

TOPANSKO ORO

Macedonia

Also known as Topaansko Oro, this dance derives it's name from Topansko pole or Topaana, a sector of Skopje, Macedonia, which was populated by gypsies, until the 1963 earthquake. This dance belongs to the broader family of "Krsteno" (crossing) dances, popular throughout Povardarie, the Vardar river basin, along with such dances as: Žensko Krsteno, Postupano, Čučuk, and Devojče devojče, to mention just a few. Topansko oro, as are many of the dances in this family, is danced over a five-measure phrase. Although the dance is often played and danced by gypsies, I personally would categorize it as Macedonian rather than "Gypsy."

Stephen Kotansky first learned Topansko oro from Pece Atanasovski in 1978 and later saw it danced by musicians in his orchestra. Stephen also conferred with Atanas Kolarovski who was familiar with an almost identical form.

TRANSLATION: Topansko pole or Topaana was a sector populated by Gypsies in an area of Skopje, Macedonia

PRONUNCIATION: TOH-pahn-skoh OHR-oh

MUSIC: Record: Jugoton (LP) LSY-61392, side 1/2

FORMATION: Short lines in a modified "W" pos.

STEPS: Čukče: The raising and lowering of the heel on one musical beat (bounce).

RHYTHM: 12/16 counted: 1-2 3-4 5-6 7-8-9 10-11-12
Dancers cts will be described in a 4/4 meter as this dance can be highly syncopated.

METER: 12/16 (4/4) PATTERN

Meas. Cts.

INTRODUCTION: Leader begins with the start of any musical phrase.

FIG I:

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|---|-----|--|
| 1 | 1 | Facing diag R of ctr and moving in LOD - čukče (or hop) on L in place as R knee lifts (ft: M high, W low) in front of L. |
| | 2 | Step R fwd in LOD. |
| | 3-4 | Repeat meas 1-2 with opp ftwk (bnc R, L fwd). |
| 2 | 1 | Turning to face ctr - čukče (or hop) on L as R lifts in front of L. |
| | 2 | Leap R in place, as L knee lifts sharply in front of R (ft: M high, W low), and hold in this pos. |
| | 3-4 | At the end of ct 3, L begins to swing out and around (CCW) to a pos just below R knee. |

- 3 1 Facing ctr - čukče (or hop) on R, L is still behind R knee.
- 2 Step L to L.
- 3 Step R across L.
- 4 Step L back in place.

4-5 Repeat meas 2-3 (it is not necessary to turn and face ctr).

Repeat dance from beg and according to "energy level" tempo, etc., add hops instead of čukče's and begin to syncopate the steps slightly.

VARIATION:

Note: As the music speeds up or the "energy level" rises, the dance becomes more dynamic with the dancers adding turns and even squats at will. Also, a new more intricate and complicated variation of the basic is introduced. This variation is often highly syncopated; therefore I am noting a skeletal form.

When the leader changes to the Variations, the hands lower to "V" pos during the last 2 cts of meas 5. In class they changed when the music changed to a minor key, but the leader may change at will. However, the teacher never went back to the Basic pattern.

- 1 1 Facing R of ctr - čukče (hop)) on L as R lifts in front of L.
 Note: This initial čukče or hop is only done the first time as a transition from the former "basic" into the variation. All following repeats of the variation begin with a leap L fwd in LOD (ct 1).
 - 2 Step R fwd in LOD
 - uh Step on ball of L ft beside R toe.
 - 3 Step R slightly fwd and beside L.
 Step cue: Cts uh-3 can be called a "ker-PLUNK".
 - 4 Step L fwd in LOD.
 Step cue: Hop L, R fwd, ker-PLUNK, L fwd.
- 2 uh Step on ball of R ft beside L toe.
 1 Small step L fwd in LOD.
 Step cue: Cts uh-1 can be called a "ker-PLUNK".
 - 2-3 Step R-L fwd in LOD
 - 4 Still facing R of ctr - step R back to place.
 Step cue: Ker-PLUNK, RL fwd, R bk
 Note: The hop becomes a leap onto L in repeats of the variation.
- 3 1 Hop on R, bringing L up and around in back of R - thereby turning to face slightly L of ctr.
 2 Step L slightly behind R.
 3 Step R in place.
 uh Step on ball of L beside R.
 4 Step R fwd slightly.
 Step cue: Cts uh-4 can be called a "ker-PLUNK".

- 4 1 Turning to face slightly R of ctr - leap on L in place as
 R moves up and around in back of L.
 2-4 Repeat, meas 3 cts 2-4, with opp ftwk (R behind, L in pl,
 RL w/ker-PLUNK)
- 5 1-4 Repeat meas 4, with opp ftwk. (leap R in pl, L behind, R
 in pl, LR w/ker-PLUNK)
 Cues for meas 3-5: Beg w/wt on R, hop-step-step-ker-
 PLUNK. Leap-step-step-ker-PLUNK. Leap-step-step-ker-
 PLUNK.

ADDITIONAL VARIATION: Meas 3-5

Add a hop just before ct 2 in each meas.

Do a solo turn to R during meas 3 or 5.

Turn to R during meas 4.

In all cases the turn is initiated on ct 1 of meas. Turn only when inspired to do so!

Repeat from the beginning of the variation, not forgetting, of course, to begin by leaping onto the L (meas 1, ct 1).

Macedonians once put it this way: "There is a beginning and an end to each dance phrase. How you get there is your own problem." Enjoy.

Presented by Stephen Kotansky