

ŽENSKO KRSTENO  
Macedonia (Yugoslavia)

*Žensko krsteno* (ZHEN-sko CURSE-teh-no, "women's cross-stepped dance") is an old dance from the Skopje region of Macedonia. Although originally danced by women only, it has been danced as a mixed *oro* for the last several generations. Its step pattern places it, along with other Skopje dances such as *Postupano* and *Toska*, in the large family of Macedonian dances known as the *Beranče* type. *Žensko krsteno* is described below as learned by Dick Crum in Skopje in 1952.

Recordings: Folkraft LP-25-A, bd. 1, *Žensko krsteno*; RTB LP 1394, Side B, bd. 5, *Žensko krsteno*; Nevofoon 15006, bd. 15, *Žensko krsteno*.

Meter and rhythm: The dance has been variously notated in 7/8, 12/16 and 13/16. It is described below in 13/16, the meter in which it is played on the Folkraft and RTB records listed above. The rhythm varies with each step variation described; however the underlying beats are in a "slow-quick-quick-quick-quick" pattern:

Underlying beats:	1	2	3	4	5	6
Rhythm:	S	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
13/16 notation:	♩.	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩

Formation: Open circle or line, mixed M and W; hands joined down at sides ("V" position).

MEAS	ACTION
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Note: All "steps" in the description below are on the ball of the foot. Heel contact with the floor is incidental, and the entire dance has a light, buoyant style. "Bounces" are articulated from the knee rather than the ankle.

Variation 1

- 1 Facing ctr, hop in place on Rft, L knee bent and Lft in air in front of R ankle (1); step Lft in place beside Rft (2); pause (or slight bounce on Lft) (3); step Rft in front of Lft (4); rock back onto Lft in its place, Rft takes position in air in front of L ankle (5); pause (6).
- 2 Repeat mov'ts of meas 1 with opposite footwork.
- 3 Repeat mov'ts of meas 1.
- 4 Hop on Lft in place, beginning to turn R (into LOD), R knee bent and Rft in air in front of L ankle (1); facing in LOD, step fwd with Rft (2); pause (3); step or slight leap fwd with Lft (4); step Rft fwd (5); pause (6).
- 5 Step or slight leap fwd with Lft (1); step or slight leap fwd with Rft (2); pause (3); beginning to turn toward ctr, step or slight leap onto Lft across in front of Rft (4); facing ctr, rock back onto Rft in its place behind Lft, with L knee bent and Lft in air in front of R ankle (5); pause (6).

*cont*

ŽENSKO KRSTENO (cont'd)

Variation 2 - Hitch-hop before ct 2

Same as Variation 1 except that the foot bearing weight on any ct 1 does a slight preliminary hop ("hitch-hop") before the other foot steps on ct 2. This hitch-hop just before ct 2 can be done in any or all of the 5 measures of the dance.

Variation 3 - Syncopated step-close-steps

- 1-3 Same as meas 1-3 of Variation 1 or 2.  
4 Hop on Lft in place, beginning to turn R (into LOD), R knee bent and Rft in air in front of L ankle (1); facing in LOD, step Rft fwd (2); pause (3); close Lft beside Rft taking wt on Lft (&); step Rft fwd (4); step Lft fwd (5); pause (6); close Rft beside Lft taking wt on Rft (&).  
5 Same as meas 5 of Variation 1 or 2.

Variation 3 can prove very tricky, even for dancers already accustomed to dealing with "irregular" Balkan rhythms. The written description above will probably be useful only as reminder notes for a dancer who has already learned the steps from a competent teacher. Folk dancers with a knowledge of musical notation may find the following breakdown of Variation 3, meas 4-5 helpful:

	Meas 4	Meas 5
Count (beat):	1 2-3 & 4 5-6 &	1 2-3 4 5-6
Notation:		
Weighted foot:	L R L R L R L R (hop)	L R L R

Note: Native dancers do any of the above Variations 1, 2 or 3 at will, and it is not necessary that all dancers do the same variation at the same time.

Description by Dick Crum

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