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Dance Research Committee: Bill and Carol Wenzel

Orijent (Serbia)

This version of Orijent (OH-ree-yent), a common dance name in Serbia, was introduced here in the early 1960s by Dick Crum, who taught it at the Mendocino Folklore Camp, then the Madelynne Greene Folklore Camp. Madelynne prepared notes for the dance, which was taught by her at the 1967 San Francisco Kolo Festival and by Gordon Engler at MFL 1968. Dick taught the dance at the 1975 Hidden Valley Folk Dance Teachers Institute, on which Virginia Wilder and Ruth Ruling, with Dick's help, based their description in Vol D-2 of the Federation Folk Dances from Near and Far. His notes are included in the 1976 NAMA #1 Dance Syllabus. Finally Dick taught the dance at the 1997 Stockton Folk Dance Camp.

Different versions of Orijent have been taught locally by Zoran Vasiljevich (Kolo '66), Mario Casillas (Orijent III at Kolo '71) and Ciga Despotovich (Ciganski Orijent) at SFDC '78. Both researchers and Serb natives speculate on the origins of the many figures for these dances. There are major Rom contributions, but 'Orijents' are popular among ethnic Serbs, too. The name might refer to the Orient Express train, which passed through regions where the dance was most popular. There the dance sequence was determined by the leader, who might select only a single variant. Dick chose his Figures I and III in Zheleznik village on Easter Sunday, 1954; he learned Figure II later from young men dancers in a Belgrade coffee house.

Dick's Figure I is considered the most basic 'Orijent' figure. But many now dance it as a touch-step-grapevine, facing and moving rapidly in LOD and ignoring his sharply controlled, almost in place, movements. For Dick the persistence of this distortion became a source of considerable pain.

Music: Records: DuTam 1001A, Koffeehouse KH-101A, 45 rpm 2/4 meter
Cassette: Dick Crum Presents Croatian and Serbian Dances, side B/5.
Videos: Stockton Folk Dance Camp 1997 @ 01:09:28.
Stockton Folk Dance Camp, 40th Anniversary, 1987.

Formation: Mixed open circle, hands joined down in V-pos. An alternative for a M-only line is shoulder hold (T-pos).

Styling: Light and bouncy; danced on the balls of the feet, with elastic knees and small, precise and controlled footwork. Except as noted in Fig II, body is erect with head held high.

Measure

2/4 Meter

Pattern

INTRODUCTION. None

I FLEX, PLACE, SLICE AND MOVE IN LOD

Knees flex throughout Figure, moving body during each measure slightly up, down, up, down (cts &,1,&,2).

- 1 Facing very slightly R of ctr with wt on ball of R ft, raise L ft slightly to L, then place ball of L on floor in front of R (cts &,1); transfer full wt to ball of L ft, as R ft is raised behind, close to L heel (cts &,2). Note: The L ft carries no weight on ct 1; but Dick asks us to imagine Velcro on the floor and L sole, preventing the L ft from moving horizontally during cts 1,&,2.
- 2 Bring R ft around near L and step on R across L with a slicing heel-lead (cts &,1); facing ctr, step L behind R (ct &); small step on R to R (ct 2).
- 3-16 Repeat meas 1-2 seven times - a total of eight.

II REACH, SHAKE, STEP ACROSS FORWARD AND BACK

- 1 Facing ctr and bending fwd and to R to keep wt over R ft, extend straight L leg to L, shake it, then step to L on L ft (cts &,uh,1); still bending fwd, close R ft twd L, then step fwd on R across L (cts &,2).
- 2 Moving fwd twd ctr with body erect, step on L across R (ct 1); raise R sharply behind L calf (ct 2).
- 3 Moving bkwd, step R directly behind L (ct 1); rpt with opp ftwk (ct 2).
- 4 Step back on R behind L (ct 1); raise L fwd in preparation (ct 2).
- 5-16 Rpt meas 1-4 three times - a total of four.

III SMALL TWISTING STEPS FORWARD AND BACK

- 1 Moving fwd twd ctr with body erect, head up and knees slightly bent, take a small step (almost a leap) onto L with ft together and heels turned slightly out to L (ct 1); repeat, stepping fwd R, heels turned out R (ct 2).
- 2 Repeat steps fwd onto L, R, L (cts 1,&,2).
- 3-4 Continuing fwd, repeat meas 1-2 with opp ftwk.
- 5-8 Moving bkwd, repeat meas 1-4, beginning with a small step onto L.
- 9-16 Repeat meas 1-8.

Sequence: Repeat dance as written to end of music.