

1972 SAN DIEGO STATE COLLEGE FOLK DANCE CONFERENCE

Presented by Elsie Dunin

BALON (or Balun)
Area of Istria, Yugoslavia

BAH-lon

"Balon" comes from the peninsula of Istria, on the northern Adriatic coast of Yugoslavia. Due to its location, and periodic rule by Italy and Austria, there are many Italian and other western European influences in the area, reflected for instance by the name "Balon" (an Italian word for dance), and the couple formation that progresses CCW (typical of many western European dances).

Elsie Dunin learned figures to "Balon" from Professor Ivančan at a Folk Dance Course in Pula (1967) and Badija (1969, 1971).

Written Source: Ivan Ivančan, Istarski Narodni Plesovi. Zagreb: Institut za Narodnu Umjetnost, 1963. (In Croatian, short summary in English)

RECORD: Jugoton EPY 3698, "Balun i Tarankanje" side B, band 1

FORMATION: Couples, one behind the other in an open circle formation facing CCW. First couple is the "lead" couple who initiates the pattern changes. * Others follow the change sequentially. A comfortable number of couples in one group is from three to twelve. * Pattern changes are initiated by cues such as:

Note:

There are four parts to Balon, and they may be performed in any sequence, however, Part I (promenade) tends to be first. To fit the Jugoton recording, the following order is suggested: there are 16 melodic phrases (8 meas each)

- 1-3 Part I (Setat)
- 4-5 Part II (Prebirat), Fig 1 (hard)
- 6-7 Part II " Fig 2 (soft)
- 8-9 " II " Fig 3 (soft & turn)
- 10 III (Valcat) Fig 1 (W turn)
- 11-12 III " Fig 2 (cpl turn)
- 13-14 I (Setat)
- 15-16 IV (Vrtet)

The above is only a suggested sequence. There are many more variations to the described four Parts of Balon. The following Figures to the Parts I -IV have been selected by Elsie Dunin as representative of the dance, for presentation to the Folk Dance Federation. These dance notes should be used only as refresher notes after learning the dance from a qualified teacher.

3, or
no fixed
cue -
just
change
Figures

continued...

PATTERN

Meas Count

PART I. SETAT (promenade, walk)

There are three possible cpl positions for this Part. In all M & W stand side by side, facing CCW M to L of W.

1. M's R arm crossed behind W, holding her at waist on R side; M's L arm is placed at his waist, fingers fwd.

W's L hand is placed on M's R shoulder and her R hand is at waist, fingers fwd or back of hand placed at waist with fingers facing bwd (no fist).

2. M same as above in # 1

W's L arm is placed across behind M's back, and her L hand holds his waist at L side.

3. Crossed hand hold. M's R hand holds W's R hand. M's L hand holds W's L hand. Clasped hands are held at W's shoulder level. M's R arm is straight and above W's L arm. M's L arm is bent. W's L arm is straight, R arm is bent.

1. Bouncy Walk

1 1-2 begin with either ft, step fwd
2 1-2 step fwd

Both M & W begin with same ft. There is a slight very even *double-bounce* with each step.

2. Smooth Walk

Very smooth floating walking step
A step on each meas as in Bouncy Walk.
M & W need not be on the same ft.

3. Smooth Walk with 'catch' step

As above, but at different intervals the M or W will do a quick dble step, ct 1.

PART II. PREBIRAT

Fig 1. Hard

1 1 Facing ctr, step L in place
2 step R in place, next to L may be flat-footed running
2 1 Step L in place, next to R steps in place
2 " R " , next to L
3 1-2 Step L in place, while kicking R ft fwd sharply
4 1-2 Step R in place, while kicking L ft fwd sharply.

Fig 2. Soft

1-2 Same as Fig 1, meas 1-2
3 1-2 Step L in place, at same time bending knee, R ft kick fwd
diag to L crossing in front of L

Continued...

1972 SAN DIEGO STATE COLLEGE FOLK DANCE CONFERENCE

Balon-Continued-Page 3

- 4 1-2 Step R in place, next to L, at same time bending knee, L ft kicks fwd diag to R crossing in front of R.

Fig 1 or 2 may be done with a) partners side by side facing ctr, or b) W may face her partner with her back to the ctr of circle. R hands are held about shoulder level, and L hands are at waists.

Figure 3. Soft and Turn

- 1-2 Partners face one another, holding R hands at W's shoulder level. Same as FIG 1, meas 1-2

M repeats FIG 2, meas 3-4

W does same, but turns one complete turn ^{CCW} under held hands, and ends facing partner, w free hand on hip, fingers either fwd or bwd.

PART III VALCAT

Figure 1. W turns

M's R hand holds W's R index finger, W turns CCW under her arm with a buzz * step in a smooth level spin. W's L arm hangs down at side or is placed at waist (no fists). M performs a buzz step in place, and his L arm hangs down or is placed at his waist.

* buzz step

- 1 Step on R ft in place, bending knee slightly
2 Step ^{bwd} on L ft on half-toe next to R ft

Figure 2. Couple turn ^{or forearm}

Partners hook R elbows ^{or forearms}, L hands at waist, turn with buzz step CW, then CCW.

- 1-5 1 Turning CW, step R ft fwd, bending knee slightly
2 step L ft on half-toe fwd
6 1-2 Stamp R ft in place, preparing to release R elbows.
7 1-2 Turning to face opposite direction (CCW) stamp L in place
8 1-2 Stamp R in place, hook L elbows
9-16 Repeat Meas 1-8 turning in opposite direction, and using opp ftwork.

PART IV. VRTET

Couple pivot turns (use "catch-step" to get onto proper foot)
Two handholds are suggested----

1. Shoulder-waist

2. W holds bent arms to sides--upper arms are horizontal, and lower arms are vertical, palms face fwd, thumbs stretched out to sides (twd the head). See diagram.

M stands very close to partner, reaches under her upper arms and grasps her thumbs from behind.

Note: W must NOT allow wrists to bend, so that hands come fwd. Wrists must be firm.

Pivot turn is CW, while couples move CCW direction.