

# THE PRAVO HORO

The Pravo Horo is the most widespread and most popular line dance throughout all of Bulgaria. The Bulgarian word Pravo comes from Prav which means straight, direct or right. In the dance context Pravo Horo means "straight line or circle dance" which moves primarily to the right. In folk language Pravo means "straight on". Horo translates to round-, ring-, chain- or line dance. Bulgarian folk dances are most of all social group dances in which people hold each other by the hand in a circle or chain and all perform the same patterns. The term Horo dates back to the times of ancient Greece where the "Choros" or choir had a narrative function in theatrical dramas and plays. Often the choir made simple steps forward and back or to the side while singing reflections on the play. In Bulgarian language we still find evidence of the original connection between group gathering, dance and song:

<u>xop</u>	(hor)	=	Choir
<u>xopa</u>	(hora)	=	people, folk
<u>xopo</u>	(horò)	=	round dance, folk dance

The circle or line dance is a popular phenomenon of all Slavic countries in the Balkan Peninsula. They might use slightly different names but those names all look very much alike and exhibit a common old Greek and Slavic origin. The Serbians, Croatians and Slovenians have their Kolo (wheel); in Macedonia their dances are called Oro, Romanians dance the Hora and in Greece the name is Horos.

Along with the similarity in terms there is additional proof of the broader meaning of the word dance for the Bulgarians. For the Bulgarian the word for dance "Horo" means much more than just the physical aspect of performing some steps. For him Horo is closely connected and associated with a whole range of social events that take place while a dance is going on. When we consider ourselves at a folk dance workshop or camp in the United States as recreational dancers, we focus more on the technical and choreographical aspects of the dance. A Bulgarian experiences this quite differently. If we were to ask him to teach us a certain step he had just done a minute ago, he probably wouldn't even remember exactly what he had done. For him, the steps and which variations come first is only a small portion of what he experiences as his Horo. While the dancers in the circle spur each other on by calling "haide ... brrr, iha" and "daj go živo" (give it life), outside the circle others entertain themselves with talk, drink or exchange of wise philosophies, jokes or the latest gossip. This all belongs as a matter of course to his total picture of a horo.

The Pravo Horo is done year round and often played to invite and welcome people to the party. Because of its simple structure it is a dance for everybody, young and old, men and women, experienced and less-experienced dancers.

Every region and every village has its own version reflecting the typical local style and characteristics. A North Bulgarian Pravo (Dunavsko Horo or Svištovsko Horo) is different from the Pravo Trakijsko or the Pravo type (Opas) which is done in Dobrudža. Still they are based on the same three measure basic pattern consisting of two small steps (quick-quick) followed by two bigger ones (slow-slow). Beyond the typical local variations one can find this typical Pravo character. Similar dances are also done in other Balkan countries, like the Hora in Romania and the Hasapikos in Greece.

PRAVO HORO

TRANSLATION : "Straight line dance", originally meaning a simple dance primarily moving in one direction, usually to the right.

BACKGROUND : The *Pravo Horo* is undoubtedly the most popular line or group dance throughout Bulgaria. There are many different versions of it and in each ethnographical region they do it to different songs and melodies in the for that area characteristic styling. The names of the regional *Pravó*'s often indicate where they are from i.e. *Pravo Trakijsko Horo* (from Trakija or Thrace), *Pravo Šopsko Horo* (from Šopluk or West-Bulgaria) and *Pravo Severnjaško Horo*, (from "Severna Bulgaria or Northern Bulgaria).

At many weddings and parties however a simple basic *Pravo* is done, one that nowadays is almost adopted as the "national" or "generic" *Pravo Horo* of Bulgaria, and is not bound to one particular ethnographical region.

This *Pravo* is the most basic one and has like many of the regional versions four steps done to a three measure phrase w.i. two small steps starting with the R ft, followed by two slow ones:



Other countries have their own version of it, they might be known under different names, but they all belong to the same group of the three-measure basic "Hora"-family.

The Romanians call the dance *Hora* or *Sîrba*, the Greeks have their *Hasaposerviko* and the Israeli *Hora* or line-*Hava Naguila* shows a simular dance pattern brought to Israel by immigrants from the Balkans.

MUSIC : Cassette "Pan Bulgarian Folk Dances"- JL1987.02 by Jaap Leegwater. Side A # 1.

or

any moderate - fast up-beat 2/4 type of *Pravo* recordings like Boris Karlov's *Dudino Horo*, *Pravo Horo* and *Radino Horo* who have become "classicals" for this dance. They all are to be found on his LP Balkanton BHA 402.

METER : 2/4

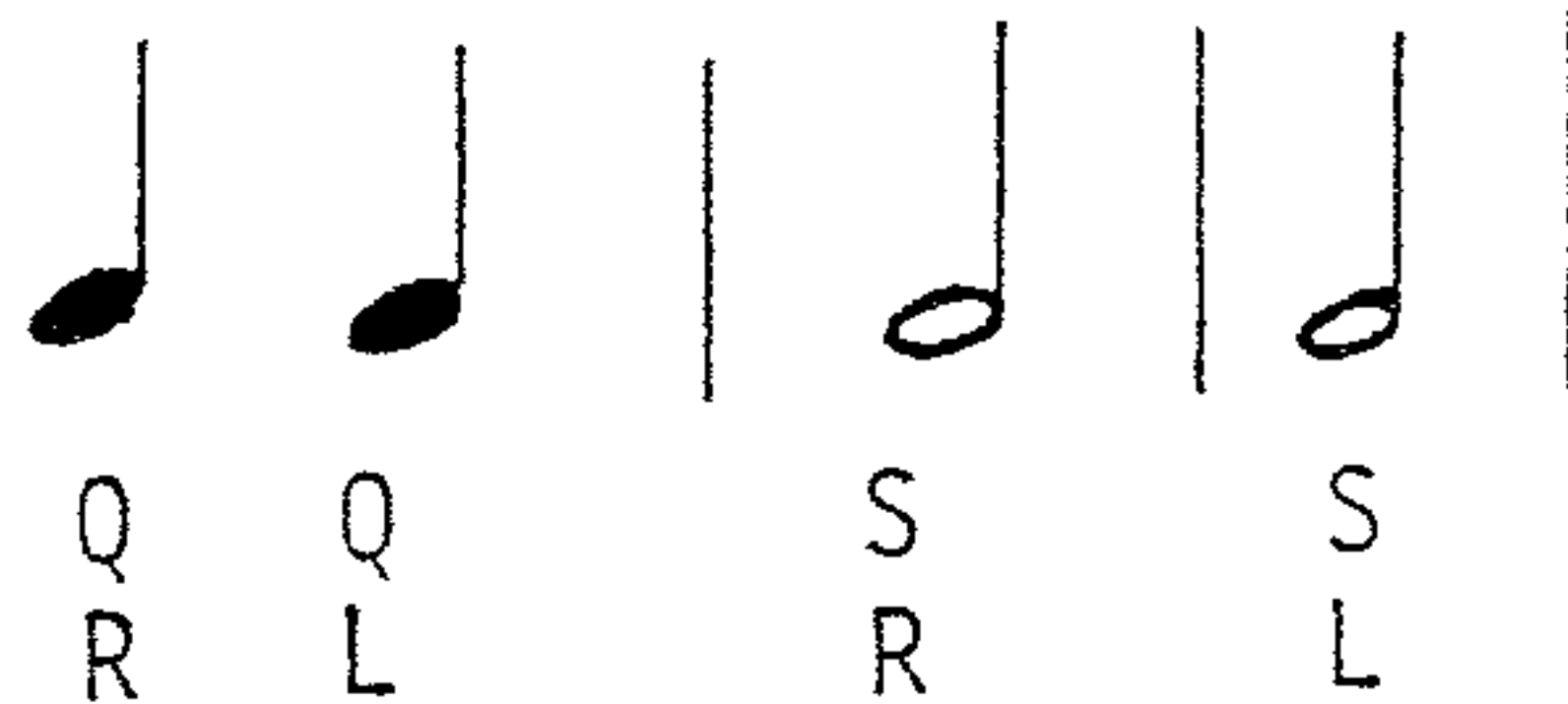


FORMATION : Half or open circle.  
Hands held in W-position.

Due to migrations, travelling musicians that are hired for local festivals and weddings caused the Pravo Trakijsko Horo to gain great popularity also outside the Trakija region. It is done at weddings and festivals all over the country and seemed to be adopted as the national Pravo Horo.

The Pravo Horo consists of four steps done to a three measure phrase which is two small steps starting with the right foot, followed by two slow ones. In the Thracian version (Pravo Trakijsko) this step is done diagonally forward right and diagonally right backward away from center. In dance terminology this step is called "Trakijka", since it originated from the Thracian Pravo. Most Pravo's in other regions have those steps in common although direction and styling may differ.

The "Trakijka - step" 2/4



PRAVO HORO

STYLE : Light, small steps.  
The arms rock gently up and down on the rhythm of the steps.  
When the music goes faster the performance of the steps becomes more vived and jumpy.

MEAS      PATTERN                      Part 1 Osnovno (Basic)

1      facing ctr, moving sdwd R,  
step on R ft (ct 1), step on L ft in front of R ft (ct 2)

2      step on R ft (ct 1),  
small lift on R ft moving L ft bkwd (ct 2)

3      step on L ft behind R ft (ct 1),  
small lift on L ft lifting R ft off the floor (ct 2)

Part 2 Skoci (Hops)

1      repeat action of meas 1 of Part 1

2      step on R ft (ct 1),  
hop on R ft lifting R knee in front (ct 2)

3      step on L ft in place (ct 1),  
hop on L ft lifting R knee in front (ct 2)

Note: This variation can also be performed with swinging the leg in front on cts 2 of meas 2 and 3.

Part 3 Prisitvanè (Three-steps)

1      repeat action of meas 1 of Part 1

2      facing ctr, dancing in place,  
step on R ft (ct 1),  
step on L ft (ct &),  
step on R ft (ct 2)

3      repeat action of meas 2 with opp ftw

Note: This small three-step is done on the whole ft and the knees mostly straight.

The different variation can be alternated and indicated by the leader of the line (*Horovodec*).