

LEZGINKA (Old-time Russian)

Record: Folk Dancer MH 1060

Formation: Couples in a circle, girl on the boy's right side. Inside hands joined, outside arms hanging free, away from sides.

Part I: Take three running polka steps* forward, starting on outside feet. With a fourth polka step, make a complete turn, moving away from partner (girl turns to her right, boy to his left). End facing partner, boy's back to center of circle. (Outside arms should swing freely, forward and to the side, at about elbow level).

Place hands on hips (with a snappy, decisive motion) and take four pumping steps* moving slightly to the side around the circle counterclockwise. Then, in place, hopping twice on boy's left, girl's right, kick other foot in close to shin bone then straight forward, keeping foot close to floor, with toe pointed. Then take a polka step in place (little, stamping steps), beginning with girl's left, boy's right foot.

Part II: Both bend right elbow, keeping elbow at shoulder level and to the back, with hand held across chest; left arm held out to the left side and back, with hand down. Then place right shoulders side by side, look at partner over bent arm, and take four polka steps moving clockwise (maintaining same relationship to each other).

Turn in toward partner, assume same position with opposite arms, (make the change in one quick but graceful motion) and take four polka steps moving counterclockwise.

Repeat over and over again. (Note: You will not be doing the same part of the dance to the same section of the melody each time -- this is correct).

This old-time Russian dance from Czarist days has elements of both the ballroom and the vigorous, show-off dances of the peasants. Lezginka was originally a dance for men only, performed with a sword or knife, danced free-style around a campfire as proof of the Cossack's vitality, virility, and agility. This dance-floor version should be performed with precision and controlled strength, but with grace and elegance.

* See special instructions

Instructions by Dave Rosenberg, P.O. Box 7592, Washington, 4, D. C.

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(Last Night I Dreamed We Were In Dayton)

(Miami Valley Folk Dancers, David Rosenberg, Nancy Kane, Oct 26-27, 1957)

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