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ČAČAK (CHAH-chahk)

Čačak is the name of a number of different dances from southeastern Serbia which all share the fact that they are performed to fast 2/4 music. A number of different Čačaks have been taught in the U.S. with names referring to the town or region from which they come - eg., Svrlijski čačak, Zaplanski čačak, Banjski čačak, etc. The dance described here is the most common form of Čačak, one which I have seen performed (with local variations of style) throughout southeastern Yugoslavia, from north of Zaječar to south of Ohrid. (Among Yugoslav immigrants to the U.S., a request for Čačak would most likely call forth a somewhat longer dance also referred to as Čačak kolo.) The dance described here is essentially the same as "5-figure" Čačak", the stage arrangement of five possible variations performed by the ensemble Kolo and brought to the U.S. by Dick Crum.

SOURCE: Villagers in the Pirot area, E. Serbia. This description is based on performances witnessed and filmed by Bob Leibman in s. Činiglavci and s. Gradašnica, Pirotsko during the fall and winter of 1970-71. I attended a private slava, a public Friday evening dance in the local House of Culture (a teenage dance with some chaperons where traditional dances such as Čačak were alternated with rock and roll, all to the strains of recorded music), an engagement party and a wedding.

RECORD: Balkan Arts BA 1J Side A, Band 1.

FORMATION: Mixed, open circle, leader on the right. If there are many dancers, the circle may overlap and become a spiral, moving in towards the center. Indoors, it was often performed in a closed circle. Dance progresses to the right overall. Hands were frequently joined across behind one's neighbors in a back basket, or encircled about their waist. Occasionally, arms may be placed on neighbor's shoulders - either across the back of their neck onto the far shoulder, or on the upper arm and nearer shoulder (in a reciprocal hold), or women especially may rest their bent arms on the shoulders of neighbors who have their hands joined behind them. Hands joined with neighbors, mostly held down, are also seen. Only on one or two occasions did I see anyone hold anyone else by the belt as was common in the past.

METER: 2/4.

DESCRIPTION: Basic dance

- I
  - 1. Face center or slightly right of center.  
Step on R to right (CCW).
  - 2. Step on L across in front of R to right.
- II Repeat I.
- III
  - 1. Step on R a bit to right and back.
  - 2. Slight bounce or flex on R.
- IV
  - 1. Close L to R or even slightly further back.
  - 2. Slight bounce or flex on L.
- V
  - 1. Step on R by L.
  - 2. Slight bounce or flex on R.
- VI
  - 1. Step on L to left.
  - 2. Step on R across in front of (or behind) L diagonally forward, left.
- VII
  - 1. Step on L slightly forward and to the left.
  - 2. Slight bounce or flex on L while free R is being brought forward.

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## ČAČAK (cont.)

- VIII    1. Step fwd (into circle) on R.  
          2. Slight bounce or flex on R.
- IX       1. Step on L in place, a bit to left, right, or slightly back of R.  
          2. Step on R in place, a bit to left, right, or slightly fwd. of L.
- X        1. Like IX 1.  
          2. Slight bounce or flex on L.

Note: on all counts in which no shift of weight occurs, a bounce is performed on the weight bearing foot so there is a continual up and down movement on every count. The free leg (which is actually bent at the knee almost immediately after weight was shifted from it) remains below the body, slightly bent at the knee - or it is kicked forward a bit (probably about a foot or less) and quickly retracted slightly prior to moving to its next position to receive weight.

## Variations

- A. When the music becomes faster, measures I and II may become syncopated and the dance becomes even bouncier:
1. Leap onto R just slightly to the right (on the ball of the foot.)  
Step on L in front of R almost immediately.
- or
1. Hop or lift on L in place. Step almost immediately on ball of R slightly to right.
  2. Step on L by, or in front of R.
- B. I 1. Hop on L moving laterally a bit to right. At the same time, kick the free R back.  
2. " " " " " " " " " " " " fwd.
- II Repeat I.
- C. I. 1. Leap onto R to right. Free L is bent slightly, held close to R so that ankles and lower calves are touching.  
2. Leap onto L to left (perhaps not as large a movement as in 1.) Free R is held by L (reverse of 1.)
- II. Repeat I.
- D. I-II Two quick syncopated gravevine steps moving laterally to the right (CCW).
- I. 1. Hop on L and touch R in front, or actually shift weight briefly onto R in front of L. Then shift weight almost immediately back onto L which has moved slightly to its right.  
2. As in 1, but R touches or steps briefly behind L.
- II Repeat I.
- E. Perform measures III-V as step-hops rather than step lifts.
- F. (Women especially.) Perform III-V as step-touches, touching the ground slightly forward of the weight-bearing foot on cr. 2.
- G. Emphasize the forward movement into the center of the circle on measures VI-VIII by taking larger steps forward and even stamping on VIII 1.