

Prysiadkas

Ukrainian and Russian dances with their squats, spins, and leaping steps contain a unique quality of execution demanding the utmost of the individual in speed, balance, agility, and precision. The Ukrainian terminology for the squatting steps, "prysiadkas" signifies the physically challenging steps performed by the man only. "Prysiadkas" allow the man to flaunt his physical strength much as the Spanish gitano amazes with his flurries of intricate footwork. Contrasted with the open exuberance of the man, the woman's part is more reserved and restrained. It is only the man who 'stoops to conquer.' While there are many variations of "prysiadkas" in both Russian and Ukrainian dances, those listed below are popularly used.

General Aspects of Prysiadkas

1. A straight, erect back in squatting position.
2. A seeming ease in execution.
3. Proper styling and precision in execution.
4. Constant practice to develop the above qualities.

Steps

I. Heel Squat

- A. From a standing position assume a squatting position--sit over heels and turn knees out. Hands cross in front of knees, palms turned in.
- B. Spring to a stride position landing on the heels with toes turned up. At the same time fling arms to an extended position at shoulder height. Continue A. then B.

II. Side Kick

- A. From a standing position (heels together, toes turned out, R hand in back of neck, L fist on hip) assume squat position. Assume standing position by rising on R foot and kicking L foot directly to the L simultaneously. Continue 3 times moving to the R and end with stamp L, R, L. Repeat in opposite direction shifting position of the hands.

III. Pigeon Toe

- A. From a standing position, assume a squatting position.
- B. Recover to a stride position landing on inverted toes--pigeoned-toed. The hands cross in front on the squat position with palms turned in. In the astride position, the hands are extended to the side opposite the hips with palms turned out.

IV. Squat with Single Pigeon Toe

- A. From standing position, squat to heels--hands crossed between knees with palms turned in.
- B. Assume astride position turning L toe to inverted positions, while R foot remains in normal position. The R hand remains to the side with the palm turned in while the palm of the L hand is turned out. Squat and repeat with R foot pigeon-toed and change in hand position.

V. Squat and Spin

- A. From standing position, assume squatting position on heels with hands crossed, palms turned in.
- B. Land in astride position on heels, hands extended sdwd shoulder height.
- C. Land in squatting position, L hand between knees, R hand extended in back. In this position (prepare) swing arms to the L giving the body momentum to spin to the L and rise on the L foot. In spinning once the R foot remains close to the L slightly off the ground. Continue alternating squat astride and squat spin.

VI. Squat Toe Heel

- A. From standing position, squat over heels.
- B. Recover from squat to standing position, with L toe inverted, place L heel in same place. Repeat sequence with the R foot.

VII. "Schupak" Heel Thrust

- A. From a squatting position, knees almost together, arms folded over chest, thrust the R foot fwd at the same time sitting over the L heel. Reverse and continue alternate thrusting.

VIII. Leg Circling

- A. From squatting position, hands flat on floor in front, swing R extended leg sdwd and fwd, cutting out R arm which is immediately replaced, then similarly the L arm, and l leg, and assume original squatting position. R leg makes a complete circle.

A mere difficult version of Part VII is to assume the same squatting position, body balanced over the L heel while the R foot is thrust fwd off the floor. Continue the above with alternate thrusts of R and L.