

Bulgaria

Pravo (PRAH-vo) in the Balkan Slavic languages means "straight" or "direct." Thus, a *pravo horo* is a dance that moves "directly" in a particular direction. The term is applied to a certain group of simple dances that (1) move steadily in one direction, usually to the right, and (2) usually have a 3-measure movement pattern.

The *Pravo* described here is from Thrace (southeast Bulgaria). The Thracians themselves call it simply *Pravo*; outsiders add the word *trakijsko* (truh-KEE-skoo, "Thracian") to distinguish it from other Bulgarian dances called *Pravo*. It is, even today, the most popular dance in Thrace. Often it is done by women only; in this case they sing their own accompaniment: several women sing a verse, then several others repeat the same verse, and so on, back and forth. Such a women's *Pravo* is always slow in tempo. More often, however, the Thracian *Pravo* is accompanied by folk instruments, begins slowly, and gradually speeds up. As the music accelerates, the men begin to improvise with highly complex steps; at this point the women either stop dancing, step back and watch, or continue dancing a simple fast variation of the basic *Pravo*. The fast *Pravo* thus becomes, in fact, a separate, independent dance done by men only, and this is the origin of most Thracian men's dances U.S. and Canadian folk dancers have been exposed to -- *Čestoto*, *Můžko trojno*, *Kazanlůško můžko*, etc.

The Thracian *Pravo* is conventionally notated in 2/4 or 6/8 time. The distinction is not clear -- sometimes the melody seems to be in 6/8 while the drum (*tůpan*) appears to be beating 2/4 (Bulgarian notations usually state the time as 2/4 and present the melody line in the form of triplets).

Formation: Present-day Thracians dance their *Pravo* in a mixed, open circle using belt hold or with hands joined down at sides ("V" position). Rarely does one see today the older, segregated formations (M on both ends, W in the middle, or one M at right end, then all the W, then the rest of the M, etc.) which in former days were governed by strict village traditions regarding sex, marital status and age.

(Continued)

PRAVO TRAKIJSKO HORO (Continued)

MEAS

PATTERN

Part I - Slow Pravo

- 1 Facing ctr or very slightly R of ctr, step Rft diag fwd/R (1); close Lft beside Rft taking wt (2).
- 2 Step Rft diag fwd/R (1); pause as Lft moves fwd in preparation for meas 3 (2).
- 3 Step Lft fwd (1); pause (2).
- 4 Facing ctr or very slightly L of ctr, step Rft diag bkwd/R (1); close Lft beside Rft taking wt (2).
- 5 Step Rft diag bkwd/R (1); pause as Lft moves bkwd in preparation for meas 6 (2).
- 6 Step Lft bkwd (1); pause (2).

Part II - Fast Pravo

As the music speeds up, dancers have a number of choices: they may continue the mov'ts of the slow part in a generally lighter style, or, individually, introduce variations such as the following (this list is by no means exhaustive):

Variation A (M and W)

- 1 Facing ctr or very slightly R of ctr, step Rft diag fwd/R (1); close Lft beside Rft taking wt (2).
- 2 Three light steps in place, R,L,R (1,&,2).
- 3 Three light steps in place, L,R,L (1,&,2).
- 4 Facing ctr or very slightly L of ctr, step Rft diag bkwd/R (1); close Lft beside Rft taking wt (2).
- 5 Continuing bkwd/R, step-hop on Rft (1,2).
- 6 Continuing bkwd/R, step-hop on Lft (1,2).

Variation B (M only)

- 1 Facing ctr, 2 steps, R,L, diag fwd/R (1,2).
 - 2 Still facing ctr, step Rft diag fwd/R (1); *čukče* on Rft in place, beginning to turn slightly R of ctr (2).
 - 3 Step Lft out to L, finishing slight turn R (now facing about 45° R of ctr), leaving Rft in previous position and sharing wt on both ft (1); still facing 45° R of ctr, *chug* onto both heels twd ctr, twisting them both twd ctr and keeping ft apart (2).
- 4-6 Same mov'ts as meas 4-6 of Variation A.

PRAVO TRAKIJSKO HORO (Continued)

Variation C (M only) *Stamps and Chug*

- 1 *G* Facing ctr or very slightly R of ctr, torso very erect, knees bent, stamp onto Rft diag fwd/R (1); knees still bent, close Lft up behind Rft (2); stamp R heel (no wt) diag fwd/R (&).
- 2 Stamp onto Rft diag fwd/R (1); hop on Rft in place, beginning to turn slightly R of ctr (2).
- 3-6 Same mov'ts as meas 3-6 of Variation B.

H Variation D (M only) *Stamps and Tapping*

- 1 Two strong stamping steps, R,L, diag fwd/R (1,2).
- 2 *Tropoli* (troo-poo-LEE, "tapping") step R, as follows:
Step full Rft in place with accent (1); tap L toe (no wt) beside Rft, raising R heel off floor (&); bring R heel down sharply and audibly (2); tap L heel (small scuff - no wt) beside Rft (&).
- 3 *Tropoli* step L: reverse mov'ts of meas 2.
- 4-6 Same mov'ts as meas 4-6 of Variation B. Or two steps R,L diag bkwd/R plus *tropoli* steps as in meas 2-3 of this variation.

NOTE ON VARIATIONS: The above variations are purely a matter of individual, personal spontaneous choice; a dancer may do any one of them while his/her neighbor is doing a different one (though in Thrace W do not do those marked "M only" above). Sometimes two or three adjacent dancers may "coordinate" their variations for greater enjoyment.