

Novi Čoček (Roma)

Novi Čoček (NOH-vee CHOH-chek) means “New čoček.” Čoček is a musical genre and dance that emerged in the Balkans during the early 19th century. It features prominently in the repertoire of many Roma brass bands.

Čoček originated from Ottoman military bands which, at that time, were scattered across the region, mostly throughout Serbia, Bulgaria, Macedonia, and Romania. That led to the eventual segmentation and wide range of ethnic sub-styles in čoček. Čoček was handed down through the generations, preserved primarily by Roma minorities, and was largely practiced at village weddings and banquets.

This čoček is based on Maurits’ research for the Roma program *Travelers from Rajasthan*, which he choreographed for Het Internationaal Danstheater in the Netherlands. Maurits saw and learned all the ingredients of this dance at the World Roma Festival Khamoro in Prague. He presented this at the 2022 Stockton Folk Dance Camp held at the University of the Pacific.

Music: 4/4 Meter Yuri Yunakov Ensemble, *New Colors In Bulgarian Wedding Music*, Track 1, Belmont. An internet search for “Yunakov Belmont” will result in sites from which the individual track can be purchased.

Video: 2022 SFDC Videos. Camp videos can be viewed by contacting a participant who purchased them, or by contacting Maurits (vangeel@xs4all.nl).

Formation: Open mixed circle, hands joined in W-pos.

Steps & Styling: The way the body faces changes frequently and is somewhat fluid. In particular, there is often anticipation of the direction to face for the next step(s).

Meas	4/4 meter	PATTERN
8 cts.	INTRODUCTION. No action. Begin with saxophone.	
	I.	FIGURE I.
1	Facing diag R, step L in front of R (ct 1); small leap onto R, lifting L up behind R (ct 2); step L in front of R (ct &); facing diag L, hop on L (ct 3); step R bkwd and hop (cts &, 4); step L bkwd (ct &).	
2	Facing ctr, step R to R, knees slightly bent with wt on both ft (ct 1); step L in place (ct 2); step R in front of L (ct &); step L to L, knees slightly bent with wt on both ft (ct 3); step R in place (ct &); step L in front of R (ct 4) (referred to as a “Yemenite-like step”).	
3	Facing ctr, step R diag R (ct 1); step L in place (ct &); step R in front of L (ct 2); step L in place (ct &); facing L (CW), hop on L (ct 3); step R fwd and hop (cts &, 4); step L fwd (ct &).	
4	Facing L (CW), stamp R beside L twice (cts 1, 2); pivot on R heel (R toes turn to R), while pivoting on L toes (L heel turns to L) (ct 3); pivot to orig pos (ct &); repeat pivot in ct 3 (ct 4); step R in place (turning ft and body to direction of next step, i.e., R if repeating Fig I, or ctr if going on to Fig II).	

II. FIGURE II.

- 1 Facing ctr, repeat Fig I, meas 1, but all movements are fwd, moving into ctr.
- 2 Repeat Fig I, meas 3, cts 1-2; facing ctr; hop on L (ct 3); step R bkwd and hop (cts &, 4); step L bkwd (ct &).
- 3 Still facing ctr, hop on L (ct 1); step R bkwd and hop (cts &, 2); step L bkwd (ct &); repeat Fig I, meas 3 except step L in place on final ct and instead of stepping fwd, turning to face L (CW) (ct &).
- 4 Repeat Fig I, meas 4.

FIGURE I VARIATIONS

- A VARIATION 1. "8 steps"
 - 2 I. Facing diag L, step R bkwd (ct 1); step L in place (ct &); step R fwd turning to face ctr (ct 2); step L to L (ct &); facing diag R, step R bkwd (ct 3); step L in place (ct &); step R fwd (ct 4); step L fwd (ct &).
- B VARIATION 2. "Scissors"
 - 2 I. Facing diag L, step R bkwd with knee bent, keeping L extended fwd on ground and bending torso slightly fwd (ct 1); step L back with knee bent, sliding R fwd (ct 2); step R back with knee bent, sliding L fwd (ct &); facing diag R, step L back with knee bent, keeping R extended fwd and bending torso fwd (ct 3); step R bkwd with knee bent, sliding L fwd (ct 4); step L in place (ct &).



Maurits van Geel dancing Novi Čoček at Stockton Folk Dance Camp 2022.

Sequence: The change of figures is indicated by the leader.
Variations can be danced by individuals when desired.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I noticed in the December issue of *Let's Dance!*, p. 20, that you have Hungarian-ized a Slovakian dance:

Csárdàs is Hungarian
Pronounced (roughly) Chardash

Čardáš is Slovakian
Pronounced (roughly) Chardash

It's the same pronunciation (roughly) but spelled entirely differently.

~ Dick Oakes

