

Tamzara Arabkir

(Armenia)

Tamzara was originally a ceremonial wedding dance, tracing out the pattern of a cross or *khachkar* (tree of life) on the ground. It is now a popular line dance done throughout Armenia and the Armenian Diaspora. This particular version is from the Arabkir district of Armenia's capital, Yerevan. Learned from Eddie Djololian, 2003.

Pronunciation: TAHM-zah-rah ah-rahb-KEER

CD: "Armenian Dances" CD made available by Eddie Djololian.

Rhythm: 9/8, counted 1-2 1-2 1-2 1-2-3 or 1 2 3 4 or S S S QS

Formation: Little fingers are clasped at shoulder level. As in many Armenian dances, dancers stay connected to each other partly by keeping the sides of their forearms touching as their arms go through the motions of the dance. When hands are being flipped to the R and L during travel steps, the eyes follow the hands.

Meas

Pattern

I. TRAVEL TO RIGHT

- 1 Step on R to R side, leaving upper arms still but dropping forearms and hands to point to the R in "windshield wiper" motion (ct 1); step on L across in front of R, flipping hands in a CCW arc up and then back to point to the L (ct 2); step on R to R side, flipping hands in a CW arc up and then to the R to point in the line of travel again (ct 3); take a long step onto L across in past R in front, dipping into both knees and again flipping hands in a CCW arc back to point to the L (ct 4).
- 2-4 Repeat meas 1 three more times (4 total).

II. TRAVEL TO RIGHT, LIFT LEFT, LIFT AND DROP RIGHT

- 1 Repeat Fig I, meas 1, cts 1-2 (cts 1-2); step on R to R side, simply bringing hands up in front (rather than all the way to the R) (ct 3); leaning slightly up and back, brush L ft twd R side in front to lift L knee to a bit higher than hips (ct 4).
- 2 Turning to face ctr, step on L to L side (ct 1); leaning slightly up and slightly back, brush R ft twd L side in front to lift R knee a bit higher than hips (ct 2); drop onto ball of R ft in front of L (ct 3); rotate R heel side to side around the pivot of the foot's ball with 3 very small "bug-squishing" movements, maybe CW, CCW, CW (ct 4).
- 3-6 Repeat meas 1-2 twice more (3 total).

III. TRAVEL RIGHT AND LEFT

- 1 Repeat Fig 2, meas 1.
- 2 Repeat meas 1 with opp ftwk and direction.
- 3-4 Repeat meas 1-2.

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IV. TOWARD CENTER, SHIMMYING AND STAMPING

- 1 Step on R twd ctr (ct 1); brush L ft twd ctr to lift L knee just above hip level (ct 2); drop onto ball of L ft a bit twd ctr from where it began (ct 3); rotate L heel side to side as in Fig II, meas 2, ct 4 (ct 4).
- 2 Repeat meas 1 in the same direction but with opp ftwk.
- 3 Release hands to sides and step fwd on a bent leg with torso still erect and shldr "shimmying" (pivoting fwd and back in opposition to each other around the spine) (ct 1); repeat ct 1 of this meas but step fwd onto L instead of R (ct 2); repeat ct 1 (ct 3); stamp twice on L next to R and pause (ct 4).
- 4 Repeat meas 3 with reverse ftwk and direction.

IV. CLAPPING

- 1 Dropping hands, travel to your own R in the circle with three steps R, L, R, completing one whole CW turn (cts 1-3); touch ball of L ft next to R as you clap twice a bit to the R of your face and pause (ct 4).
- 2 Repeat meas 1 with reverse ftwk and direction.
- 3 Repeat meas 1 without turning but moving twd ctr (as well as clapping toward it).
- 4 Repeat meas 3 with reverse ftwk and direction.

Notes by Erik Bendix

Presented by Erik Bendix