

STARA BABA  
(Poland)

Pronunciation: STAH-rah BAH-bah (Old Woman)

Stara Baba is a couple dance in 2/4 time from the region of Kurpie zielone (KOOR-pyeh zyeh-LOH-neh) in northeast Poland. It came to Kurpie from the neighboring region of Warmia and Mazura (VAHR-myah and mah-ZOO-rih), where another version of this dance also exists.

Originally, the dance was done at parties and weddings by four couples dancing from four corners of the room, moving in and out of the center and changing partners. Here the dance has been adapted to two lines to fit the American folk dancing situation.

Styling and Steps:

Stara Baba Step (in this description will be referred to as the Basic Step) done in closed social dance pos, ptrs facing each other.

Part a. Slightly bend knees and lean in the direction of travel (ct & of previous meas).

- 1-2 Move in the direction of the joined hands with three small step-togethers (cts 1,&2,& of 1st meas and cts 1,& of 2nd meas) and one step-hold (cts 2,& of 2nd meas).
- 3-4 Repeat action of meas 1-2 with opp ftwk and direction.

Part b.

- 5 Dance three steps (M, L,R,L, W, R,L,R) in place on bent and springy knees (cts 1,&2); hold (ct &).  
M: call "ozwij się" (oh-sveey sheh) (means: say something).
- 6 Repeat action of meas 5 with opp ftwk.  
W: call "u-ha-ha" (oo-hah-hah).
- 7-8 With four smooth, flat steps (M: L,R,L,R, W: R,L,R,L) dance one full cpl CW turn in place.
- 9-12 Repeat action of meas 5-8. (Note: the CW turn done during meas 11-12 will often be adjusted.)

Variations to meas 5-6

1. With the three steps make a 1/4 CW cpl turn (meas 5), and a 1/4 CCW turn (meas 6).
2. With a preliminary flex of the knees stamp with outside (M L, R W) ft (meas 5); repeat action with inside ft (meas 6).

Record: ZM-46729 "Tańce ludowe z Polski - Volume 2" (Folk Dances From Poland), side A, band 7. 2/4 meter.

Formation: Pairs of cpls across from each other in two lines approximately 15 ft apart, cpls in closed social dance pos, M's back to ctr, W faces ptr.

STARA BABA (continued)MeasPatternINTRODUCTION

1-2 No action.

I. UP AND DOWN THE SET1-4 Dance part (a) of the Basic Step, cpls moving up and down the set (Note: the two lines will move in opp direction).

5-12 Dance part (b) of the Basic Step, except with the second pivot make only a 3/4 CW turn.

II. IN AND OUT

1-12 Dance the Basic Step, moving with part (a) twd and away from the other cpl in your pair.

III. CHANGE PARTNERS

1-4 Dance part (a) of the Basic Step, moving twd and away from the other cpl in your pair, except during cts 2,&amp; of the 2nd meas "swap" ptrs, i.e., W make a 1/2 CW turn, passing back to back, while M "send off" your orig ptr and join in social dance pos with your new ptr. The remaining side-together steps are then done with your new ptr, M returning to his orig place (meas 3-4).

5-12 Dance part (b) of the Basic Step with your new ptr. With the second pivot end with M's back to ctr.

Repeat the dance with the new ptr. At the beginning of Figure III, original ptrs will return to each other.

The title, which means "an old woman," derives from the words of a song which goes with the dance.

Stara baba, dziad młody  
pedza byczki do wody,  
:od wody do siana,  
pokaż, baba, kolana.:

Translation

An old woman and a young guy  
are driving young bulls to water  
from water to the hay,  
old woman, show your knees

Pronunciation

Stah-rah bah-bab jiaht mwod-dih  
pen-dzom bich-kee doh voh-dih  
ohd voh-dih doh shah-nah  
poh-cahsh bah-bah koh-lah-nah

Dance introduced in the Fall of 1977, at the Fourth Annual North-South Folkdance Teachers' Seminar in Ben Lomond, California, by Ada and Jaś Dziewanowski, who learned it in Ostrożeka and Myszyniec, Poland. Do not reproduce these directions without the Dziewanowskis' permission.

Presented by Ada Dziewanowska