

POKUPSKI PLESOVI

Croatian

PRONUNCIATION: PAW-koop-skee PLEH-soh-vee

TRANSLATION: Dances of Pokuplje

SOURCE: Dick Oakes learned this dance from Nena Šokčić, former lead dancer with the Croatian dance ensemble "LADO," who introduced these dances to folk dancers in the United States. Ms. Šokčić resided in the United States and did choreography for the AMAN Folk Ensemble (aka, AMAN International Music and Dance Company) of Los Angeles, California. Dr. Anthony Shay, artistic director of AMAN, taught it at the 1971 California Kolo Festival.

BACKGROUND: Opšaj Dir (AWP-shy DEER-ee) is made up of fun nonsense syllables and Pokupski svatovski drmeš (PAW-koop-skee SVAH-tawf-skee DERR-mesh) means wedding dance from Pokuplje.

The dances are called "drmeši" (shaking dances), which make up the most typical traditional dance form in the northwestern part of Croatia, Yugoslavia. They are composed of representative steps found in the Pokuplje area of Croatia. Because there are many such steps available to the native dancer, groups from adjacent villages may do different movements and sequences for a medley common to them both. For this reason, Opšaj Dir has taken several forms when presented to United States dancers in the past. A typical drmeš consists of a small cir of dancers who alternate "traveling" steps with "shaking" steps. In Croatia, the length of time that these two types of steps are done is determined by the mood of the dancers, or the whim of an acknowledged "leader." Pokuplje is the name for the Kupa river basin in Croatia. Major settlements there are Karlovac, Sisak, Petrinja, Glina, and Topusko. It was inhabited in prehistoric times, and according to the Lasinji collection site the people are called the "glass culture."

MUSIC: Festival Records (LP) AMAN-106, side A, bands 1-2

FORMATION: Closed cir of mixed M and W facing ctr in back-basket hold: Hands joined behind adjacent dancers. Although there is no "rule," L arm under may feel more comfortable.

METER/RHYTHM: 2/4

STEPS/STYLE: DRMEŠ STEP: Step R in place slightly extending L fwd (ct 1); raise up on ball of R bringing L next to R (ct &); bounce twice on both heels (ct 2,&). Repeat action of first meas with opp ftwk. (2 meas.)

As the cir increases speed, dancers should "press" back (rather than "lean" back) which keeps the head in a normal unstrained position and allows the participants to dance more relaxed and with more enjoyment.

MEAS

MOVEMENT DESCRIPTION

OPŠAJ DIRI

1-16 INTRODUCTION - No action.

I. SLOW CIR TO L

1 Facing ctr and movin to L, step R (ct 1); step L (ct 2).
2-16 Repeat action of meas 1 fifteen times.

II. FASTER CIR TO L (as music accelerates)

1 Step R across L slightly bending R knee (ct 1); step on ball of L to L
straightening knee (ct 2).
2-16 Repeat action of meas 1 fifteen times.

III. FASTEST CIR TO L

1 Step R across L bending knee deeper (ct 1); low leap onto ball of L to L (ct
2).
2-16 Repeat action of meas 1 fifteen times.

IV. DRMEŠ

1-40 Dance Drmeš Step twenty times.
Repeat dance once, then repeat Fig I through Fig III.

POKUPSKI SVATOVSKI DRMEŠ

1-4 INTRODUCTION - No action.

I. DRMEŠ

1-12 Dance Drmeš Step six times.

II. FWD AND BACK

1 Facing ctr, step R twd ctr (ct 1); hop R (ct 2).
2 Step L twd ctr, bending knee (ct 1); straightening knee, hop L (ct 2).

- 3 Step bwd R (ct 1); step bwd L (ct 2),
4 Step R slightly swd, bringing L close to R (ct 1); step L slightly swd,
bringing R close to L (ct 2).

NOTE: As ft are brought together, the heels may move slightly R and L, but do not twist hips.

5-16 Repeat action of meas 1-4 three times.

Repeat from beg, dancing Fig I for 16 meas each time.

OPŠAJ DIRI
Croatia

Ajd' u kolo sve selo, zaigrajmo veselo,
Zaigramo (zapjevajmo) veselo, ajd' u kolo
sve selo.

Chorus:
/ Opšaj diri, diri diri di, opšaj dara,
dara dara dar. /

Moj je dragi grane list, ljepši nego
runolist,
Ljepši nego runolist, moj je dragi gore list.

Chorus

Od kad imam dragana, ne dam više tavana,
Ne dam više tavana, od kad imam dragana.

Chorus

Oteli mi dragana, sva im duša garava,
Sva im duša garava, oteli mi dragana.

Chorus

Let's dance all around the village, singing
cheerfully.
We'll sing happily, all around the village.

Chorus:
/ Opšaj diri, diri diri di, opšaj dara, dara
dara da. /

My love is a leaf from a tree, but more beautiful
than edelweiss.
Nicer than edelweiss, my love is a leaf from a
tree.

Chorus

Since I have a sweetheart, do not give more loft.
Do not give more loft, since I have a sweetheart.

Chorus

They grabbed my love, all their souls are black.
All their souls are black because they grabbed
my sweetheart.

Chorus