

## KAMENOPOLSKO

Kamenopolsko (~~means "from the region of Kamenopolje"~~ (means "from the region of Kamenopolje"-- literally, "rocky field"-- in the district of Pleven, North Bulgaria) is in some ways a very characteristic North Bulgarian dance, or combination of dance movements. In Part I, the forward-and-back or "chorus" figure, are movements typical of the Pleven-style rŭčenica, Čekurjankino, etc. In Part II are the quick and sometimes complicated crossing steps found in many North Bulgarian dances and across the border in southern Romania. Part III is essentially the dance "Kokonješte", done in North Bulgaria and Northeast Serbia--that is, also in areas where there is "Romanian influence." (The word "Kokonjeste," spelled in many ways partly through transliteration from the Cyrillic alphabet and partly because different speakers pronounce it as "kokonjeste," "kukunješče," etc., seems to be of Romanian origin and probably means "in the style of a young nobleman." A 45 rpm recording on the XOPO label, XOPO 327 "Kukuneško Horo," fits very nicely the North Bulgarian-style "Kokonješte"(as in Part III of Kamenopolsko).

Native dancers rarely do this dance in any set sequence of steps. They may begin with the "chorus" step for a while, then do some of the crossing steps, then possibly return to the "chorus" step. As the dance was originally seen in Bulgaria by Dennis Boxell, after some chorus steps and crossing steps the dancers would eventually move into the "Kokonješte" steps of Part III, and the musicians would adjust, perhaps with a pause to let the dancers finish what they were doing. Experienced folk dancers in the United States often do not try to remember a sequence of steps, but simply do the dance however it is called by the leader whether or not they end up "with the music" when the record is over. As the dance is usually done in short lines, each with its own leader, each line may be doing a different part of the dance at any moment.

RECORD: Folkraft LP-26 "Bulgarian Folk Dances, Vol. I"

FORMATION: Dancers in short lines, belt hold, mixed men and women or men and women in separate lines. The lines each stay fairly straight as they move back and forth on the floor (na lessa"--as if the dancers were strung on a stick) but the lines are in no particular formation.

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METER: 2/4

PATTERN

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### Measure

### PART I - Chorus step

- 1 Bending slightly forward at the waist, step forward on right, step slightly forward on left so that left toe is approximately behind right heel, step forward firmly on right bending right knee slightly --count "one-and-two."
- 2 The same, starting with left foot.
- 3 The same, as in Meas. 1.
- 4 Straightening up, hop on right foot, thrusting left foot out sharply and slightly in front of right.  
Just before the second beat, hop again on right; on the beat, bring left behind right and step--count "ah-two." This is a "reel" step.

(Continued)

KAMENOPOLSKO (Continued)

PART I (Cont.)

Measure

- 5 Another "reel" step, hopping on the left and bringing the right foot around behind and stepping on it.

On the second beat, leap on left foot in place, raising right knee slightly.

(Optional variation: just after the second beat, tap right heel slightly forward. This is a "grace-note," sometimes omitted).

"Talker cut" for chorus step; right-two-three, left-two-three, right-two-three, kick, ah-one, ah-two, leap (or leap-tap). Note that chorus step does not match music phrase in length.

PART II - Crossing steps

Basic step for Part II

Step on right foot directly in front of left (crossing).

Step back on left in place.

Step on right beside left.

Step on left foot directly in front of right (crossing).

"Talker cut": half-a-ba-sic...

- 2 Step back on right foot in place.  
Step on left beside right.  
Step on right foot directly in front of left (crossing).  
Step back on left in place.

"Talker cut": ...half-a-ba-sic.

- 3 Step on right in place beside left.  
Hop on right, thrusting left foot out sharply.
- 4 Slight leap onto left in place, thrusting right foot out sharply.  
Slight leap onto right in place, thrusting left out sharply.

This is a "scissors step." Feet stay approximately parallel to the floor.

- 5 Turning to face slightly to the left, a slight leap onto left foot in place.  
Hop on left foot, bending right knee to raise right foot up in back.  
(Optional "grace-note": just after second beat, tap right heel slightly forward).

"Talker cut" for Part II basic step: half-a-ba-sic, half-a-ba-sic, right-hop, scis-sors, leap-hop (or lead-hop/tap). You may not like "talker cues," but many brave hearts fell asleep in the deep of Kamenopolsko without 'em! Thanks to Ken Spear of Flushing, New York for "half-a-ba-sic, half-a-ba-sic."

In Part II the solid, almost "piston-like" quality of much of the Pleven-style dance can be seen clearly. The rhythm is very even in the crossing steps, the feet step firmly and even hop firmly, unlike the "bouncy" Sop style. The knees come up fairly high, especially for men.

(Continued)



Measure      PART II - variation "Double Threes" (cont.)

This gives "one-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight, half-a-ba-sic, one-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight, half-a-ba-sic, right, hop, scis-, -sors, leap, hop (or hop-tap)."

By this time you should be plenty ready for Part III.

PART III--"Kokonjeste" steps

- 1      Facing slightly to the right and moving in LOD, a quick hop on the left and step on the right--like a skipping step: "ah-one"  
Continuing in LOD, another skipping step onto the left: "ah-two"
- 2      Just before the first beat, a quick hop on the left..... then three quick steps right left right, stepping loudly onto the right on the last step: "ah-one-two-three."
- 3      Hop on right foot, swinging left leg counterclockwise in a small arc and turning the body to face slightly left.  
Step quickly in back of right with left foot, left knee straight.  
Step on right foot in place, right toe pointing to center.
- 4      Hop on right foot, winging left leg clockwise in a small arc and turning the body to face center.  
Step quickly in front of right with left foot, knee straight.  
Step on right foot in place.

Measures 3 and 4 are the "one-and-two, one-and-two" or "hop-step-step, hop-step-step" rhythm common in many Balkan dances. Sometimes the last step in Meas. 3 or 4, or both, is accented as in Meas. 2 - sometimes the Meas. 2 last step is not accented. This stamp-taking-weight is a kind of "exclamation point" used by the individual dancer now and then.

- 5-8      Repeat the pattern of Meas. 1-4 facing slightly to left and moving in RLOD, with opposite footwork.

PART III -- variation: "reel"

As in basic step for Part III, except:

- 3-4      Turning to face center, four skipping "reel" steps moving very slightly backward: ah-left, ah-right, ah-left, ah-right.

PART III - "grapevine"

- 1      Facing center, step sideward to the right on ball of right foot.  
Step on left in front of right (crossing).  
Step sideward on ball of right foot as before.  
Step on left in back of right.
- 2      The same again.

(Continued)

MeasurePART II-- variation: "Twos" or "Two on the left"

- 1 Step slightly in front of left with right foot.  
Step back on left in place.  
Step slightly back with right foot.  
Step forward on left in place.

This is like a "rocking" step. The body faces center, but the action of the step is at about "eleven o'clock."

- 2-6 Continue with the basic step, measures 1-5.

"Talker cut": one-two-three-four, half-a-ba-sic, half-a-ba-sic, step-hop, etc.

PART II--variation: "Double twos"

- 1 As "twos" above.
- 2 As in measure 1 of basic step.
- 3 Step in place with right foot.  
Step slightly back with left foot.  
Step in place with right foot.  
Step slightly in front of right with left foot.

- 4-7 Continue with basic step, measures 2-5.

This gives "one-two-three-four, half-a-ba-sic, one-two-three-four, half-a-ba-sic, right-hop," etc.

PART II--variation: "Threes"

- 1 As in measure 1 of "twos."
- 2 Now do another of the same thing...
- 3-7 ...and continue with the rest of "twos," meas. 1-6.

This gives "one-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight, half-a-ba-sic half-a-ba-sic, step, hop," etc.

PART II-- variation: "Threes and twos"

- 1 As in measure 1 of "twos."
- 2 Now do another of the same thing...
- 3-8 ...and continue with the rest of "double twos," meas. 1-7.

This gives "one-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight, half-a-ba-sic, one-two-three-four, half-a-ba-sic, right, hop," etc.

PART II-- variation: "Double Threes"

- 1-2 As in first 2 measures of "threes."
- 3 As in measure 1 of basic step.
- 4 As in measure 3 of "double twos" with...
- 5 ...another of the same thing and...
- 6-9 ...continue with measures 2-5 of the basic step.

(Continued)



Measure

PART III - "grapevine" (cont.)

This forms a kind of "grapevine" step, with body facing center, moving in LOD with a very regular rhythm: right-left-right-left, knees fairly high.

- 3      Leap sideward onto right foot.  
Stamp left heel diagonally forward, at about "ten o'clock," taking no weight; left knee straight.  
Stamp left heel as before but straight forward, hold slightly.
- 4      Leap onto left in place.  
Stamp right heel in place, no weight.  
Leap onto right in place.  
Stamp left heel in place, no weight.

This gives "Right-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight, leap-heel-heel, leap-heel, leap-heel."

- 5-8      Repeat the pattern of Meas. 1-4 in RLOD, with opposite footwork.

PART III - men's variation

As in "grapevine" above, except:

- 3      Turning to face slightly right, squat and kick right.
- 4      Squat (if you rose while kicking) and kick left.

The same with opposite footwork on Meas. 7-8.

Kamenopolsko to recorded music is like a buffet lunch with a limited appetite. If you want some of everything you have to skimp a little. For those who like a set sequence and want to come out "with the music," here's one sequence:

Wait one measure for introduction ("one-and-two-and")  
2 chorus step  
2 basic step  
2 "twos"  
2 "double twos"  
2 more chorus step  
2 "threes"  
2 "threes-and-twos"  
1 "double threes"  
Then 2 each in Part III --- end with grapevine step.

Presented by Dennis Boxell