

YARKHOSHDA
(Armenia)

YARKHOSHDA is a man's dance popular among the Armenians and Kurds in the districts of Sassoon and Moosh/Daron. In the original form each dancer had an opponent who he tried to force to submit by striking him into submission. (A high pain threshold was an advantage). Today the emphasis is on recreation rather than competition. Although the dance was practiced in the U.S. by original immigrants from Moosh, it has died out among their descendants. It is still performed in the district of Talin, in Soviet Armenia, by the descendants of Sassoon's refugees, and is featured prominently in their wedding festivities.

Pronunciation: Yahr-khosh-dah

Source: Ethnographic film from Soviet Armenia.

Music: Gyondbashi (Tape) 2/4 meter

Style: Erect carriage with strong assured movements. One now cooperates with partner instead of competing, and the mood is playful.

Formation: Even number of M in a circle. First form two lines, to determine which M in opposite line is your opponent. Then open the lines out into a circle. Dancers move "solo fashion" in a CCW circle.

Meas

Pattern

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 1 | Holding arms out at chest level with palms facing outward, walk in CCW circle. Step fwd L,R (cts 1,2). |
| 2 | Step fwd L, R (cts 3,4). |
| 3 | Lift L beside R knee (ct 5); stamp L beside R (ct 6). <u>Note:</u> While walking, one may sway arms slightly to L (ct 1) R (ct 2); L (ct 3); R (ct 4). Raise hands slightly and spread them with palms facing each other (ct 5); clap hands together strongly at eye level (ct 6). |
| 4-6 | Repeat meas 1-3 (cts 7-12). |
| 7-8 | Turning to face opponent, move twd him with walking steps: L,R,L,R (cts 13,14,15,16). Arms may sway as before. |
| 9 | Raising L, lean back and raise arms overhead with palms facing fwd (ct 17); step fwd onto L, keeping most of wt on the R, while slapping the palms of opponent sharply (ct 18). |
| 10-11 | Step or sway in place for four steps: L,R,L,R (cts 19-22). |
| 12 | Lean back and then slap palms again (cts 23,24). |
| 13-14 | Step on L, turning to face away from opponent (ct 25); walk back into circle, stepping R,L,R (cts 26,27,28). |
| 15 | Lift L beside R knee (ct 29); stamp L and clap (ct 30). |

Start dance sequence again from the beginning.

YARKHOSHDA (Continued)

NOTE: There is considerable leeway for individual expression in this dance. Some possible variants are:

using a kerdzee step while traveling. (e.g., step L (ct 1), strike R heel fwd (ct 2); step R (ct &); step L (ct 3); step R (ct 4).

trying to intimidate your opponent with a fearsome expression as you approach to clap palms with him.

putting one hand behind your back as you walk.

walking in a small CW circle on cts 19-22, or kneel down on one knee.

© 1986 by Gary Lind-Sinanian

Presented by Gary Lind-Sinanian