

Opas

(Bulgaria)

Opas is the common name for a group of dances from Dobrudza, Eastern Bulgaria. I learned this Opas from Belcho Stanev, well-known Bulgarian dance teacher and choreographer from Varna.

Pronunciation: OH-pahss

Music:

Rhythm: 6/8 meter, counted here "1-&-ah, 2-&-ah."

Formation: Short and/or straight lines of dancers. Lines must not be so long (or curved) as to hinder movement in and out of center during Figures II and III. Belt hold or front basket hold.

Styling: Very earthy, bent knees and on full foot. (Belcho suggested we pretend our feet were being "sucked down" into the floor.)

Meas

Pattern

I. SIDE TO SIDE

- 1 (On the last ct before ct 1, lift L leg quite high with knee bent in front and begin moving whole leg to L.) Take a large step to the L on L, heel first (ct 1); step on R behind L (ct 2).
- 2 Step on L to L (ct 1); lift R leg quite high with knee bent in front and begin moving whole leg to R (ct 2).
- 3 Repeat meas 1 with opp ftwk and direction.
- 4 Repeat meas 2 with opp ftwk and direction.
- 5-16 Repeat meas 1-4 three more times (4 times in all).

II. STAMPING IN PLACE PLUS IN AND OUT

- 1 Turning to face slightly L of ctr, step on L to L (ct 1); stamp R ft near L, no wt (ct 2).
- 2 Turning to face slightly R of ctr, step on R to R (ct 1); turning to face slightly L of ctr, step on L to L (ct 2).
- 3 Turning to face slightly R of ctr, step on R to R (ct 1); turning to face slightly L of ctr, step on L to L (ct &); turning to face slightly R of ctr, step on R to R (ct 2).
- 4-6 Repeat meas 1-3.
- 7 Repeat meas 1.
- 8 Stamp R ft again (ct 1); stamp R ft again (ct 2).
- 9 Turning to face ctr, take a large step twd ctr on R (ct 1); hop on R ft (2).
- 10 Continuing to move twd ctr, step on L (ct 1); hop on L (ct 2).
- 11 Turning to face slightly R of ctr, step on R to R (ct 1); stamp L near R, no wt (ct 2).
- 12 Repeat meas 11 with opp ftwk and direction.
- 13-14 Moving away from ctr, repeat meas 9-10, same ftwk.
- 15 Repeat meas 11.
- 16 Stamp L ft again, no wt (ct 1); pause (ct 2).
- 17-32 Repeat meas 1-16.

Opas—continued

III. TWIST, IN AND OUT

- 1 Continuing to face slightly R of ctr, take a very large step twd ctr on L (ct 1); begin moving R leg in a large arc fwd (ct 2).
- 2 Turning to face slightly L of ctr, place R heel on floor, twd ct, R toe twisted to L (ct 1); pause (ct 2).
- 3 Twist body (and R toe!) to the R (ct 1); and back to the L (ct 2).
- 4 Turning to face ctr, take a large step twd ctr on R (ct 1); hop on R (ct 2).
- 5 Continuing to move twd center, step on L (ct 1), hop on L, twisting lower body and R knee to L (ct 2).
- 6-7 Take 4 running steps bkwd, twisting lower body and free knee on each ct, R, L, R, L.
- 8 Turning to face R, land on both ft, ft apart (ct 1); pause (ct 2).
- 9-16 Repeat meas 1-8.
(Shout: “O-PA!” on meas 1-2 and “I-HA!” on meas 3 of Fig III.)

Repeat from the beginning.

Dance description by Lee Otterholt
Presented by Lee Otterholt