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Kjustendilska Ruchenitsa

Bulgaria (Shopluk)

Kjustendilska Ruchenitsa (kyoo-stehn-DEEL-skah ruh-cheh-NEE-tsah) is a very popular dance from Graovo, a western part of the region of Shopluk in west-central Bulgaria. The town of Kjustendil lies SW of Sophia, close to the borders with Macedonia and Serbia, from which some influence is apparent. The dance has other names, including Graovska Ruchenitsa; and the pattern characterizes other dances of the region, including Graovsko Horo, which differs in its meter (2/4). Many teachings have included those by Barry Glass (Graovska Ruchenitsa) at Mendocino Folklore Camp 1972, Camille Brochu at Stockton Folk Dance Camp 1986 and Michael Ginsburg at Mendocino Folklore Camp 1999.

Music: The considerable musical offering includes:

CD: Boris Karlov: CD 2, Track 22 7/16 meter

Records:

Balkaton (BHM-5746, Side A/1 and BHA-358, Side B/6)

NAMA #1, Side A/5

XOPO (Horo and Rachenitsa), Side A/4

Ethnic Folk Arts Center - Bulgarian, Side B/7

AMAN Folk Ensemble; AMAN-103, Side A/7

Worldtone Records; WT 10026, Side B (45 rpm)

Cassettes:

Balkan Dance Music by Izvor (Camille's Camp Tape, Side A/1)

Ajde Na Horo - Jaap Leegwater and Yves Moreau, Side B/10

Bulgarian FD Music - Dmitri Manov, S.F. Kolo 1998, Side A/5.

Rhythm: Meter = 7/16 = 2/16+2/16+3/16, counted here as 1,2,3 or q,q,s

Formation: Short mixed lines face RLOD, hands held down in V-pos or in belt hold, L over R. The leader at the R end and/or the dancer at the L end of the line may wave a handkerchief (râchenik) in free hand.

Steps: Hop: Flex supporting knee, lifting supporting foot clear of floor on the up-beat and returning it to the floor with weight on the beat.
Skip: A hop while moving forward, backward or sideward.
Bounce: Small hop in which ball of supporting ft does not leave floor.

Styling: Shopski styling includes jerky, light, jumpy steps with a lot of pauses, giving the impression of delay in some movements. Mostly the body leans forward, keeping the weight and steps on the front of the foot.

Measure 7/16 meter

PATTERN

INTRODUCTION Dance begins with a musical phrase, as chosen by leader.

- 1 Facing RLOD and moving in LOD, hop, bounce or skip on L while touching R fwd (ct 1); step back on R (ct 2); step back on L (ct 3).
- 2 Repeat meas 1.
- 3 Turning to face LOD, step fwd R, L, R (cts 1, 2, 3).
- 4 Continuing in LOD, repeat meas 3 with opposite ftwk.
- 5 Skip on L (ct 1); step fwd on R (ct 2); turning to face ctr, hop on R, raising L fwd with knee bent and L ft across in front of R shin (ct 3).
- 6 Hop on R, swinging L leg to L (ct 1); step on L to L (ct 2); bending both knees, step on R across L (ct 3).
- 7 Still facing ctr, hop on R (ct 1); step L to L (ct 2); step R behind L (ct 3).
- 8 Skip R fwd (ct 1); step fwd L (ct 2); hop on L, raising R fwd, knee bent (ct 3).
- 9 Hop on L, touching ball of R fwd (ct 1); rpt ct 1 (ct 2); step R beside L (ct 3).
- 10 Repeat meas 9 with opp ftwk, turning on ct 3 to face RLOD.

Dance repeats to end of music. During measures 8-10 many variations are available to individual dancers, including hops, bounces, steps and jumps in measures with or without a net foot-change. Dancers generally face center and respect their neighbors. Measure 8 starts with L foot free; measure 10 ends with R foot free.