

## MALO KOLO

Notes by Dick Crum for *živiLA TAMBURA '93*

One of the oldest and most beloved dances in the kolo repertory, *Malo kolo* ('little kolo') was regularly done in the 1950's. Musicians often played it as the opening kolo. If those in attendance were a "kolo crowd" and the orchestra was one that particularly liked to play kolos, *Malo kolo* might be performed three or four times in an afternoon or evening of dancing.

It is impossible to fully convey the electric charge that surged through a noisy hall when the musicians struck the eight solid, rousing chords that launched *Malo kolo*'s sparkling melody. Gleeful shouts burst out of the mass babble, and chairs and tables were scuffled aside as the dancers got up and moved onto the floor. No other kolo, with the occasional exception of *Žikino kolo*, had this kind of power.

There were occasions when *Malo kolo* seemed to go on forever, especially late in the evening of a wedding reception. As the excitement mounted and the adrenalin flowed, the dancers pulled into a tight, perspiring huddle, gripping their neighbors' waists or shoulders, exchanging shrieks of exhilaration and intensifying their footwork.

The musicians customarily speeded up the music at this point, modulated into a higher key, and sometimes stepped down from their platform and pushed into the center of the vibrating circle. They often moved around the inside of the kolo, stopping in front of especially good dancers, inspiring them to outdo themselves.

This climactic communion of musicians and dancers, music and movement, was the apogee of U.S. kolo dancing in the 1950's.

### DESCRIPTION

**Formation** Usually a closed circle, mixed males and females. The American-born generations in the 1950's sometimes danced *Malo kolo* in open-circle formation.

**Meter** 2/4


This pattern is so common in the U.S. old-time kolo repertory that dancers often refer to it as the *Basic kolo step*, the *Basic step* or the *Kolo step*. I have arbitrarily chosen the terms *Malo kolo step* or *Malo kolo pattern*.

Old-time kolos that employ the *Malo kolo step* are:









<i>Čarlama</i>	<i>Natalijino kolo</i>
<i>Erdeljanka</i>	<i>Pljeskavac I</i>
<i>Jeftanovićevo kolo</i>	<i>Seljančica</i>
<i>Malo kolo</i>	<i>Srpkinja</i>
<i>Milica</i>	<i>Zaplet</i>

The basic pattern of *Malo kolo* (see Variant A below) was subject to an enormous amount of variation, ranging from syncopated little hops and additional subtle bounces to flashy exhibitionistic kicks, stamps, and heel-clicks in contrapuntal rhythms. These were a function of momentary mood, individual skill, source of learning, and, in some cases, regional style. A selection of these variants is given below.

**Variant A: *Malo kolo step* - simple walking variant**


Rhythm pattern: 

Facing center throughout, and using flat-footed steps of short-to-medium length:

- Meas 1 (1)  Step Rft sideward to R.  
(2)  Close Lft beside Rft, taking weight on Lft.
- Meas 2 (1)  Step Rft sideward to R.  
(2)  Close Lft beside Rft without taking weight on Lft; or bring Lft a bit forward low in air.
- Meas 3 (1)  Step Lft sideward to L.  
(2)  Close Rft beside Lft, taking weight on Rft.
- Meas 4 (1)  Step Lft sideward to L.  
(2)  Close Rft beside Lft without taking weight on Rft; or bring Rft a bit forward low in air.

**Note:** The above pattern is subject to a certain amount of individual variation. Some dancers face slightly in the direction of movement (i.e., slightly to R or L) instead of facing center throughout. Also, in count 2 of measures 1 and 3, the closing foot may step in front or in back of the other foot rather than beside it. These variations are random with some dancers and standard with others, but do not warrant classification as separate variants.

**Variant B - Simple *Malo kolo step* with added bounce on first count**

Rhythm pattern: 

This variant adds a bounce on count 1 in measures 1 and 3, splitting it into two

beats/movements (♩ > ♪ ).

Facing center throughout, and using flat-footed steps of short-to-medium length:

- Meas 1 (1) ♪ Step Rft sideward to R, momentarily sharing weight on both feet, flat on floor, a short distance apart from each other.  
(&) ♪ Shift full weight, with an almost imperceptible bounce, onto Rft in this new place.  
(2) ♩ Close Lft beside Rft, taking weight on Lft.
- Meas 2 (1) ♩ Step Rft sideward to R.  
(2) ♩ Close Lft beside Rft without taking weight on Lft; or bring Lft a bit forward low in air. This is sometimes accompanied by a hop or bounce on Rft in place.
- Meas 3 (1) ♪ Step Lft sideward to L, momentarily sharing weight on both feet, flat on floor, a short distance apart from each other.  
(&) ♪ Shift full weight, with an almost imperceptible bounce, onto Lft in this new place.  
(2) ♩ Close Rft beside Lft, taking weight on Rft.
- Meas 4 (1) ♩ Step Lft sideward to L.  
(2) ♩ Close Rft beside Lft without taking weight on Rft; or bring Rft a bit forward low in air. This is sometimes accompanied by a hop or bounce on Lft in place.

#### Variant C - Standard *Malo kolo step* with "doubling" of count 1

Rhythm pattern: | ♪ ♪ ♩ | ♩ ♩ | ♪ ♪ ♩ | ♪ ♪ |

This is the most common form of the *Malo kolo step*. It is essentially the Variant A pattern performed with more energy and the addition of 2 hops, the first splitting count 1 in measures 1 and 3 into two distinct beats/movements (♩ > ♪ ).

Facing center throughout, and using flat-footed steps of short-to-medium length:

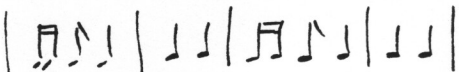
- Meas 1 (1) ♪ Low hop or bounce on Lft in place or moving slightly R.  
(&) ♪ Step Rft sideward to R  
(2) ♩ Close Lft beside or slightly behind or across in front of Rft, taking weight on Lft.
- Meas 2 (1) ♩ Step Rft sideward to R.  
(2) ♩ Low hop or bounce on Rft in place, closing Lft beside Rft without taking weight on Lft; or bring Lft a bit forward low in air.
- Meas 3 (1) ♪ Low hop or bounce on Rft in place or moving slightly L.



- (&) ♪ Step Lft sideward to L
- (2) ♪ Close Rft beside or slightly behind or across in front of Lft, taking weight on Rft.

- Meas 4 (1) ♪ Step Lft sideward to L.
- (2) ♪ Low hop or bounce on Lft in place, closing Rft beside Lft without taking weight on Rft; or bring Rft a bit forward low in air.

**Variant D - Standard *Malo kolo step* with "tripling" of count 1**

Rhythm pattern: 

This is essentially the Variant C pattern with the addition of a full-footed pat which splits count 1 in measures 1 and 3 into three distinct beats/movements ( > ).

Facing center throughout, and using flat-footed steps of short-to-medium length:

- Meas 1 (1) ♪ Low hop or bounce on Lft in place or moving slightly R.
- (&) ♪ Pat Rft slightly sideward to R, without taking weight on Rft.
- (ah) ♪ Step onto full (flat) Rft in this new place.
- (2) ♪ Close Lft beside or slightly behind or across in front of Rft, taking weight on Lft.

- Meas 2 (1) ♪ Step Rft sideward to R.
- (2) ♪ Low hop or bounce on Rft in place, closing Lft beside Rft without taking weight on Lft; or bring Lft a bit forward low in air.

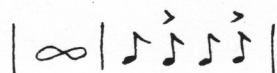
- Meas 3 (1) ♪ Low hop or bounce on Rft in place or moving slightly L.
- (&) ♪ Pat Lft slightly sideward to L, without taking weight on Lft.
- (ah) ♪ Step onto full (flat) Lft in this new place.
- (2) ♪ Close Rft beside or slightly behind or across in front of Lft, taking weight on Rft.

- Meas 4 (1) ♪ Step Lft sideward to L.
- (2) ♪ Low hop or bounce on Lft in place, closing Rft beside Lft without taking weight on Rft; or bring Rft a bit forward low in air.

**"CIFRA VARIANTS"**

The following variants are random examples of "fancy footwork" (*cifra* or *cifranje*) such as men frequently inserted into their dancing.

**Variant E - Stamps**

Rhythm pattern: 

Meas 1 Same as meas 1 of any of the previous variants.

- Meas 2 (1) ♩ Short step R with Rft  
(&) ♩ Light stamp of L heel (no weight) beside Rft, rising slightly on ball of Rft.  
(2) ♩ Audibly come down onto R heel.  
(&) ♩ Light stamp of L heel (no weight) beside Rft.

Meas 3-4 (Optional) Reverse movements of meas 1-2.

### Variant F - Cross-kicks

Rhythm pattern: | ∞ | ♩ ♩ |

Meas 1 Same as meas 1 of any of the previous variants.

- Meas 2 (1) ♩ Short step R with Rft, bringing Lft *very* slightly out to side in the air.  
(2) ♩ Low hop on Rft in place, kicking Lft (L heel leading) across low in front of R ankle.

Meas 3-4 (Optional) Reverse movements of meas 1-2.

### Variant G - Heel-clicks

Rhythm pattern: | ∞ | ♩ ♩ |

Meas 1 Same as meas 1 of any of the previous variants.

- Meas 2 (1) Short step R with Rft, bringing Lft *very* slightly out to side barely off the floor, L heel turned slightly out.  
(2) Strike L heel against R heel, keeping weight on Rft.

Meas 3-4 (Optional) Reverse movements of meas 1-2.