



PRYSIADKA

NOTE: The following article, a free translation from the Russian book OSNOWY KHARAKTERNOHO TANCIA, appeared in the April '44 issue of THE FOLK DANCER, edited by Michael Herman of New York, and is shared with us by him.

Readers will find the Russian words *РАЗ* (one), *И* (and), *ДВА* (two), and *ЗАТАКТ* (beginning position) under the illustrations.

Prysiadkas are the most typical and principal characteristic of both Russian and Ukrainian dances. They are by no means the monopoly of these two countries, as they are also found in the dances of other countries; but there they play only a minor part and are hardly ever identified with them. It is only in the dances of Russia and Ukraine that they have achieved unusual significance and expression. As the cultural relations between Russia and Ukraine increased, the individual traits of the various prysiadkas blended, until now it would take a special authority to distinguish which is Russian or Ukrainian.

Prysiadkas can be divided into two categories--full and half. In the full prysiadka, the steps are executed while the body remains in squat position. In the half prysiadka, the various steps are done before and after the squat position.

Posture is of primary importance in the prysiadka. The back must be erect, straight and rigid. There should be no round shoulders or hunching up during the step. Yet with this rigidity of the spine, the step must flow with ease and suppleness. Far better to master one prysiadka with straight spine, ease of action and proper style, than to suffer through several prysiadkas sloppily done.

Proper preparatory exercises can help the dancer limber up before attempting prysiadkas. One should never go into a prysiadka cold. Strained and torn ligaments can result. The thigh, hip and back muscles, plus knee joints, are used in prysiadka and should be kept limber. Beginners should hold on to a bar or the back of a chair during first attempts in order to help maintain their balance.

In recent years many of the prysiadkas have been adopted for use on the stage. These have had various embellishments added to make them even more spectacular. But we are concerned here only with the 'native' prysiadkas.

An easy prysiadka with which to start is shown in Fig. 1. It is done by leaping into the air and coming down in a full squat on the balls of both feet, with knees spread far apart. With another leap come down on the ball of the left foot & swing the right foot out to the side. Repeat, alternating feet.



Fig. 1

Another interesting half prysiadka is shown in Fig. 2. After the full squat, the dancer does a toe & heel step. Be sure to turn the body as in the illustration to acquire the proper style. Alternate feet after each squat



Fig. 2

A similar half prysiadka is shown in Fig. 3. This time the dancer lands on both toes after the squat, then with another leap lands on both heels.

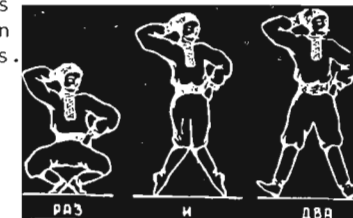


Fig. 3

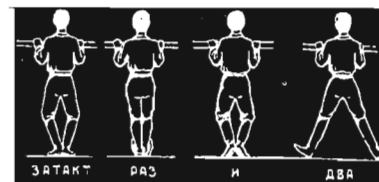


Fig. 4

Fig. 4 shows prysiadka that can be done from a semi-squat or full squat position. Figs. 5 & 6 show some other variations of the half prysiadka.



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

A typical Ukrainian prysiadka (Fig. 7) is called *metelka*, which means 'broom', probably because of the sweeping motion of the knees as they brushed the floor.

The full prysiadka shown in Fig. 8 is called the *schupak* in Ukrainian. There are two versions of it. One is where the legs are shuffled forward only half way in quick alternate movements. The more difficult version is shown in the last two drawings of the series. Here the legs are thrust forward at full length. The trick is to maintain one's balance on the ball of one foot while the other is being thrust out. This is the most popular of all prysiadkas and the one most commonly seen.

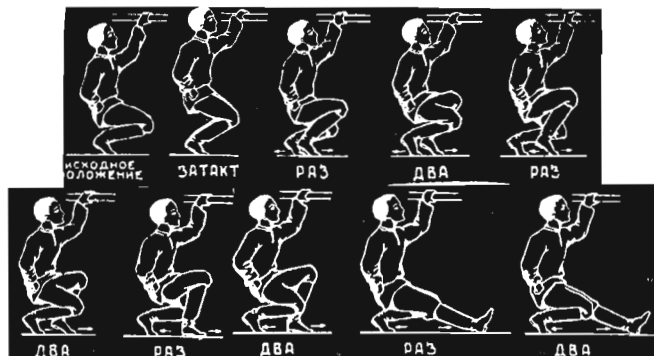


Fig. 8

Fig. 9 shown another popular prysiadka. Here the dancer leaps into the air after the full squat and lands on both heels. Really adept dancers can execute a full turn on the ball of one foot after the full squat, then leap into the air and land on both heels.

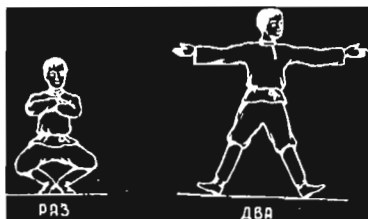


Fig. 9



KRAKUSY

Polish Folk Dance Ensemble

by Krystyna Chciuk

The year 1973 has been proclaimed throughout the world as the year of Mikolaj Kopernik (Nicolaus Copernicus), Polish astronomer, in observance of the 500th Anniversary of his birth.

One of the many events planned to commemorate this occasion will be the appearance of KRAKUSY, on Saturday, April 14, 1973, at 8:00 PM in the War Memorial Veterans' Auditorium, Van Ness Avenue and McAllister Street, San Francisco. Krakusy is under the direction of Marylka Klimek-Georg, born in Poland, and a member of the Polish State Folk Ballet "Slask" from 1953 to 1967. She has been director and chief choreographer of Krakusy since 1968, which today claims about 65 dancers.

Krakusy's history dates back to early 1956 when four couples, aware of the vast richness of Polish folklore, set out to revive Polish dance and introduce its beauty to the public.

Poland, which for centuries formed a bridge between Western and Eastern Europe, absorbed many foreign and varied forms of music and adapted them to suit her own responsive spirit. The great majority of Polish folk music has dancing melody and rhythm. Although there are many dance songs, musical instruments are predominant for dance accompaniment. Instrumental folk music of Poland has been used by many composers since the 16th Century. Chopin raised the folk music to its ultimate rank in his immortal mazurkas and brilliant polonaises, as did Karol Szymanowski in his folk ballt, *Harnasie*.

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