

SASHA (Russia—Germany)

“Sasha” is the nickname for Russian boys named Alexander, and for Russian girls named Alexandra or Alexandria, and it is a terrific dance. It may not be really Russian (Bob Dalsemer, of the John C. Campbell Folk School, learned this from a Danish teacher who learned it from another Danish teacher who got it from a German folk dance leader). Whatever its origin, it is an immediate hit with children and adults alike.

Music: On Sanna’s CD#1½, *Even More Folk Dance Music for Kids & Teachers*, as well as John C. Campbell Folk School (1-800-FOLK-SCH), and Marian Rose’s CD-book package, “Step Lively #1 (marian@istar.ca).

Meter: 4/4

Formation: Pairs standing anywhere in the dance space. Start by partners facing.

Dance Pattern

I. “Sasha!”

Partners shake index fingers at each other while saying, “Sasha! Sasha! One-two-three!” It’s even better to count in Russian: “Rahss-dvah-tree” (roll those “r’s”).

II. Clapping sequence

Partners clap: Right hands three times—right-right-right
Left hands three times—left-left-left
Both hands—both-both-both
Pat knees—knees-knees-knees

III. Elbow turns

Partners hook right elbows and walk/swing in a clockwise circle 8 steps. On 8th, give a sharp “hey!” and switch to left elbows. Walk/swing counterclockwise with 8 steps and a “hey!”

IV. Promenade alone

Walk around the dance space alone, in any direction, until it’s time to start the pattern again with a new partner. Face someone nearby (no fair reserving partners ahead of time) and begin again with “Sasha! Sasha!”

PRESENTED BY SANNA LONGDEN. Notes by Sanna Longden © 2007, based on those of Bob Dalsemer, Marian Rose, and first observance at a contra dance party.