ŽENSKO KRSTENO

Macedonia (Yugoslavia)

Zensko krsteno (ZHEN-sko CURSE-teh-no, "women's cross-stepped dance") is an old dance from the Skopje region of Macedonia. Although originally danced by women only, it has been danced as a mixed oro for the last several generations. Its step pattern places it, along with other Skopje dances such as Postupano and Toska, in the large family of Macedonian dances known as the Berande type. Zensko krsteno is described below as learned by Dick Crum in Skopje in 1952.

Recordings: Folkraft LP-25-A, bd. 1, Žensko krsteno; RTB LP 1394, Side B, bd. 5, Žensko krsteno; Nevofoon 15006, bd. 15, Žensko krsteno.

Meter and rhythm: The dance has been variously notated in 7/8, 12/16 and 13/16. It is described below in 13/16, the meter in which it is played on the Folkraft and RTB records listed above. The rhythm varies with each step variation described; however the underlying beats are in a "slow-quick-quick-quick-quick-quick" pattern:

Underlying beats: 1 2 3 4 5 6
Rhythm: S Q Q Q Q Q
13/16 notation: J. J J J J

Formation: Open circle or line, mixed M and W; hands joined down at sides ("V" position).

MEAS ACTION

Note: All "steps" in the description below are on the ball of the foot. Heel contact with the floor is incidental, and the entire dance has a light, buoyant style. "Bounces" are articulated from the knee rather than the ankle.

Variation 1

- Facing ctr, hop in place on Rft, L knee bent and Lft in air in front of R ankle (1); step Lft in place beside Rft (2); pause (or slight bounce on Lft) (3); step Rft in front of Lft (4); rock back onto Lft in its place, Rft takes position in air in front of L ankle (5); pause (6).
- 2 Repeat mov'ts of meas 1 with opposite footwork.
- Repeat mov'ts of meas 1.
- Hop on Lft in place, beginning to turn R (into LOD), R knee bent and Rft in air in front of L ankle (1); facing in LOD, step fwd with Rft (2); pause (3); step or slight leap fwd with Lft (4); step Rft fwd (5); pause (6).
- step or slight leap fwd with Lft (1); step or slight leap fwd with Rft (2); pause (3); beginning to turn toward ctr, step or slight leap onto Lft across in front of Rft (4); facing ctr, rock back onto Rft in its place behind Lft, with L knee bent and Lft in air in front of R ankle (5); pause (6).

ŽENSKO KRSTENO (cont'd)

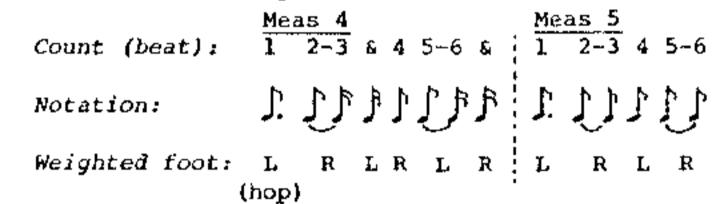
Variation 2 - Hitch-hop before ct 2

Same as Variation 1 except that the foot bearing weight on any ct 1 does a slight preliminary hop ("hitch-hop") before the other foot steps on ct 2. This hitch-hop just before ct 2 can be done in any or all of the 5 measures of the dance.

Variation 3 - Syncopated step-close-steps

- 1-3 Same as meas 1-3 of Variation 1 or 2.
- Hop on Lft in place, beginning to turn R (into LOD), R knee bent and Rft in air in front of L ankle (1); facing in LOD, step Rft fwd (2); pause (3); close Lft beside Rft taking wt on Lft (&); step Rft fwd (4); step Lft fwd (5); pause (6); close Rft beside Lft taking wt on Rft (&).
- Same as meas 5 of Variation 1 or 2.

Variation 3 can prove very tricky, even for dancers already accustomed to dealing with "irregular" Balkan rhythms. The written description above will probably be useful only as reminder notes for a dancer who has already learned the steps from a competent teacher. Folk dancers with a knowledge of musical notation may find the following breakdown of Variation 3, meas 4-5 helpful:



Note: Native dancers do any of the above Variations 1, 2 or 3 at will, and it is not necessary that all dancers do the same variation at the same time.

Description by Dick Crum

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