

ORIJENT

(Serbia)

Orijent (OH-ree-yent), as presented in the United States by Dick Drum, in the 1960s, remains a popular line dance with folk dancers. Background information tells us that it was one of the most popular kolos in the Šumadija area of Serbia, as well as in the city of Belgrade in the 1950s. It was danced with great enthusiasm by students and workers and was found at social gatherings in coffee houses in urban and rural areas. It is ascribed by dance researchers and native dancers to a Gypsy origin, though it was being danced by non-Gypsy Serbs. Some scholars see a possible connection between the title of the dance, "Orijent" meaning "Orient", and the fact that the famous Orient Express train used to pass through the area in which the dance is best known.

Of many possible patterns, Mr. Crum selected the three described here and arranged them in a sequence. In its native setting the sequence of patterns would be determined by the whim of the leader, who, not at all rarely, might limit himself to a single variant, possibly that given below as Fig I, the most common or 'basic' Orijent. Figs I and III were noted by Mr. Crum in Železnik village, Easter Sunday, 1954; Fig II was learned later from a group of male dancers in a Belgrade coffee house. More information about the dance may be found in the NAMA #1 record booklet.

MUSIC: Records: Du-Tam 1001 A, 45 rpm. 2/4 meter.
 Koffeehouse KH-101A, 45 rpm
 RTB - LPV 170 "Brdjanka Kolo"
 NAMA #1, S-B, B-1

FORMATION: Short lines of dancers. "V" pos: hands joined with adjacent dancers, arms down at sides. If M dance in separate lines they usually use "T" pos: arms extended sdwd at shldr level, hands on nearer shldr of adjacent dancers. Face slightly R of ctr; wt on ball of R ft.

STYLE: Light, heels always off floor; knees elastic throughout, producing a bouncy quality of movement. Body erect, head held high, except as noted in Fig II. Šumadijan ftwk is typically small, precise and controlled. No effort should be exerted to cover space on the floor.

The following description reflects the dance as it was presented by Mr. Crum at the October 1975 Hidden Valley Folkdance Teachers' Institute, sponsored by Dean and Nancy Linscott. Notes from earlier teachings by Crum, Madelynne Greene, and Ron Wixman were also consulted.

MUSIC 2/4

PATTERN

Measures

No Introduction

I. FLEX, FLEX AND TRAVEL

A 1 Place ball of L ft on floor across in front of R ft (upbeat); in this pos and with wt primarily on ball of R ft, flex knees (ct 1);

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straighten knees slightly (ct &); flex L knee and take wt on L ft, raising R ft low back of L ft (ct 2); straighten L knee and bring R ft around in a small CCW arc close to floor (ct &).

2 Turning to face ctr, step on R ft in front of L with a slicing motion, R heel leading (ct 1); step on L ft across back of R (ct. &); step on R ft to R, turning to face slightly R of ctr and flexing R knee slightly (ct 2); wt still on R, straighten R knee and bring L ft fwd low (ct &).

3-16 Repeat action of meas 1-2, seven more times (8 in all).
End facing ctr.

II. REACH, ARC AND BACKWARD

Pattern moves very slightly in RLOD.

B 1 Facing ctr, bend fwd from hips and reach out to L with L ft off floor, shake lower leg and ft (ct & of previous meas); step on L just in front of neighbor's R ft (ct 1); bring R ft near L before stepping on R ft slightly diag fwd R of L ft (ct 2).

2 Step on L ft diag fwd R, straightening torso, bringing R ft off floor behind L ankle (ct 1); hold (ct 2).

3-4 Continuing to face ctr, move directly bkwd with 3 small steps, R,L,R (cts 1,2,1); hold (ct 2). On bkwd steps, stepping ft should be placed directly behind supporting ft.

5-16 Repeat action of meas 1-4 (Fig II) three more times (4 in all).
At end of meas 16 bring L ft beside R, no wt, in preparation for Fig III.

III. TOWARD CENTER AND BACK

C 1 Move twd ctr with very small, close ftwk (as though ankles were bound together with elastic bands). Step on L ft, R ft immediately closing to L ft, both heels turned slightly to L (ct 1); step on R ft, L ft immediately closing to R ft, both heels turned slightly to R (ct 2).

2 Step fwd L,R,L (cts 1,&,2) in same style as meas 1 (Fig III).
Cue for meas 1-2: L, R, L-R-L.

3-4 Continue to move twd ctr, repeat action of meas 1 (Fig III) with opp ftwk: R, L, R-L-R.

5-8 Beg L, repeat action of meas 1-4 (Fig III) but move bkwd away from ctr.

9-16 Repeat action of meas 1-8 (Fig III).

Repeat dance until music ends.