pattern

STEP # 1 BUENEK

- 1 Facing ctr, accented step sdwd R on R, straightening both knees (ct 1); fall onto L next to R, bending L knee and simultaneously bend R knee, lifting R heel bkwd-diagonally right-low, keeping knees together (ct 2).

STEP # 2 WAVES FWD

Preparation: bend L knee, lifting R knee (ct & before the meas).

- 1 Facing ctr, accented step fwd on R, keeping L knee bent simultaneously bowing upper body fwd (ct 1); fall onto L next to R, kicking R heel bkwd simultaneously straightening up upper body (ct 2).

STEP # 2 WAVES BKWD

Preparation: bend L knee, lifting R ft from the floor with R heel behind the body plane (ct & before the meas).

- 1 Facing ctr, accented step bkwd on R, keeping L knee bent (ct 1); fall onto L next to R, kicking R heel bkwd (ct 2).

STEP # 3 STEP-HOP

- 1 Facing ctr, step in place on R, kicking L heel bkwd, keeping knees together(ct 1); hop in place, keeping L leg pos (ct 2).
- 2 Repeat meas 1 with opp ftwk.

Erkečko—continued

Step # 3 can be used for moving in any direction. Regardless the step direction, Step # 3 is performed with one of the two following hand movements:

VERSION # 1 WITH HANDS

- 1 Clap both hands in front of the chest (ct 1); set the hands apart on the same height (ct 2).

VERSION # 2 WITH HANDS

Preparation: bend both elbows at waist level and point them bkwd. Palms, clenched in loose fists with thumbs up, are at sides at mid-abdomen level.

- 1 Jerky lift the fists up to waist level, keeping thumbs pos (ct 1); release the arms on the same way back to their original pos (ct 2).

STEP # 4 TRANSITION TO THE RIGHT

Preparation: Extend R leg down, then sdwd R, describing a little arc.

- 1 Facing ctr, jump sdwd R on both ft, closing R ft with a sharp click (ct 1); hop in place on R, extending L leg down and then sdwd L, describing a little arc (ct 2).
- 2 Facing ctr, jump sdwd L on both ft, closing L ft with a sharp click (ct 1); hop in place on L, bending R knee, lifting R heel bkwd-diagonally right-low in anticipation of Step # 1 Buenek, keeping knees together (ct 2).

STEP # 5 TRANSITION TO THE LEFT

Preparation: Extend L leg down, then sdwd L, describing a little arc.

- 1 Facing ctr, jump sdwd L on both ft, closing L ft with a sharp click (ct 1); hop in place on L, extending R leg down and then sdwd R, describing a little arc (ct 2).
- 2 Facing ctr, jump sdwd R on both ft, closing R ft with a sharp click (ct 1); hop in place on L, bending R knee, lifting R heel bkwd-diagonally right-low in anticipation of Step # 1 Buenek, keeping knees together (ct 2).

STEP # 6 SEAGULL TRANSITION

- 1-4 Facing ctr and joining hands in belt-hold pos, perform 4 times Step # 1 Buenek, women yelling like seagulls.

Meas**Pattern****NO INTRODUCTION.****FIUGRE I**

- 1-22 Facing ctr, Step # 1 Buenek.

FIGURE II

- 1-4 Facing ctr, with Step # 2 Waves Fwd the line moves toward the ctr of the "circle". While squeezing the line, point your elbows bkwd and help your neighbor by lifting up your R elbow.
- 5-10 With Step # 2 Waves Bkwd the line opens the "circle" to its original form.
- 11-20 Repeat meas 1-10.

FIGURE III

- 1-4 Facing ctr, 4 times Step # 1 Buenek, women yelling like seagulls.
- 5-16 Facing ctr, 12 times Step # 1 Buenek.
- 17-26 Facing ctr, everybody drops hands and perform 10 times Step # 3 Step-Hop with Version # 1 With Hands. For 10 meas the partners of each couple describe full circles around each other (R partner goes bkwd-L-fwd-R; L partner goes R-bkwd-L-fwd) and finish them in their original pos.
- 27-28 Facing ctr, everybody again forms a line and with hands down at sides, performs Step # 4 Transition.

FIGURE IV

- 1-4 Facing ctr and joining hands in belt-hold pos, everybody performs 4 times Step # 1 Buenek, women yelling like seagulls.
- 5-17 Facing ctr, 11 times step # 1 Buenek.
- 18-28 Repeat Fig III meas 17-28, but this time 11 times and with Version # 2 With Hands.
- 29-30 Facing ctr, everybody again forms a line and with hands down at sides, performs Step # 5 Transition.

Suggested sequence:

Fig I. Fig II. Fig I. Fig II.
 Fig III. Fig IV. Fig III. Fig IV.
 Step # 6 Seagull Transition.
 Fig I. Fig II.
 Fig III. Fig IV. Fig III.

Erkečko—continued

Pripadnalo i Temna Magla

Pripadnalo i temna magla
Pu morava i pu dubrava. 2

Ne mi bilo temna magla
Nai mi bilo sivu stadu. 2

Male, Mila Male

Male, mila male
Libe mi se zeni
Za neznajno ljube

Male, mila male
A znajno ljube
Drebni salzi roni.

Thick Fog Was Covering

Thick fog was covering
The meadows and the woods.

It was not thick fog
It was a huge grey flock.

Hey You, My Dear Mom

Hey you, my dear mom,
My beloved is getting married
To a unknown beloved.

Hey you, my dear mom,
But his well known beloved
Is crying bitterly.