

Valašský Starodávny (Czech Republic)

Valašský Starodávny (vah-LAHSH-skee star-oh-DAHV-nee) is a couple dance from the Valašsko region of eastern Moravia. The name means "old traditional dance from Valašsko." Actually, "starodavny" has a rich and complex meaning that is difficult to translate. It refers to someone or something that recalls a cherished memory, for example one's first lover. In this context it refers not only to a very old dance, but to one that is fondly remembered. The dance is done on festive occasions; in the case of weddings, the bride and her mother can do the dance together. This particular starodavny was taught by Radek Rejšek and Eva Rejšková at the 2000 University of the Pacific Stockton Folk Dance Camp. In other versions of the dance, different figures are substituted for Figs IX and X.

Cassettes: Dances from the Czech Republic, Stockton Folk Dance Camp 2000, Side A/6; Dvorana Folk Dance Week 1996, Side A/7. 6/8 meter, counted 1-2-3

Formation: Single circle of cpls (W to M's R) facing center, hands joined in V-pos.

Steps: Closed-Ballroom pos*.

Starodávny Step (1 per meas): Step fwd on R landing on the heel before the full foot is placed on the floor (ct 1); step on L ft near the R heel (ct &); step fwd on full R ft (ct 2); step fwd on full L ft (ct 3). Flex knees on each step. Steps on cts 1 and 3 are longer than the others and the one on ct 3 is delayed as long as possible. Step may begin with L ft. Step repeats exactly.

Glide Step (1 per meas): Dance large, smooth step to the side keeping ft close to floor and bending knee of supporting ft (ct 1); close trailing ft to supporting ft keeping it close to floor (ct 2); hold (ct 3).

Styling: Style is flowing and graceful, with knee flex on each step. Except in Figs I and XI, there is a feeling of intimate connection between ptrs in this dance, and this is exemplified by the silent (private) claps between them (Figs VII and VIII).

*Described in the "General Glossary" of *Steps & Styling* (rev. 1996), published by the Folk Dance Federation of CA, Inc.

Measures 6/8 meter

PATTERN

INTRODUCTION None. Dancers may wait one meas and begin on meas 2 of Fig I.

I. GLIDING AND STARODÁVNÝ STEPS FORWARD & BACK

1 Both dance one Glide Step to R. Swing straight arms back (ct 1), and then raise them fwd to head level (ct 2, 3).

2 Repeat meas 1 but end with L ft free.

3-4 Repeat meas 1-2 to L with opp ftwk, but at end of meas 4, keep arms parallel to the floor and R ft free.

- 5 Dance 1 Starodávny Step twd ctr both starting with R.
- 6 Step R,L,R in place (cts 1,2,3). Arms remain fwd.
- 7 Dance 1 Starodávny Step bkwd to place starting with L. Release hands with corner dancer.
- 8 W: Dance 3 steps in place (L,R,L), bending knees gently on each step.
M: Dance 3 steps fwd in CW arc to end facing ptr with back to ctr.

II. INTERLUDE

- 1 Ptrs holding both hands with arms rounded and to the side, make small knee bend and bow head in acknowledgement.

III. SIDEWARDS; CIRCLING AWAY

- 1-2 Still holding both hands with arms rounded, step sdwd in LOD (ct 1); M close R to L (W opp ftwk) (ct &); step sdwd in LOD (ct2); swing trailing ft across in front of stepping ft (ct 3). Repeat meas 1 with opp ftwk and direction.
- 3-4 Dance 2 Starodávny Steps away from ptr (M to L, W to R) to make small circle and return to ptr. M hold arms out to sides or slightly in front with palms fwd; W have arms down at side. On ct 3 of meas 4, place free ft (M's R, W's L) beside supporting ft with a small knee bend.
- 5-8 Repeat meas 1-4, but with opp ftwk and direction. On ct 3 of meas 8, W touch with R ft (no wt).

IV. TURNING STARODÁVNÝ STEPS WITH ELBOW HOLD

- 1-3 With R elbows hooked and R hips adjacent, cpls dance 3 Starodávny Steps turning CW, both starting with R ft. L arms are held out and parallel to the floor, palms down.
- 4 Bringing arms down, dance a small circle to L (CCW) away from ptr with 3 walking steps beginning with R (cts 1,2,3).
- 5-8 With L arms hooked and L hips adjacent, repeat meas 1-4 with opp ftwk and direction. End with ptrs facing, M with back to ctr.

V. INTERLUDE

- 1 Repeat Fig. II.

VI. STARODÁVNÝ STEPS IN LOD AND TURNING

- 1-4 Cpls in semi-open Ballroom pos move fwd in LOD with 4 Starodávny Steps. M start with L, W with R ft. Hold joined hands (M's L, W's R) fwd and almost straight. On ct 3 of meas 4, M leads W into Closed-Ballroom pos with R hips adjacent. M end with R ft free.
- 5-7 Circling CW, dance 3 Starodávny Steps, both starting with R ft.
- 8 M turn W CW under joined hands (M's L, W's R). M step to L (ct 1); step on R beside L (ct 2); hold (ct 3). W step R,L,R on the turn (cts 1,2,3). End with ptrs facing, M's back to ctr.

VII. SILENT CLAPS, GLIDES AND TURNS

- 1 Bending knees a little, ptrs silently slap own thighs (ct 1); silently clap own hands (ct 2); silently clap ptrs hands (ct 3).
- 2 Turn away from ptr (M to L, W to R) with 3 steps. Make most of the turn on the first step, and close on 3rd. End facing ptr.
- 3-4 Repeat meas 1-2, but on meas 4 M turn to R and W to L. At end join hands with ptr.
- 5 M: Take a large Glide Step in LOD, bending knees and swinging joined hands twd RLOD (ct 1); straighten knees and close R to L while sweeping arms from RLOD to LOD side and turning W CW under joined M's L and W's R hands (ct 2); hold (ct 3).
W: Dance mirror image with ptr (ct 1); step on L turning CW under joined hands (ct 2); complete CW turn by stepping on R next to L to end facing ptr (ct 3).
- 6 Ptrs hold both hands, arms rounded, and make small knee bend.
- 7-8 Repeat meas 5-6 with opp ftwk and direction.

VIII. INTERLUDE

- 1 Silently and gently, ptrs touch palms together at about head level.

IX. SIDEWARDS; CIRCLING AWAY

- 1-8 Repeat Fig. III.

X. TURNING STARODÁVNÝ STEPS WITH ELBOW HOLD

- 1-8 Repeat Fig. IV, except at end M walk 3 steps without turning out to end L of ptr, reforming single circle.

XI. GLIDING AND STARODÁVNÝ STEPS

- 1-8 Repeat Fig. I, except on meas 8 M dance 3 steps in place keeping the circle intact. All bow head to acknowledge other dancers in the group, bringing arms down to sides.