

## CHERKASSIYA (Israel)



The *Cherkassiya* was one of the first Israeli dances to reach the United States, ranking close to the *Hora* in popularity. The name derives from Circassia, in south-eastern Russia. The Circassians were excellent horsemen and the spirited figures of the dance—originally performed by men only—suggest the movements of horses and their riders.

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**OPENING FORMATION:** Either closed or broken circle formation, or small lines opposing each other. The circle formation is more practical for larger groups. Hands are joined, or on shoulders, or behind backs . . . all versions are acceptable.

Any number of dancers may participate and partners are not required.

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**CHORUS: 8 Meas.:** Really a form of the grapevine step, this step is referred to as the "cherkassiya" step. Moving to own left, dancers cross right foot over left and step on right. Step to left on left foot. Step on right foot crossed behind left. Step to side on left foot. Repeat this combination of steps 3 more times.



**FIGURE 1: 8 Meas.:** Circle now moves to the right with 16 steps as follows: All step to side on right toe, left foot extended to the side. Step on left foot crossed behind right foot and bend both knees slightly. Continue, taking 2 steps for each measure of music.

Repeat **CHORUS**, circle moving to left.

**FIGURE 2: 8 Meas.:** Without dropping hands, all face to the right and move forward (counterclockwise) with 8 step-hops starting on right foot, extending free foot in back on each hop.

Repeat **CHORUS**, circle moving to the left.

**FIGURE 3: 8 Meas.:** Circle moves to right. Dancers keep feet close together as they move toes to the right; then, without lifting feet from floor, move both heels to right. Continue this sliding of toes and heels for 8 measures.

Repeat **CHORUS**, circle moving to left.

**FIGURE 4: 8 Meas.:** All kick feet forward, alternately, 16 times beginning with right foot.

Repeat **CHORUS**, circle moving to left.

**FIGURE 5: 8 Meas.:** All kick feet backwards, alternately, 16 times.

Repeat **CHORUS**, circle moving to left.

**FIGURE 6:** All turn to right without dropping hands, and in a semi-crouch position, shuffle to the right 16 steps.

The dance is played twice through on this record.

