

ČAČAK

Serbia

(CHA-chak) = a dance possibly named for the town of Čačak, Serbia (or vice versa?)

OTHER NAMES:

Five-step Čačak, Five Figure Čačak

Čačak Kolo - the first name used for the dance, but better used for a different *čačak*

Long Čačak - a name better used for a different *čačak*

BACKGROUND:

Čačak actually describes a family of dances found in Serbia and northwest Bulgaria. Most dances called *čačak* have a 10-bar phrase (against 8-bar music) and either a 3-2-1 pattern or a "4 plus 6" sequence. *Bela Rada* (see the 1997 *Problem Solver*) belongs to this dance family.

Dick Crum learned *Čačak* in the former Yugoslavia and probably first presented it at Maine Folk Dance Camp in 1953. Michael Herman issued the phonograph record Folk Dancer MH-3022b, *Čačak*, that winter and published the first instructions in his *Folk Dance Syllabus #1* (1953), titled *Čačak Kolo*. What Crum presented was the sixth dance in *Serbian Medley 1*, the medley performed by the *Kolo* ensemble of Beograd, Serbia. Originally, he taught a basic figure and a variation consisting of the current Figure 2. Later, he added one, then two, and then three more figures to make the 5-figure dance described below. He called his 5-figure dance *Long Čačak*, but that name, with *Čačak Kolo*, has come to refer to another dance called *Čačak Kolo* (described in the 1987 *Problem Solver*). Other teachers have taught fewer, more, and different figures. Elsie Dunin presented 8 figures. The most that I have seen is Dick Oakes' 9-figure *Čačak*.

FORMATION:

Short lines of men with belt hold and short lines of women with belt or front basket hold. The person at the right end of each line is the leader of that line. The people at each end tuck their thumbs in their belts (in belt-hold formation) or hold the hands of the people next to them (in basket formation).

Please note: Crum used to say that Serbs "dance in their shoes," and that their ankles "flirt with each other," to describe the precise, controlled, erect mood of Serbian folk dances. Certainly, this does not apply to ALL Serbs or ALL regions of Serbia, but it does apply to this *Čačak*. Please dance accordingly!

BARS ACTION

2/4 Introduction.

1-4 Wait

1. Step-lifts. Face forward.

1 Step to R onto R foot (ct 1), step behind R foot onto L foot (ct 2).

2 = 1.

3 Step slightly forward onto R foot (ct 1), with a small hop on R foot, lift L knee halfway to hip-high with L foot beside R ankle (ct 2).

4 Step in place onto L foot (ct 1), with a small hop on L foot, lift R knee halfway to hip-high with R foot beside L ankle (ct 2). Bend forward slightly.

5 = 3, lifting L knee hip-high with L foot held beside R leg, and straightening up. (Think "small, small, LARGE" to remember these three lifts.)

6 Step in place onto: L foot, R foot (cts 1,2).

7-9 = 4-6 (2 step-lifts and 2 steps). (Think "small, LARGE" to remember these two lifts.)

10 Step thrice in place onto: L foot, R foot, L foot (cts 1,&,2).

Note: you may shout "*Hop!*" or "*Hok!*" (pronounced "hope" or "hoke") during bars 5 and 8.

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Čačak (concluded)

2. Threes. Face diagonally forward to right of facing front, which leaves you facing somewhat to right.

- 1 Run forward to R 3 small steps onto: R foot, L foot, R foot (cts 1,&,2).
- 2 Run forward again to R 3 small steps onto: L foot, R foot, L foot (cts 1,&,2).
- 3 Step very slightly to R onto R foot, turning to face just a bit to L of facing front (ct 1), step beside R foot onto L foot (ct &), step beside L foot onto R foot (ct 2).
- 4 Step very slightly to L onto L foot, turning to face just a bit to R of facing front (ct 1), step beside L foot onto R foot (ct &), step beside R foot onto L foot (ct 2).
- 5 = 3 (dance a "3" to R).
- 6 Facing slightly to L of facing center, run forward and to L 2 steps onto: L foot, R foot (cts 1,2).
- 7-10 = 4-7.

3. Step-kicks. Face forward throughout.

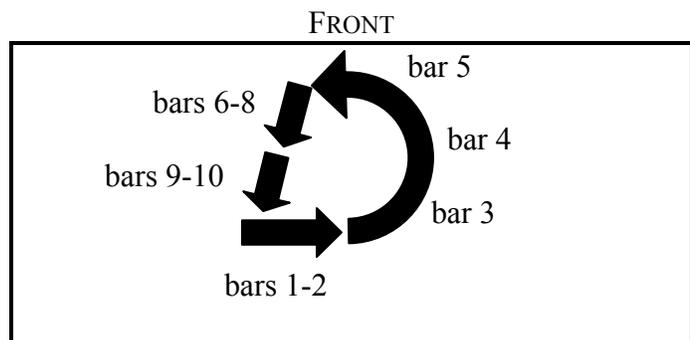
- 1 Hop sideward to R on L foot (ct 1), step to R onto: R foot, L foot (cts &,2).
- 2 = 1 (hop-step-step to R again).
- 3 Step in place onto R foot (ct 1), hop on R foot and kick L foot forward, small and tight and low (ct 2), pull L foot back to R foot (ct &).
- 4 = 3 with opposite footwork (step L & kick R).
- 5 = 3 (step R & kick L).
- 6 = 1 with opposite footwork and direction (hop-step-step to L).
- 7-10 = 4-7.

4. Step-stamps.

- 1-10 = 1-10 of figure 3, with light, flat-footed stamps with the heel, instead of kicks. Bend forward slightly, and face diagonally to R when stamping beside R foot with L foot. Bend forward slightly and face diagonally to L when stamping beside L foot with R foot. Stand up straight and face front during bars 1-2, 6, and 9. Crum described this bending over during the stamps as "ducking under water," and the standing up as "coming up for air."

5. The clock.

- 1-10 Dance the FOOTwork of Figure 1, but travel from "6 o'clock" through "3 o'clock" to "12 o'clock" during bars 3-5. Travel from "12 o'clock" to "Mickey's shoulder" (the center of your clock) during bar 6. Travel from "Mickey's shoulder" to "6 o'clock" during bar 9. Some folks step across in front of L foot onto R foot (cts 2) in bars 6 and 9.



SEQUENCE:

Remember what *Lado* ensemble director Zvonko Ljevaković told Crum:

The real folk dances seldom have more than one part. When you encounter a dance with more than one part, you can be pretty sure that somebody has taken the real dance and *zafknuti* 'played around' with it. This immediately forces the dancers to resort to conscious memory, to THINK more about what their feet are doing, and you've begun to compromise the joyful spontaneity of the original dance.

So any sequence will be artificial. Crum taught: each figure thrice, each figure once, then the first figure to the end. Harry Gartner (Pawling NY) noted that some groups dance each figure twice, then each twice again, finishing with the first figure. Four of each figure seems logical to me, finishing with Figure 5. But you do what you think best.

End of ČAČAK. Description © 2008 by Ron Houston.